



CAUTHE 2025 Annual General Meeting PhD/ECR Workshops and Mentoring Programme Report

Dr Anita Manfreda, PhD/ECR Liaison
Wei Zhang, PhD Student Representative
January 2025

Summary of Key Activities in 2024

The PhD/ECR cohort has been an integral part of the CAUTHE community. In 2024, CAUTHE has supported several PhD/ECR activities and will continue its support in 2025. A summary of those activities is provided in this report.

1. Bill Faulkner PhD/ECR and MCA Workshop 2024

The Bill Faulkner PhD Scholar, Early Career Researcher (ECR) Workshop alongside the Mid-Career Academics (MCA) Workshop that coincides with the annual CAUTHE Conference was hosted on 6 February 2024 at the University of Tasmania, Hobart. The whole-day workshop, followed by a group mentoring session, introduced a 'Welcome to All' strategy. This strategy combined PhD, ECR, and MCA workshops to support participants in various career stages. The workshop was attended by 31 PhD scholars, 11 ECRs, and 7 MCAs. Building on feedback from previous workshops, this session focused on academic topics and offered opportunities for socialising and enhancing overall well-being.

This year's PhD, ECR, and MCA Workshop and Mentoring Session was co-organised by Associate Professor Anne Hardy, Mr. Wei Wally Zhang, and Ms. Line Andersen from the University of Tasmania. They were assisted by CAUTHE PhD/ECR Liaison, Dr. Richard Aquino, PhD Student Representative, Ms. Michelle Whitmore, and Dr. Anita Manfreda.

The workshop overall received very positive feedback and evaluations. The activities that were rated most highly were activities that allowed for networking and connection, including the Opening Treasure Hunt, opportunities for networking. Workshops and other activities were well received, receiving all above 4/5 average scores.

2. 2024 CAUTHE mentoring program

The CAUTHE Mentoring Programme was designed to connect our PhD and ECR members with senior colleagues to establish a mutually beneficial long-term relationship, promoting career as well as personal development through connectivity and support. Launched in September 2021, the third round of the CAUTHE Mentoring Program successfully concluded in December 2024. In total, 14 mentors and 26 mentees – total of 14 groups – participated in the program, with an increased uptake from the 2023 program.

Overall, very positive feedback was received from the participants. Participants indicated multiple topics their mentoring groups discussed during meetings, including Career advancement, Wellbeing and Networking and Research development. Mentees indicated the most useful aspects of the program were receiving clear and tailored guidance from mentors, opportunities to gain new perspectives from experienced academics, and connecting with peers and professionals in the field. They particularly valued the supportive and constructive environment of the sessions, which fostered trust and openness. Notably, the program was described as a platform for building meaningful relationships, both with mentors and within the academic community, while providing practical advice for professional and research development.

Mentors found the program unexpectedly rewarding, which is surprising given its primary focus on supporting mentees. They reported significant benefits, including connecting across universities, engaging in meaningful conversations about academia and life, and learning about their mentees' work, challenges, and ambitions. The opportunity to share experiences, provide tailored advice, and witness mentees' progress also offered intellectual stimulation and personal rejuvenation. This unexpected reciprocity fostered trust, authenticity, and a sense of community, making the experience mutually enriching and impactful.

Given this round's success and the benefits of mentoring for our PhD and ECR members, the CAUTHE Executive Committee decided to offer the program again in April 2025.

3. 2024 CAUTHE/SMAANZ/ANZALS Mid-Year HDR Meeting

The 2024 CAUTHE/ SMAANZ / ANZALS mid-year HDR conference was held over two days, online and in-person, on 4-5 July 2024. There were 39 registered attendees, approximately half of which were from CAUTHE.

The two-day programme offered a rich blend of insights and practical advice for participants. The first day, held entirely online, began with an introduction by Prof. Erica Wilson, Chair of CAUTHE, followed by an engaging session on Teaching, Research and Service by Dr Richard Aquino (University of Canterbury), who emphasised the value of having a mission statement. After a brief break, Dr Louise Grimmer (University of Tasmania) provided an inspiring exploration of using social media and podcasts to communicate research.

Day two, conducted in a hybrid format with participants joining online or in person in Melbourne, featured valuable guidance on creating poster presentations and journal articles. A panel from RMIT University and Adobe led the poster session, while Dr Jordan Bakhsh (Deakin University) and Prof. Tracy Taylor (RMIT) shared expert tips for crafting strong journal article introductions. The programme concluded with six impressive presentations by PhD students, showcasing diverse research projects.

6. CAUTHE WeChat

The CAUTHE WeChat redistribution initiative is an experimental effort to expand CAUTHE's reach to non-English-speaking audiences. Given that Chinese speakers form the dominant user base on WeChat, this initiative aims to enhance CAUTHE's

visibility and encourage Chinese-speaking students and scholars to participate in the conference. Additionally, promoting the CAUTHE Pledge and the Be Kind Campaign through this platform helps raise awareness about academic inclusiveness and sustainability, particularly among Chinese-speaking students and early-career researchers.

Since November 2024, the PhD representative has collaborated with the CLAN WeChat page (Chinese Leisure Academic Networks) to redistribute content from CAUTHE's social media channels, newsletters, and JHTM's WeChat page while also promoting the CAUTHE 2025 Conference. As a result, posts under the #CAUTHE hashtag on CLAN's WeChat page have accumulated over 6,000 views.