

CDU-ASC Post graduate Research Scholarship in the Behavioural Sciences

Area of Research: Behavioural and Attitudinal Change associated with the Alice Solar City (ASC) Project.

General Position: Charles Darwin University (CDU) and Alice Solar City (ASC) jointly offer an exciting postgraduate scholarship opportunity that is embedded in an important current socio-environmental undertaking: the Alice Solar City project (ASCP) which commenced in March 2008 and operates until June 2013. The position is for a full-time PhD student to investigate a negotiated component of the Alice Solar City Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER) Plan, during a 3-year period 2010-2014.

Context: ASC is one of 7 community based 'Solar City' trial programs across Australia that are supported and largely funded by the Australian Government, and implemented through a consortium of local organisations. It aims to empower the Alice Springs community to make informed and intelligent use of energy, and to demonstrate and review (i) how solar technologies, energy efficiency and load management measures at residential and commercial premises, can contribute to a reduction in demand for fossil-fuel generated grid electricity, and (ii) how such actions and related learnings may modify energy-related human behaviours and attitudes. For more detailed information about ASC, consult the website <http://www.alicesolarcity.com.au/>

Monitoring and Evaluation: An MER plan is in place and its implementation will continue until 2013. The ASCP is supported by an extensive online database which includes a range of 'hard' (quantitative/technical) data such as demographic data, site audits, incentives implemented, and electricity consumption. An essential part of the MER is to explore and document the experiences, opinions, attitudes and behaviours of customers and non-customers, and changes in these personal factors. This 'soft' (qualitative/social) data collection will involve customer and control (non-customer) groups using survey questionnaires, individual and small group interviews, focus groups and case studies.

Potential Research: The MER plan proposes several evaluative questions that will be informed through qualitative data collection and analyses, and complemented by available quantitative data. Some of these questions (complementary to the core MER) offer scope for a post-graduate student to undertake original work and contribute significantly to the project. Some examples are:

- What are the nature and extent of community energy-related perceptions and changes, especially community norms, associated with the ASC program?
- In the context of the ASC program, is it possible to develop and test a behavioural model that will predict energy related behaviours and potential energy-saving engagement - what is the nature and structure of such a model?

These are possibilities, and are neither exclusive nor mandatory - a suitable topic may be negotiated with the student, within the constraints of the ASC program and its ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

Operational Details:

Supervisors	Professor Rolf Gerritsen Research Leader, Central Australia Charles Darwin University PO Box 795 Alice Springs NT 0871 ph 08 8959 5256 mb. 0447 083 490 rolf.gerritsen@cdu.edu.au	Mr Chris Penna MER Manager Alice Solar City PO Box 8561 Alice Springs NT 0871 ph 08 8950 4355 mb 0458 524 499 chris.penna@alicesolarcity.com.au	Owen Stanley Professor of Natural Resources and Community, School for Environmental Research, IAS Charles Darwin University Ph: (08) 8946 6049 Fax: (08) 8946 7720 owen.stanley@cdu.edu.au
PhD Enrolment	At Charles Darwin University		
Primary Location	Alice Springs – CDU Campus. Some flexibility may be negotiated re living location.		
Pre-requisites	Honours 2A or equivalent degree in an appropriate discipline such as psychology, sociology, education or relevant aspects of human geography/natural resource management.		
Commencement	Enrolment for Sem 1 or Sem 2 2010 - preferably Sem 1		
Stipend	AUD \$26,000		
Further Information and/or Discussion	Rolf Gerritsen or Chris Penna – details above		
More Detailed Documentation	Available on request from Chris Penna		