

# HIGHLIGHTS 2008

- In 2008 total competitively won research income received by the Melbourne Institute rose 7 per cent to \$11m. This total has grown strongly in recent years and was 43 per cent above the level of 2004. This performance has led to a similarly strong rise in research incentives payments received from the Commonwealth, which amounted to almost \$1m in 2008. Contract research income totalled \$9.6m in 2008 and National Competitive Research grants \$1.3m.
- Staff were also successful in securing three new ARC Discovery Grants and three new Linkage Grants commencing in 2009 amounting to \$785,000 over five years.
- The Melbourne Institute and *The Australian* jointly held their fifth Economic and Social Outlook Conference in March, entitled 'New Agenda for Prosperity'. The event was the first broad-ranging policy conference after the election of the new government, and included contributions from the Prime Minister, key senior Commonwealth Ministers, Shadow Ministers, academics and commentators.
- The Australian Government announced in July that the Melbourne Institute was successful in its bid to continue to manage the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey for waves 9 to 12. The seventh wave of the HILDA Survey was completed, with an excellent wave-on-wave response rate of close to 95 per cent achieved. The size of the HILDA user community continued to grow and by the end of 2008 the number of people registered to use at least one of the HILDA data releases numbered 1045.
- In July 2008, Associate Professor Beth Webster was appointed as the new Director of the Intellectual Property Research Institute of Australia (IPRIA), which is now located at the Melbourne Institute. Associate Professor Beth Webster continues to head the Industrial Economics research program.
- The Melbourne Institute's Labour Economics and Social Policy research program commenced work on a new program relating to vocational education and training for the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) following a tender process in late 2007.
- Work continued under the long-standing Social Policy Research Services (SPRS) contract, currently managed by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (from 2001 to 2005 the contract was managed by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs): nine projects were completed in 2008 (with seven commenced for completion in 2009) and nine refereed journal articles based on research under this contract were accepted or published in 2008. The third annual SPRS Conference was held in October. This presented an opportunity for the researchers to present their findings to relevant policy advisers in Canberra.
- The first wave of the MABEL — Medicine in Australia: Balancing Employment and Life — survey was sent to all doctors in Australia in June 2008, with over 10,000 doctors responding. One of the largest longitudinal panel surveys of doctors in the world, MABEL is conducted by the Health Economics team and will provide new insights on how changes in the working lives of Australian doctors are influencing the provision of healthcare. An initial set of results will be available in the first half of 2009.
- Two academic workshops were conducted by the Melbourne Institute:
  - 'Education and Skill Mismatches in the Labour Market', November — jointly organised by the Labour Economics and Social Policy research program and the NCVER, and
  - Health Economics Workshop', March — organised by the Health Economics research program.
- The Industrial Economics research program commenced or concluded about a dozen projects concerned with innovation and organisational performance. The program also developed an innovative approach to measure the growing integration between Australia and Asia, in association with Asialink and PricewaterhouseCoopers. This will be published early in 2009 as the *PricewaterhouseCoopers Melbourne Institute Asialink Index*.
- Melbourne Institute staff members (and affiliated associates) published one book, three chapters in edited books, and 44 articles in refereed journals, and presented papers at 31 domestic or international conferences.
- Melbourne Institute staff continued to serve on a wide range of Advisory Boards and committees of professional or policy interest. For example, the Director was appointed Chair of an Expert Reference Group established by the Minister for Employment Participation, the Hon Brendan O'Connor, to provide advice about a performance management framework for the employment services contract — to take effect from mid-2009. Also Associate Professor Beth Webster was appointed to the advisory panel for the Review of the Australian Automotive Industry headed by the Hon Steve Bracks.
- The Melbourne Institute continued to publish a range of economic surveys which provided timely insights into the implications for Australia of the unfolding global financial crisis. The Applied Macroeconomics group also resumed the monthly publication of short-term economic forecasts. These are contained in the *Monthly Bulletin of Economic Trends*.

## Medicine in Australia: Balancing Employment and Life (MABEL)