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Supercomputer is far from being a flop

Australia's most powerful computer to date has been acquired by a consortium of five New South Wales universities and will be housed at the Australian Technology Park in Sydney.

Able to perform more than a trillion calculations, or flops, per second, the computer will be used for cutting-edge research and mathematical modeling, and will be managed by the Australian Centre for Advanced Computing and Communications (*ac3*) in their secure data centre.

The University of Technology Sydney's Professor Lindsay Botten, who coordinated the purchase of the Dell supercomputer on behalf of the consortium, said the computer will be able to perform up to 1.5 trillion calculations per second.

"It is a magnificent machine that will allow the partner universities to propel their research forward, produce results in computer modeling much faster and make our research more competitive internationally," Professor Botten said.

"Purchase of the computer was assisted by a grant from the Australian Research Council together with funding from UTS, Sydney University, University of New South Wales, Macquarie University, and University of Wollongong."

The supercomputer is a cluster of 144 Dell PowerEdge™ 1750 dual processor Intel Xeon nodes each with 2 Gbyte of memory, and running the Linux operating system. The nodes are interconnected via a high speed Foundry Fast Iron switch and with a peak performance of 1.5 teraflops, is expected to be the most powerful high performance Dell computing cluster installed in Australia

ac3 CEO Dr Philip McCrea said the consortium is excited to have access to such a powerful resource that will make a tremendous contribution to a diverse range of research projects.

"We chose a fully integrated and warranted system from a trusted supplier to ensure our users can have confidence that their innovative research is undertaken on a reliable platform," Dr McCrea said.

"Our participating universities are engaged on some extraordinary projects including development of new photonic technology, new microwave technologies, modeling of the effects of land cover changes, the design of new drugs, and improved mobile communication reception.

"The new supercomputer will extend the facilities at *ac3*, which also includes an NEC SX-5 vector computer and an SGI Origin 2400 system."

ac3 was established in 2000 with seed funding from the NSW Government and eight NSW universities. The company provides advanced computing services to NSW industry, commerce, government, and academia, by providing managed co-location services and operating supercomputers in its secure data centre at the Australian Technology Park at Redfern.

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Further Information

Dr Philip McCrea, CEO *ac3*

(02) 9209 4601 or email pmc@ac3.com.au .

www.ac3.com.au