$62 million SMART Infrastructure Facility officially opens

The official opening of the $62 million award-winning SMART Infrastructure Facility, one of the largest infrastructure research facilities in the world, was officially opened today (11 November).

The Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Anthony Albanese, performed the opening. Attendees were welcomed by the former Secretary of the Treasury and now Chair of the SMART Advisory Council, Dr Ken Henry. Other guests attending included the Federal Member for Cunningham, Ms Sharon Bird; UOW Chancellor, Ms Jillian Broadbent and UOW Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gerard Sutton.

The University of Wollongong’s SMART (Simulation, Modelling Analysis, Research and Teaching) Infrastructure Facility is a 12,000 square metre building consisting of 30 specialist research and education laboratories that focus on a wide range of infrastructure services such as electricity, energy, water, gas, transport, rail and road.

The four-storey building is designed to accommodate large scale research teams, including 200 higher degree research students. It also has excellent seminar and small conference facilities for industry, government and visiting scholars to use.

The laboratories are integrated by a simulation centre which can generate powerful and scalable models of various infrastructure services and the interactions between these networks. The simulation centre is supported by a peak computing facility with high end computational and visualisation capabilities of the bio-physical characteristics of, for example, road, rail, water, electricity and communication in a particular area, including how people interact with these assets.

The Chief Executive Officer of the SMART Infrastructure Facility, Mr Garry Bowditch, said the facility enhances the quality and speed with which Australia’s infrastructure researchers can deliver world-class research outcomes and breakthroughs.

It enables researchers to:

- Use larger and more reliable data sets
- Process and manipulate structures in real time to more effectively conduct complex analysis of networks

The SMART Infrastructure Facility is designed to encourage collaboration in academia, government, research organisations and industry.

SMART is the first building on the main campus to target a Green Building Council accreditation. This process involved a point-based evaluation of the environmentally sustainable design (ESD) initiatives of the building, according to a range of criteria including energy and water efficiency, indoor environment quality and resource conservation.
The facility has recently won a hotly-contested Master Builders Australia (MBA) Excellence in Construction Award for tertiary buildings in the $20-50 million range. The award follows hot on the heels of the recent Institute of Architects commendation with judges commenting that the SMART Facility sits comfortably in the Wollongong campus and was an “outstanding example of the incorporation of Ecologically Sustainable Design principles”.

Architects for the SMART Facility project were Graham Bell and Bowman and the builders were Cockram Constructions.

SMART’s funding comprises $35 million through the Federal Government’s Education Investment Fund, $17 million from UOW and $10 million from the NSW Government through RailCorp.

For further information contact Alastair Walton on 0418 251 229 or Garry Bowditch on 4221 1434.