

Something old, something new:

'Australia's Innovative University' raises bar with new Institute

To innovate: to bring in something new; make changes in anything established.

The Macquarie Dictionary

One of Macquarie's early and most successful innovations was *The Macquarie Dictionary*, the revolutionary dictionary of Australian English published almost 25 years ago. The gestation was long and difficult, marked by years of dedicated research by Professor Arthur Delbridge and other distinguished scholars and the waxing and waning fortunes of potential publishers.

A quarter century on, now thoroughly identified as innovative and entrepreneurial, Macquarie has established a new Institute for Innovation, led by international microelectronics expert and technology manager Professor Craig Mudge.

You might wonder why it has taken so long to formalise, teach and study the practice of innovation at 'Australia's Innovative University'. Perhaps it was just too busy doing it. Perhaps it needed the compelling scope and rate of change of the 21st century to generate a self-conscious focus. Or perhaps it's simply an idea whose time has come.

Today, the drive to innovate often carries a sense of urgency and risk-taking – make it happen, beat the competition. Yet many innovations arise from the visionary eye on the far horizon, from people with a deeply held conviction and

long-term commitment. *The Macquarie Dictionary* testified not only to the innovative, risk-taking spirit of its initiators and backers, but also to their abiding faith in its worth and meaning.

Words like 'abiding faith' and 'meaning' aren't headlines in our change-addicted era, but Craig Mudge points out they are central to the philosophy of successful innovators like Guy Kawasaki – product evangelist, champion of Apple Mac computers and founder of Garage Technology Ventures. Kawasaki's powerful core message is, 'when starting a company, make meaning' and he cites three ways to do it: increase the quality of life; right a wrong; prevent the end of something good.

Craig's own resume is crammed with bold pioneering ventures, from early experience at CSIRO working on the country's first microchip research, to computer design in companies like Digital Equipment Corporation (now part of HP), leading the computer science lab at the legendary Xerox PARC, and software start-ups in Silicon Valley. 'I've found it very exciting. I like to start new things that really have meaning. I'm less interested in simply copying a California marketing success such as juice bars, where there's no new knowledge and the market risk has been eliminated.'

Now, he wants to put together a group of people who can teach the business of innovation in this country. Part of his brief is to 'lift the spirit of enterprise across the entire student body' – from science to the humanities.

The overlapping use of the terms innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship can be confusing, but they are dynamically connected, as Craig's new teaching programs make plain. Commencing in 2006 is a broad undergraduate unit for all students labelled 'enterprise', designed to teach the skills and confidence that shape working lives beyond the traditional role of 'employee'.

A second undergraduate unit will cover 'technology entrepreneurship', while postgraduate units include business and IP management, and social, biotechnology and technology entrepreneurship. The Institute will also deliver short courses for start-ups and established companies.

Craig defines entrepreneurship broadly as 'recognising an opportunity and marshalling resources to go after it'. Vigorous engagement with both business and not-for-profit sectors are on the menu.

'Any enterprise, for profit or otherwise, that we start here will be born global,' he explains. 'My core message to industry is that we will be practical, international and connected.'

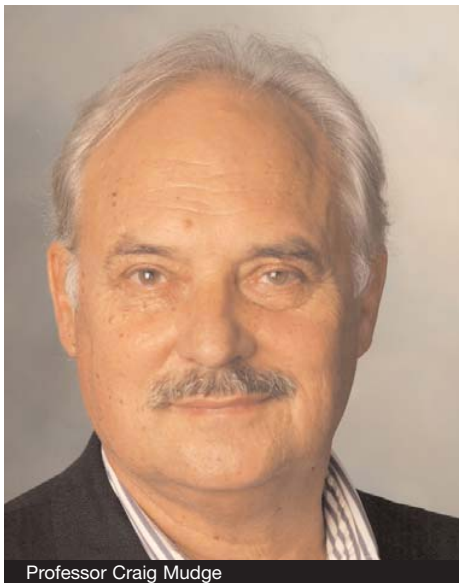
He defines an innovative enterprise as one that is outward-looking and continually refreshing its products and services in context, recognising and responding to big trends. 'Innovation can be 'incremental' or 'disruptive', but context is all-important.'

Even an innovative university is of course a work in progress. The Institute will offer tailored courses for academics and short courses to postgraduate students on how to build a sustainable business plan for commercialisation of research ideas.

'One of my goals is to have industry and academia speaking each other's language better than they do today. The startling thing about Silicon Valley is how well they have learned to do this,' says Craig.

Note: Craig is keen to build a strong relationship with Macquarie alumni. 'We'll design customised short courses for alumni on request. But we also want to build the best stable of adjunct teachers and would love to have alumni on our team. We'll provide training for those with the right experience and powerful stories to tell.'

If you think this describes you, don't hesitate to email Craig at Craig.Mudge@mq.edu.au



Professor Craig Mudge