The symposium, attracting over 100 participants from across Australia, was held on October 3rd 2014 at the University of Sydney, supported by the Association for Academic Language and Learning. It showcased diverse practices from a range of universities for developing HDR student writing, and provided opportunities for supervisors, students, deans and directors of graduate research, academic developers and academic language and learning educators to discuss what works – and what might work better in the contexts of their institutions.

Keynote speakers, Bill Green and Inger Mewburn addressed different aspects of the HDR student journey. Bill emphasised writing as a ‘practice of being’ and the challenges associated with research students expanding their identity through their writing. Inger urged the audience to take on the ‘Wild West’ of self-help education on the web by using their wisdom and insights into the HDR journey to design appropriate and relevant resources to support student writing and model and guide students, both in using these resources but also in knowing their limitations.

The symposium also launched Writing Groups for Doctoral Education and Beyond: Innovations in Practice and Theory edited by Claire Aitchison and Cally Guerin and provided a forum for participants to develop research groups around a number of themes. One group has already produced a research proposal for a national scoping study on HDR supervision training and support focused on student writing. For more information contact Dr Bronwyn James.

The resources from the Symposium (for e.g., presenters’ abstracts and powerpoint slides, and storified tweets from the day) can be found can be found at the Learning Centre website.