

# Funding coups are part art, part science

BY HELEN MUSA,  
Arts Editor

Most people know the Australia Council is the chief funding lobby for the arts in Australia, but how many would believe it was getting into bed with science?

Yesterday at Parliament House in what the council sees as a triumphant coup, the recipient of two Australian Research Council linkage grants were announced by federal Education Minister Brendan Nelson and Arts Minister Rod Kemp.

The linkage takes the form of two cutting-edge scientific research projects where the artistic imagination plays a crucial part.

Sound artist Nigel Helyer, whose project *Audio Nomad*, is hosted by the University of NSW, will work with Professor Chris Rizos and Dr Daniel Woo to develop a hand-held wireless device which can identify the location of the user then deliver a special "sound design" to that location.

The device, will, for instance, help a user to retrace the course of the now-demolished Berlin Wall and deliver sound histories. The Australia Council will contribute \$60,000 cash and \$60,000 in kind over three years



Australian Centre for Field Robotics' Steve Scheduling, left, University of NSW's Dr Daniel Woo, Dr Stefan Williams, also of the Centre for Field Robotics, sound sculptor Dr Nigel Helyer and artist Mari Velonaki.

while the ARC will give \$302,486.

In the second project, interactive installation artist Mari Velonaki will work with Dr David Rye, Dr Steve Scheduling and Dr Stefan Bernard, of the Australian Centre for Field Robotics, on *Fish-Bird, Autonomous Interaction in a Contemporary Arts Setting*. The artwork will allow

machines to react to the presence of visitors to an exhibition and interact with them, advancing the relationship between humans and machines.

The Australian Council will contribute \$54,000 cash and \$60,000 in kind over three years while the ARC grant is \$265,514. Other sponsorships will make up \$175,000.