ARC: Current Developments and Research Opportunities

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Overview

1. The ARC
2. The National Competitive Grants Program
3. Funding opportunities (Discovery Program and LIEF)
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Trends in Government Investment in R&D $M 2004-14
(source: budget tables)
ARC developments

- Current schemes (DP, IN, DE, FT, LE)
- New schemes (ITRP, Centres of Excellence for 2014, Future Fellowships round 6, LP14)
- Revision and harmonisation of funding rules
- Updating of assessor database (FoR codes & keywords, new assessors)
- Open access, open data, research impact
- New CEO – Prof Aidan Byrne (May 2012)
- New Executive Director for EMI - Prof Brian Yates and new ED for HCA – Prof Denise Meredyth
Overview

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National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP)

**Discovery Program**
- Discovery Projects
  - Discovery Indigenous
- Future Fellowships
  - DECRA
- Laureate Fellowships

**Linkage Program**
- Linkage Projects
  - ITRP
- Centres of Excellence
  - LIEF
  - Co-Funded & SRI
Proposal lifecycle - 1

- Funding Rules are released on the ARC website.
- Eligibility Exemption Requests are submitted (if applicable).
- Proposals open in RMS.
- Requests not to Assess are submitted to the ARC.
- Proposals are submitted in RMS.
- Proposals are assigned to independent assessors, who assess and provide written comments on the Proposal against the selection criteria.
Proposal lifecycle - 2

• Applicants may be given the opportunity for a rejoinder to assessors’ written comments.
• Proposals are ranked by the ARC College of Experts or other Selection Advisory Committee, on the basis of the Proposal, any assessors’ reports and any rejoinder.
• The ARC College of Experts or other Selection Advisory Committee provides recommendations to the ARC’s CEO.
Proposal lifecycle - 3

- The CEO submits funding recommendations to the Minister for consideration.
- The Minister determines which Proposals will be approved and the amount of funding.
- Funding outcomes are publicly announced and Administering Organisations enter into an agreement with the ARC.
Proposal assessment

- ARC staff and Executive Directors look at eligibility etc., but do not decide which proposals should be funded
- All proposals are assessed against the selection criteria, and in accordance with the weightings for that scheme
- Proposals are generally assigned to two College of Experts members and at least two external assessors with specific knowledge of the field of research
- College of Experts meets to moderate judgments and to make final recommendations about fundable proposals and budgets
- Under the ARC Act all recommendations are just that, and must be approved by the Minister
The ARC College of Experts

• play a key role in identifying research excellence, moderating external assessments and recommending fundable proposals.
• assists the ARC in recruiting and assigning assessors and in implementing peer review reforms in established and emerging disciplines as well as interdisciplinary areas.
• experts of international standing drawn from the Australian research community: from higher education, industry and public sector research organisations.
• ARC College nominations are approved by the ARC CEO for appointments of one to three years.
Grant lifecycle

• Projects commence.
• Administering Organisations manage projects and submit progress reports as required.
• Variations to Funding agreements must be submitted in certain circumstances.
• Final reports certify the successful completion of ARC-funded projects.
Size of scheme and success rates (1)

*Discovery Projects 2008-2013: Success and Return Rates*
Size of scheme and success rates (2)

**DECRA 2012-2013: Success Rates**

- **2012**
  - Total proposals: 1882
  - Unsuccessful: 1605
  - Successful: 277
  - Success rate: 12.8%

- **2013**
  - Total proposals: 1081
  - Unsuccessful: 881
  - Successful: 200
  - Success rate: 15.6%
Size of scheme and success rates (3)

*Discovery Indigenous 2012-2013: Success Rates*

- **2012**: 19 proposals, 34.5% success rate
- **2013**: 22 proposals, 31.3% success rate
Size of scheme and success rates (4)

Future Fellowships 2009-2012: Success Rates

- 2009: 775 proposals, 20.5% successful
- 2010: 559 proposals, 26.4% successful
- 2011: 458 proposals, 30.7% successful
- 2012: 394 proposals, 34.7% successful
Size of scheme and success rates (5)

**Australian Laureate Fellowships 2008-2013: Success Rates**

- **2009**: 133 proposals, 10.1% successful
- **2010**: 82 proposals, 15.5% successful
- **2011**: 122 proposals, 12.2% successful
- **2012**: 91 proposals, 15.7% successful
- **2013**: 95 proposals, 15.2% successful

