

SACE Research Event Report

Cross-Disciplinary Pecha Kucha Connections

Event Date: Monday, September 8, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Venue: Woolley Common Room, A20 John Woolley Building

Facilitator: Dr. Sanné Mestrom, FASS Research Advisor (SACE)

The SACE Research Event: Cross-Disciplinary Pecha Kucha Connections successfully brought together researchers from across the SACE for a dynamic three-hour event designed to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and shared discovery. The event featured 11 rapid-fire research presentations followed by a fun and innovative collaborative workshop ('Research Constellation Mapping'). The event strengthened the SACE research community by creating structured opportunities for meaningful academic dialogue beyond typical departmental boundaries, fostering an inclusive research environment that values diverse methodological approaches.

Attendance & Participation

- **Total Attendance:** 30 participants (including 2 HDR students)
- **Presenters:** 11 academic staff presented their work
- **Workshop Participants:** 11 attendees stayed on to engage in the Research Constellation Mapping activity
- **Disciplines Represented:** Film Studies, Media & Communications, Indigenous Cultural & Creative Industries, Digital Cultures, Visual Arts, Sonic Arts, Health Communication, and Publishing

Event Structure & Format

Morning Presentations (10:00 AM – 12:00 PM)

The event opened with 11 consecutive 10-minute presentation slots, allowing each presenter 8 minutes for their research presentation plus 2 minutes for changeover. Presenters were offered flexibility in format, choosing between traditional slide presentations or the Pecha Kucha format (20 slides × 20 seconds each).

Featured Presenters and Research Areas:

1. **Bruce Isaacs** (Associate Professor, Film Studies) - Film history, aesthetics, and digital cinema
2. **Andrew Sully** (Filmmaker) - Drama and documentary filmmaking, science communication
3. **Daniel Browning** (Professor, Indigenous Cultural & Creative Industries) - Indigenous media and cultural production

4. **Justine Humphry** (Senior Lecturer, Digital Cultures) - Digital infrastructures and mobile media
5. **Agata Mrva-Montoya** (Senior Lecturer, Media & Communications) - Digital publishing and accessibility
6. **Ben Egliston** (Senior Lecturer, Digital Cultures) - Political economy of digital media and gaming
7. **Sanné Mestrom** (Senior Lecturer, Visual Arts) - Public art and inclusive urban design
8. **Alan McKee** (Professor, Head of School) - Digital intimacies and sexual media
9. **Olaf Werder** (Senior Lecturer, Media & Communications) - Health communication and community collaboration
10. **Vicky Browne** (Lecturer, Sonic Arts) - Sound installation and ecological themes
11. **Stuart Bailey** (Lecturer, Visual Art) - Political awareness through contemporary art practices

Networking Lunch (12:00 PM – 12:30 PM)

Research Constellation Mapping Workshop (12:30 PM – 1:00 PM)

The collaborative workshop was designed to systematically map potential research collaborations among participants. Using a structured visual mapping exercise, participants explored cross-disciplinary connections through guided prompting questions.

The workshop utilised a unique "Research Constellation Mapping" approach, where participants:

1. **Formed research constellations** partnering people from different disciplines
2. **Systematically explored all possible pairings** (10 total combinations per group)
3. **Applied structured prompting questions** to each pairing:
 - *"What's the conversation only these two could have?"*
 - *"What expertise does each bring that the other needs?"*
 - *"What would surprise people about this collaboration?"*
 - *"What project makes perfect sense for both but neither could do alone?"*
4. **Documented potential collaborations** including research themes, project ideas, publication platforms, and timelines onto the large A0 worksheet
5. **Identified priority projects** based on excitement, feasibility, and impact potential

This systematic approach ensured that participants moved beyond surface-level networking to explore more substantive research connections and prospective collaboration possibilities.





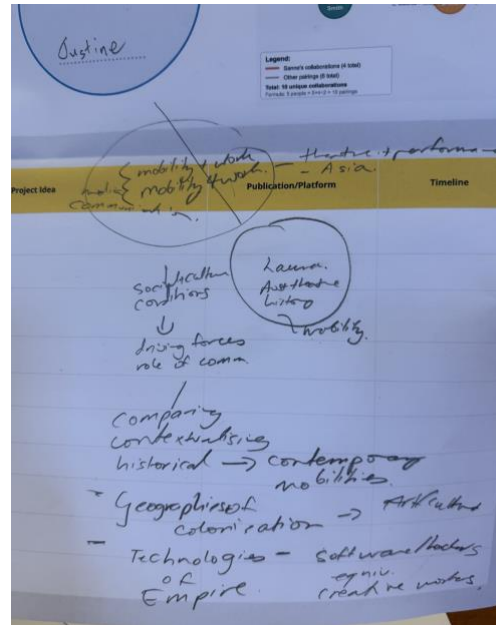
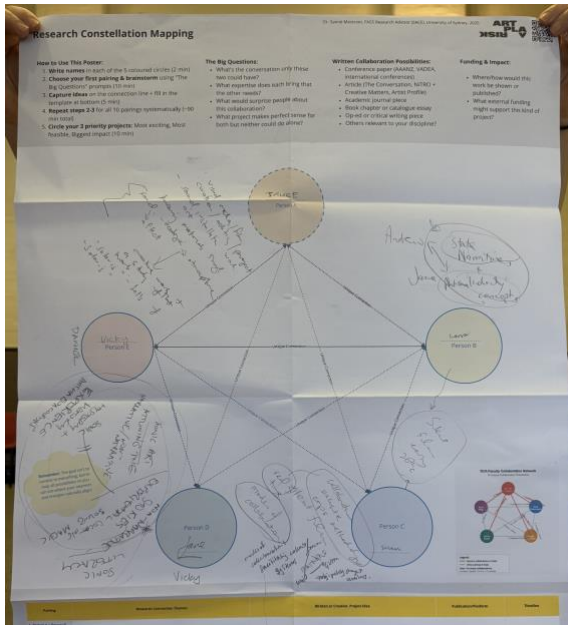
Immediate Outcomes

