Bill Hickson & Engineers
Australia Master in Applied Cybernetics Scholarship
Introduction

The ANU Master of Applied Cybernetics is the world’s first graduate program focusing on the challenges of ensuring cyber-physical systems are safe, sustainable and responsible. Established to explore a new branch of engineering, Master’s students from a range of disciplinary backgrounds learn about the human, cultural, environmental and technological aspects of the systems that are defining our future.

Equity of access to our education programs is important and front of mind at the School of Cybernetics. We need people from all walks of life if we are to build the future we want to see; a future that is safe, responsible and sustainable for all of humanity.

With this in mind, we have scholarships to support continued diversity in our cohort, including two new scholarship opportunities for candidates with an Engineering background who can demonstrate a passion for ensuring technology and automation are fit for purpose in addressing the great challenges of our time.

These new scholarships are named in honour of mechanical engineer Bill Hickson whose generous endowment to Engineers Australia will fund scholarships to support further education in the field of mechanical engineering. They recognise the transformative power of education and the importance of mechanical engineering in the 21st century.

Join us as we prototype a new approach to education, one that is not just locked up behind university walls, that has a bias to practice, that asks better questions in the context of history, and is designed for impact.
The late William ‘Bill’ Hickson FIEAust CPEng was born in London in 1924, growing up in a working-class area as one of six children. After leaving school at 16, Bill began a science degree at London University while working part-time as a laboratory assistant at a sugar refinery to help support his family.

He then became an assistant in the Cavendish Laboratory at the University of Cambridge, where he worked on the British nuclear program. When the lead scientists left for the United States (where their research would contribute to the Manhattan Project), Hickson was awarded a War Office Scholarship and switched to studying a diploma of engineering full time at Dartford Technical College.

After gaining his diploma, 21-year-old Hickson joined the British Army as a commissioned officer, with military service in Egypt, where he played an important role in the large-scale British evacuation of its Middle Eastern Headquarters. In 1947, Bill emigrated to Australia, followed by his wife Marion.

They lived in Sydney, where he took a job with EMAIL (Electricity Meter and Allied Industries Ltd) working as a design engineer before moving to the Commonwealth Department of Works, where he spent 17 years between the department’s Sydney, Adelaide and Canberra offices.

In Adelaide, Hickson worked as a researcher for the Woomera military testing range, as well as on various air conditioning and refrigeration projects for buildings at the site. In 1959, Hickson, Marion and their three children — Ken, Pamela and Lynette — moved to Canberra, where Hickson was promoted to Principal Mechanical Engineer.

Bill’s work in Canberra was extensive and featured projects at the Cotter Pumping Station, Old Parliament House and CSIRO, as well as the Australian Pavilion for EXPO 1967 in Montreal, Canada. He later went into partnership with D Rudd and Partners, where he helped develop a successful consultancy practice.

Bill was an engaged member of the engineering community throughout his career. He became an Associate Member of Engineers Australia in 1951, before becoming a Fellow in 1980. Bill was passionate about engineering education and his generous bequest of $1.58 million to Engineers Australia will fund scholarships to support further education in the field.
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Value of scholarship

The Bill Hickson & Engineers Australia Scholarship provides a stipend of $30,000 and an additional $5000 to support relocation and other education expenses.

Applicant profile

To qualify for a Bill Hickson & Engineers Australia Master of Applied Cybernetics Scholarship to undertake the ANU Master of Applied Cybernetics (commencing February 2023):

- You must come from an Engineering background and be eligible for membership of Engineers Australia.
- We encourage diversity in education, experience, gender, orientation and aspiration.
- We are looking for a track record of outputs and activities illustrating leadership in your field.
- A demonstrated ability to communicate complex ideas to a range of audiences.
- A demonstrated ability to operate with a high degree of flexibility and openness to calculated risk-taking.
- Demonstrated determination and resilience. Aptitude for working in uncertain and fast-changing environments.
- Demonstrated aptitude for interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary collaboration with people from different backgrounds.
- Individual and/or group-based professional / entrepreneurial / community service contributions.
- Ability to operate across disciplinary silos.
- Ability to think laterally and critically. Collaborative and mission-driven mindset.

Preference for this scholarship will be given to applicants with financial needs.
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Interested in applying?

Applicants seeking to express interest in this scholarship should apply through the standard application channels for the Master of Applied Cybernetics. This involves making a short submission to the School of Cybernetics that includes a CV, a cover letter and one portfolio piece, noting that they wish to apply for the Bill Hickson & Engineers Australia Master of Applied Cybernetics Scholarship.

cybernetics.anu.edu/education/masters
If you have questions, please contact us at cybernetics@anu.edu.au

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