

HyTECH July 2026 Update

ARC Training Centre for Hyphenated Technologies

A brief summary of Centre updates, research highlights, and upcoming engagements.

Click on links to learn more or visit the related LinkedIn posts.

CENTRE UPDATES

- ARC approved the Annual Report 2025.
- Full cohort! Zongxi (Anson) Zhao, PhD candidate (UQ), joins the Centre. Dr Xuejian Wan, Postdoctoral Research Fellow (UQ), starts 1 September.
- Steering Committee (29 July): approved Dr Elvis Okoffo, Affiliate Postdoctoral Fellow (UQ). Financial update presented.
- ARC impressed by HyTECH's growth. Dr Mara Ruiz Minano, Centre Manager (UTAS), presented HyTECH's industry engagement to ARC - now helping shape new sector-wide metrics (attached to this email).

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

- Tobias Hulleman, PhD candidate (UQ), on placement with SCIEX AB - testing new EAD tech for chemical ID.
- Nanda Mrabawani, PhD candidate (UTAS), wins MBCRC top-up scholarship for elemental analysis of Australian seaweeds.
- [Sanathri Alwis, Affiliate PhD Student \(UTAS\)](#) publishes new IC-MS method for biomass pyrolysis samples.
- Kaushi (Kaushalya Kankani Durage), PhD candidate (UTAS), extends her placement with Trajan Scientific and Medical until 14 July 2027.

CONFERENCES

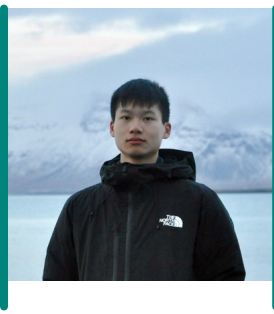
- [Six Deakin ECRs presented](#) at the AIFST Convention.

ENGAGEMENT & COLLABORATION

- Dr Cassandra Rauert and Prof. Kevin Thomas (UQ) visited Shimadzu, Kyoto - UQ node adds a new CF3 system for sub-micron plastics separation.
- Italy visit in August: Prof. Erminio Monteleone and A/Prof. Sara Spinelli (University of Florence) join the Deakin node for the EVOO provenance project.

RECOGNITION AND ACHIEVEMENTS

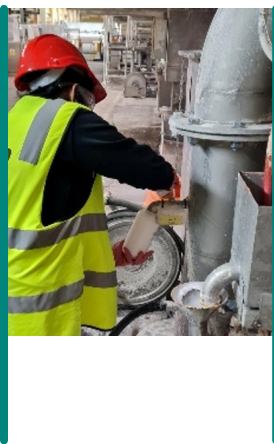
- Two students, two 3MT finals: [Lily Pan](#), Affiliate PhD Student (UQ), heads to the Faculty of Health Final; [Mayushi Malshika Jayakody](#), Affiliate PhD Student (Deakin), named 1st Runner-Up, advancing to the Deakin 3MT in August.
- [Dr Snehal Jadhav](#), Academic Investigator (Deakin), wins the AIFST Education Award for mentorship excellence.
- Sherlyn Ardison, PhD candidate (Deakin), poster on rapid Pseudomonas screening in raw milk featured at the [AIFST 2026 Research Poster Award](#).
- Sanathri Alwis, Affiliate PhD Student (UTAS), wins [Honourable Mention](#) for her oral presentation at RACI National Congress 2026.
- [Dr Ibraam Mikhail, Prof. Brett Paull and Dr Andrew Gooley](#) feature in UTAS media on a portable PFAS detection system - faster, cheaper environmental monitoring.



NEW TO THE CENTRE: Zongxi (Anson) Zhao (PhD Candidate, University of Queensland)

ABOUT ANSON

Commenced his PhD at UQ in 2026, focusing on High-Resolution Mass Spectrometry (HRMS) to characterise under-regulated Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CECs). Bachelor's from South China Normal University; Master's from Lancaster University, UK (2024). Hands-on experience in LC-MS/MS and GC-MS/MS.



Dilhara Dissanayaka

PhD Candidate, University of Tasmania

WHAT I'M WORKING ON

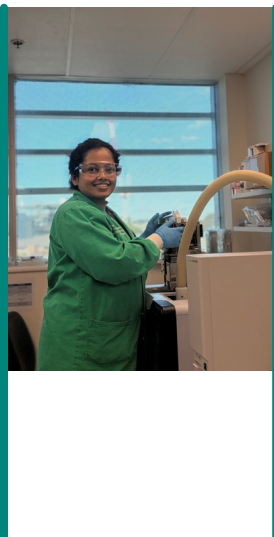
Monitoring and evaluating the Accelerated Solvent Extraction (ASE) method for resin acids, fatty acids and glycerides in pulp and process water samples from Boyer Mill - assessing it as a faster, less labour-intensive alternative to LLE.

REAL-WORLD IMPACT

Optimising analytical methods for the paper industry - better process efficiency and product quality.

THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHT

Completed my second-year PhD review, including three experimental thesis chapters.



Ruvini Weerasinghe

PhD Candidate, University of Queensland

WHAT I'M WORKING ON

Investigating how environmental samples affect detection of chlorine- and fluorine-containing micro/nanoplastics.

REAL-WORLD IMPACT

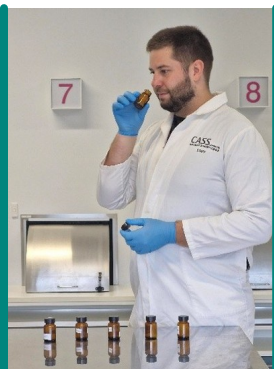
Building a robust, practical Py-GC-MS method to monitor hard-to-detect plastics in the environment.

THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHT

Completed the experimental work for the first data chapter of my thesis. I have now completed my placement (5 months); the project title was "The validation of a method for the extraction and analysis of Tobacco Specific Nitrosamines (TSNAs) in nicotine."

UPCOMING

Poster and poster spotlight accepted at SETAC Asia-Pacific's 15th Biennial Conference.



Kevin Ghavalas

PhD Candidate, Deakin University

WHAT I'M WORKING ON

Finalising volatile profiling and beginning aroma analysis of long-life milk.

REAL-WORLD IMPACT

Aroma and volatile profiles to support product development and flavour stability in long-life milk.

THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHT

Getting my volatile data - starting to draw initial conclusions.

UPCOMING

9-11 Nov 2026

HyTECH Annual Meeting: Brisbane. Save the date!

We'd love to hear from you

Collecting testimonials from industry partners, students & researchers.

HyTECH@utas.edu.au

Thank you for your continued support and collaboration with HyTECH. Kind regards, Mara