- **Cross-disciplinary exposure:** Participants gained insights into diverse research methodologies across SACE disciplines
- **Documentation of ideas:** Written records of specific project ideas, publication pathways, and collaboration themes
- **Priority identification:** Each group identified their top 3 priority projects for potential development

Research Connections Identified

The workshop successfully facilitated the identification of potential collaborations across multiple thematic areas, including:

- Digital humanities and cultural studies intersections
- Indigenous methodologies across media platforms
- Art-science communication partnerships
- Health communication and creative practice convergences
- Technology ethics and creative industry applications



The Research Constellation Mapping approach proved highly effective for:

- Overcoming disciplinary silos
- Generating blue sky as well as concrete project ideas
- Identifying complementary expertise
- Creating potential next steps for collaboration (potentially actionable by internal SACE funding opportunities)
- Building sustained research community connections

Future Event Planning

The success of this event suggests several directions for future programming. I believe an annual cross-disciplinary event should be institutionalised as part of the SACE Research Event Series, while the Research Constellation Mapping methodology could be expanded to other schools and faculties.

Developing digital tools to support ongoing collaboration tracking would enhance the sustainability of connections made, and creating mentorship opportunities that pair experienced collaborators with new partnerships could accelerate collaboration development.

Long-term Strategic Goals

The event contributes to several important long-term strategic goals for SACE. These include increasing cross-disciplinary grant applications from SACE researchers, developing signature interdisciplinary research programs unique to SACE, enhancing research impact through innovative methodological combinations, and strengthening SACE's reputation as a leader in collaborative research approaches. The systematic approach to collaboration identification demonstrated in this event provides a foundation for achieving these broader strategic objectives.

Alignment with Academic Excellence Framework: Collegiality

I believe the SACE Research Event exemplified the University's Academic Excellence Framework **collegiality** pillar, which underpins all academic endeavours across Research, Education, and Service. We could potentially reference this for colleagues when inviting them to participate in future Pecha Kucha research events.

The event design and outcomes demonstrated the four key behavioural orientations that contribute to a collegial culture and environment.

Curious: Positive, Constructive, and Solutions-Focused Engagement

The Research Constellation Mapping methodology embodied curiosity by encouraging participants to actively listen to colleagues from different disciplines and explore diverse research perspectives with open minds. The structured questioning approach—asking *"What's the conversation only these two could have?"* and *"What would surprise people about this collaboration?"*—fostered constructive dialogue that moved beyond superficial networking to genuine intellectual curiosity about interdisciplinary possibilities. Participants demonstrated solutions-focused thinking by systematically identifying concrete collaboration opportunities and developing actionable project proposals rather than simply discussing abstract ideas. As Bruce Issacs noted, what the process revealed was that if you listen hard enough, you can find connective tissue between every single colleague you're partnered with. I believe this insight is the most valuable and rewarding take-away from this constellation mapping process.

Fair: Acting with Care and Compassion

The event structure ensured fairness through equal presentation opportunities for all participants, with consistent 10-minute time allocations regardless of career stage or seniority. The workshop design operated with good faith, giving all participants the benefit of equal access to collaboration mapping exercises. The systematic documentation process treated all ideas and connections with equal respect, ensuring that contributions from both established academics and emerging researchers received comparable attention and follow-up consideration.

Inclusive: Building Welcoming Workplace Culture

The event actively worked to build an inclusive environment by bringing together researchers across the full spectrum of SACE disciplines, from Film Studies to Indigenous Cultural Industries to Digital Cultures, as well as HDR students. The structured workshop format reduced barriers to participation by providing clear frameworks for engagement that didn't privilege particular communication styles or disciplinary approaches. By including both academic staff and HDR students in presentation and workshop activities, the event recognised and valued diverse career stages and contributions, creating opportunities for mentorship and knowledge transfer across generations of researchers.

Responsible: Contributing to University Community Success

The event demonstrated responsibility toward the University community by systematically building research capacity and fostering collaborative relationships that advance institutional strategic objectives. The comprehensive documentation and this follow-up planning shows accountability for translating networking activities into sustainable research outcomes. By creating concrete potential pathways for interdisciplinary collaboration, participants took ownership of contributing to the University's research mission and the Faculty's strategic priorities around innovative scholarship and community building. We'll see if any of these conversations transfer into actual projects, or if their generative and collegiate spirit is a meaningful end in itself – to be discussed further with the SACE Research Team!

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This event was part of the SACE Research Event Series 2025