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Iraqi delegation visits

6 October 2004

A high-level delegation of academics from the University of Baghdad visited Monash's Clayton campus last week to sign two memoranda of understanding (MOUs) between the universities and Monash's Faculty of Engineering.

The delegation comprised the University of Baghdad president Dr Mosa Al-Mousawe, its Engineering faculty dean Dr Ali Al-Kiliddar and chemical engineering professor Hussain Al-Shahristani, who is also president of the Iraqi Academy of Science.



From left: Dr Mosa Al-Mousawe, Professor Hussain Al-Shahristani, Professor Richard Larkins and Dr Ali Al-Kiliddar.

The memoranda, signed by vice-chancellor Professor Richard Larkins, will serve as a starting point for discussions to develop a comprehensive plan on the role Monash can play in reviving the higher education system in Iraq.

"The MOUs will promote cooperation between the two institutions and encourage direct contact and cooperation between faculty staff, administrative units, departments and research centres," Professor Larkins said.

Monash Faculty of Engineering Head of Structures Group and Australian Iraqi Forum president Dr Riadh Al-Mahaidi organised the visit, which was part of a wider tour of Australian universities and



various government departments in Canberra.

During the two-day visit, Professor Al-Shahristani, one of the world's highest profile dissident scientists, presented a seminar on the 'Moral responsibility of scientists and engineers in the age of weapons of mass destruction'.

Professor Al-Shahristani was once a leading figure in the Iraqi scientific world heading up Iraq's Atomic Energy Commission as chief scientific adviser in the late 1970s. He spent 10 years in solitary confinement during the 1980s for refusing to join Saddam Hussein's nuclear weapons program.