The bar chart shows the number of proposals and the success rates for each year.
Overview

1. The ARC

2. The National Competitive Grants Program

3. Funding opportunities
   - Discovery Program (DP, IN, DECRA)
   - LIEF
Important Information

- Funding Rules
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Discovery Projects and Discovery Indigenous Schemes

- Funded under the ARC’s National Competitive Grants Program
- Funds projects for a period of three consecutive years
- Provides a minimum of $30,000 and a maximum of $300,000 each year, per Project, provides funding to Administering Organisations to support research programs
Discovery Scheme Objectives

- support excellent basic and applied research;
- enhance the scale and focus of research in the National Research Priorities;
- expand Australia’s knowledge base and research capability;
- encourage research and research training in high-quality research environments;
- enhance international collaboration in research; and
- foster the international competitiveness of Australian research.
Discovery Indigenous Scheme

• Since its inception, the Discovery Indigenous scheme (based on the former Discovery Indigenous Researchers Development scheme) has provided funding support research programs led by Indigenous Australian Researchers and has built the research capacity of higher degree research and early career researchers.

• Funds projects where at least one Chief Investigator is an Indigenous Australian, who will be the Project Leader
The Discovery Indigenous scheme aims to:

- develop the research expertise of Indigenous Australian researchers;
- support fundamental research and research training by Indigenous Australian researchers as individuals and as teams;
- support and retain established Indigenous Australian researchers in Australian higher education institutions; and
- expand Australia’s knowledge base and research capability.
The Discovery Indigenous scheme offers Discovery Indigenous Awards (DIAs), which are:

- offered to Lead Chief Investigators (CIs) who are Indigenous Australians;
- only awarded in conjunction with a funded project;
- only funded for the duration of a project.
Investigation of atypical bushfire spread driven by the interaction of wind, terrain and fire (IN130100038)

The University of New South Wales - ARC funding: $460 000

Summary: Large bushfires continue to pose a significant risk to communities in south-eastern Australia. Despite this, there is still very little known about the processes driving the development of large bushfires. This project aims to improve understanding of extreme fire processes and thus improve mitigation planning, community safety and environmental outcomes.

Chief Investigators: Dr Jason Sharples (ICA), A/Prof Jason Evans

The unwired horizon: clouded and mobile delivery platforms for early collections of Yolngu cultural heritage in Arnhem Land, Australia (IN130100017)

The Australian National University - ARC funding: $360 000

Summary: Led by the Yolngu Elder and researcher Joseph Gumbula, this project will develop a clouded database engine and networked applications for streaming digitised heritage resources in ways appropriate for Indigenous peoples, particularly those in remote communities. Trial content will be selected from records of Gumbula's own heritage dating from 1924.

Chief Investigators: Dr Joseph Gumbula, Prof Howard Morphy
Selection Criteria

Discovery Projects

- Investigator(s) 40%
- Project Quality and Innovation 25%
- Feasibility and Benefit 20%
- Research Environment 15%
Selection Criteria – Feasibility and benefit

• Do the Project’s design, participants and requested budget create confidence in the timely and successful completion of the Project?
• Will the completed Project produce innovative economic, environmental, social and/or cultural benefit to the Australian and international community?
• Will the proposed research be value for money?
Assessment

- Keywords and Field of Research codes
- Abstract and first page of project – intelligent non-expert
Researcher Roles

• Roles that may be undertaken by researchers are:
  – Chief Investigator (CI); or
  – Partner Investigator (PI).

• A Proposal must nominate at least one CI; the first named CI will be the Project Leader.

