

**WESTERN SYDNEY**  
UNIVERSITY



Centre for  
Smart Modern Construction

## Centre launch – 16th November 2017

**Speaking notes:** Professor Srinath Perera, Director c4SMC

Thank you, Phil Love (our MC), and welcome;

**David Borger**

**Western Sydney Director of Sydney Business Chamber**

Professor Simeon Simoff

Dean, School of Computing Engineering & Mathematics

Distinguished guests from the industry

And my colleagues

Today, I am privileged to stand here and present the Centre for Smart Modern Construction (c4SMC), its purpose, agenda and progress.

We launched the centre on 8<sup>th</sup> of August at our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations of the Construction Management programs at Western Sydney University. Today is its Industry Launch.

Today's construction industry, is facing multiple challenges of dealing with globalisation, digitalisation, global warming and sustainability and resilience related issues. We are at the onset of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial revolution that is characterized by a fusion of technologies that is blurring the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres. We see Smarter Modern Construction (SMC) imminent in the process of industry transformation to a modern future.

The Centre for SMC is about industry and academic collaboration in order to build the capacity to face these challenges and to be ready to deliver the multibillion dollar investment and development plan for Western Sydney (WS). WS is already the third largest economic region in Australia and will continue to grow and will become the **Construction Hot Spot** in whole of Australia. At WSU, we are determined to provide the construction work force that is future

ready to embrace this development effort. We want to make the Centre for SMC the knowledge hub that binds WS industry and academia together.

The government and universities have identified the need for Impactful research. The construction industry with 95% of its enterprises at Micro & SME levels is realising that change and progress cannot effectively be achieved without collaboration. And that is why Centre for SMC can be the hub for this collaboration.

Today, I would like to outline our planned contribution and how you can help.

**Our priority activities are:**

1. Establishment of new c4SMC undergraduate scholarships to be awarded to the best of our undergraduate students. These are meritorious scholarships.
2. To invest in new areas of SMC knowledge enquiry and research. As part of this endeavour we are establishing a series of Doctoral Scholarships to pursue research in SMC areas.
3. The Centre will support bringing overseas academic leaders in SMC, to Western Sydney University for 2 to 3 months each year to share their insights directly with our academic team and with our industry investors.
4. The fourth initiative will be to enable 1 or 2 of our academics to visit SMC hot-spots in various places around the world each year to foster knowledge transfer and build global and local networks.
5. And finally, one our most exciting initiatives is the establishment of a **SmartBuild-Lab** on our Kingswood campus where we will create a full-scale construction demonstration platform. This live construction laboratory will available for industry collaborators to demonstrate, test and further develop their construction products and systems and make those available for university students and researchers for both teaching and research. Our focus will be on applied industry capability building.

These are the five priority activities of the Centre.

We will be advocating for a more joined up construction conversation involving clients, industry, government and academia. We believe that a more joined up conversation will be fundamental to preparing our future constructors and their enterprises to thrive in the future.

Joining up Construction will be a theme of planned Industry Round Tables starting early next year. These will occur 2 – 3 times annually and culminate in a major international conference every 2-years at Western Sydney University.

In order to achieve this agenda, The Centre intends raise more than \$4.0m over the next 3-years as direct industry funds to be invested in above activities. And, we will leverage these funds to increase this capacity through other funding sources to be co-invested in the centre activities.

Our Industry Engagement Lead, Adjunct Professor David Chandler will be happy to speak to you to explain how you could collaborate.

Let me now brief you on progress to date on the activities of the Centre from its inception 3 months ago.

- We have raised over \$400,000 so far to start the investments I have just outlined with 8 industry collaborators already signed up and few more in the process of signing up. They were acknowledged by Phil Love our MC this morning. We intend to raise over 1 million dollars by the end of the year and it looks promising.
- We have established Two High Achiever scholarships for Construction Management final year undergraduates, starting in 2018.
- We have established FOUR 3 year PhD scholarships with the support of the university. Our Dean, Professor Simoff will formally announce these shortly.
- The topics of the four projects are:
  1. Evaluating digital traceability of construction products and components,
  2. Methodology for analysing construction effectiveness using non-price measures,
  3. Developing insights into what SMC enterprises will look like and how they might thrive in a modern construction world.
  4. Investigating how modern construction projects can be more successful and their linkage with modern construction enterprises.
- We have now secured a site within the Kingswood campus of the university for the SmartBuild Lab.

We currently have the largest construction management undergraduate program in Australia with over 1400 students, 91% employment rates and 81%

student satisfaction. Dr Mary Hardie and Assoc. Prof Swapan Saha take care of the programmes. We will graduate over 1500 modern constructors by 2025.

We have a very strong and growing academic team that would support the activities of the centre. These include world leading academics in construction such as our Deputy Dean, Professor Kerry London and also Professor Vivian Tam. We have Professor Chris Knap joining as Professor of Architecture.

Most importantly we have well qualified researchers and academics who are members of the c4SMC team. They will be keen to speak to you here today.

We will be acknowledging our investors and engaging regularly.

We will be looking to share their modern construction narratives on the Centre's web site and showcasing the Centre activities.

We will be building collaboration across disciplines at this university and with other institutions in Australia and overseas.

Today I hope you have a better insight into the purpose of the Centre for Smart Modern Construction, and with your support how we can achieve positive and measurable Impact.

I wish to thank you all for coming here today and taking the first step in collaboration. I also wish to thank all our signed-up collaborators. I would also like to thank David Borger for sharing our enthusiasm and taking the lead in providing a platform for the industry launch of the Centre here today.

Finally, I also wish to thank our Dean of the School of Computing Engineering and Mathematics Professor Simeon Simoff and Dean of the Graduate Research School, Professor James Arvanitakis and the Vice Chancellor and senior management of the University for their Continued Support in the activities of the Centre.

Until now we have focussed on the industry support for Centre.

But, today we are pleased to announce that the university is also providing substantial financial support.

To announce that support I would like to invite our Dean, Professor Simeon Simoff to the stage, to briefly outline what is involved.

Thank you.