

Ethics in Human Research Conference

The ARC sponsored the *Ethics in Human Research Conference* held in Canberra on 12–13 May 2005. The conference, which was organised by the NHMRC and the ARC, involved approximately 400 participants.

National Academies Forum symposium

On 31 March 2005 the National Academies Forum held a symposium titled *After the tsunami—harnessing Australian expertise for recovery*. The ARC provided \$10 000 towards the cost of the event which attracted a wide range of delegates from academia, research, government, industry and the community. A report on the outcomes of the symposium can be found on the website of the National Academies Forum at <www.naf.org.au/symposia.htm>.

Science meets Parliament

The ARC sponsored the *Science meets Parliament* activities held at Parliament House, Canberra, on 8–9 March 2005. *Science meets Parliament* is an annual event organised by the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FASTS) during which scientists and Parliamentarians meet at Parliament House to discuss science and its importance to the nation.

Science at the Shine Dome

The ARC sponsored two early-career researchers to attend the *Science at the Shine Dome* early-career researchers program, from 4–6 May 2005 in Canberra. The program was run by the Australian Academy of Science. Early-career researchers attending the program had the opportunity to learn about the latest research across a range of science disciplines, meet and exchange ideas with renowned scientists, and participate in a career development program.



To help understand soil moisture levels in Australia's agricultural lands, a research team (from The University of Melbourne, The University of Newcastle and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration [NASA] Goddard Space Flight Center) is undertaking a large-scale ARC project to map surface and root-zone soil moisture.

The project will develop new techniques for airborne, high-resolution mapping of soil moisture on farmlands enabling farmers to make better use of water resources, including allocations of irrigation. The research will also enhance the capacity for weather and climate prediction as soil moisture is an important indicator for precipitation forecasts over land at mid-latitudes. This project is undertaking its first of two 4-week airborne campaigns in the Upper Hunter this November, together with a team of scientists from the European Space Agency (ESA).

Recognising the importance of this project to the farming community *The Weekly Times*, one of Australia's largest rural and regional newspapers, published a major article on the project during 2005.

Photograph: Courtesy of Dr Jeffrey Walker