• At the time of the submission of a Proposal, all obligations regarding previously funded Projects involving the nominated CIs on the Proposal must have been fulfilled to the satisfaction of the ARC. Such obligations include the provision of satisfactory Progress and Final Reports.
Budget items supported

- access to national and international research and infrastructure facilities;
- access to workshop services;
- equipment;
- expenditure on fieldwork essential to the project, including technical and logistical support, and travel and accommodation costs;
- maintenance;
- personnel;
- PhD stipends;
- specialised computer equipment and software essential to the Project;
- teaching relief up to a total of $40,000 per year; and
- travel costs essential to the Project not exceeding $50,000, over the life of the Project. Funding is permitted for CIs, PIs and research support personnel. Travel costs related to carrying out field research are not included in this cap.
International Collaboration Awards (ICA)

- up to two researchers either CIs or PIs, per Proposal.
- for up to 6 months, per Award, over the life of the Project;
- for a CI to work overseas on the Project with an overseas based PI and/or PI based overseas to work in Australia on the Project.
- up to a maximum amount of $20,000 for 6 months per CI or PI, or pro rata for a lesser period, as a Special Condition; and
- to fund the following items:
  - travel on international return economy class airfares,
  - reasonable local travel,
  - a living allowance and
  - consumables.
Budget items not supported

- bench fees or similar laboratory access fees;
- capital works and general infrastructure costs;
- costs not directly related to research, for example, professional membership fees, fees for patent application and holding, visas, relocation costs, costs of dependents, insurance, and mobile phones (purchase or call charges);
- fees for international students or HECS and HELP liabilities for students
- salaries and/or on-costs, in whole or in part, for CIs or PIs
Submission of proposals

• The Proposal must contain all the information necessary for its assessment without the need for further written or oral explanation, or reference to additional documentation, unless requested by the ARC.

• Administering Organisations must submit Proposals through the RMS unless otherwise advised by the ARC.

• All Proposals must meet the format and content requirements, including certification, as set out in the RMS form and the *Instructions to Applicants.*
**DECRA Scheme**

- Updated weightings of selection criteria for DE14
- Increased period for claiming eligible career interruptions
- Part-time option, upfront
- Spells out small amount of teaching
DECRA Selection Criteria Weightings for DE14

Project Quality and Innovation 40% (prev. 50%)
- Does the research address a significant problem?
- Is the conceptual/theoretical framework innovative and original?
- Will the aims, concepts, methods and results advance knowledge?

DECRA Candidate 35% (prev. 30%)
- research opportunity and performance evidence (ROPE); and
- capacity to undertake the proposed research.

Research Environment 15% (prev. 10%)
- Is there a supportive and collaborative research environment for the project?
- Will the project provide the DECRA Candidate with the capacity and opportunity to develop an independent record of innovative, high quality research? Are the necessary facilities available to complete the Project?
- Are there adequate strategies to encourage dissemination, commercialisation, if appropriate, and promotion of research outcomes?

Feasibility and Benefit 10%
A DECRA14 Candidate must at the closing time of submission of Proposals:

- have been awarded a PhD on or after 1 March 2008;
- or commensurate with a period of significant career interruption have been awarded a PhD awarded on or after 1 March 2005.
- The following types of interruption will be considered:
  - carer’s responsibility;
  - international relocation for international post-doctoral studies (no more than 3 months per relocation);
  - illness;
  - maternity or parental leave;
  - unemployment or non-research employment
DECRA: Part-time Teaching

- The DECRA Recipient may spend up to 0.15 FTE of her/his time annually on teaching activities. The DECRA will not be extended to accommodate any periods of teaching. Supervision of honours or postgraduate students is not included in this limit.
DECRA: Maternity and Parental Leave

• Maternity leave – up to 14 weeks paid by ARC, extension of DECRA for this period.
• The Administering Organisation must ensure that a DECRA Recipient is entitled to take up to two weeks paid partner/parental leave at the time of birth or adoption to the partner/parent who is not identified as the primary caregiver during the course of the DECRA. The ARC will provide up to two weeks funding for this purpose and the DECRA period will be extended for a period equivalent to the duration of the paid partner/parental leave. The funding for this purpose is to be claimed by the Administering Organisation through submission of a Variation of Funding Agreement.
Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities (LIEF) Scheme Objectives

- to develop collaborative arrangements with other organisations to develop and support research infrastructure;
- to support large-scale cooperative initiatives thereby allowing expensive infrastructure, equipment and facilities to be shared and/or accessed;
- support areas of existing and/or emerging research strength
LIEF Selection Criteria

- Significance of research to be supported 20%
- Need and use of the proposed IEF 30%
- Nature of alliance and commitment between organisations 30%
- Investigators 20%
Discussion/questions
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