The Australian Research Council

The Australian Research Council (ARC) is an independent statutory agency within the Education Portfolio. The ARC’s main responsibilities are:

- providing funding for research through the competitive funding schemes of the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP);
- providing policy advice on research matters to Government;
- Evaluating research quality in Australia through the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) exercise;
- and, together with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), administering the Australian Research Integrity Committee (ARIC).
Government support for research and development in Australia: 2013-14
The ARC

- National competitive Grants Program: $883.9M in 2013
- Linkage and Centres: $332.4M
- Discovery and Fellowships: $551.4M
- Valuation and Policy Excellence in Research for Australia
National Competitive Grants Program

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

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

**Discovery Program Funding**
2013-14 - $551.4 million

**Linkage Program Funding**
2013-14 - $332.4 million
Discovery and Linkage Programs

• **Discovery**: Fund excellent, internationally competitive research by individuals and teams that will produce high quality outcomes

• Build Australia’s research capacity through supporting and facilitating research training and career opportunities for excellent Australian and international researchers

• Support research in priority areas that will deliver national benefits

• Enhance research capacity and outcomes through support for international collaboration

• The main Discovery schemes are:
  – *Discovery Projects, Discovery Indigenous, DECRA, Future Fellowships, and Laureate Fellowships*

• **Linkage**: Encourage and extend cooperative approaches to research and improve the use of research outcomes by strengthening links within Australia’s innovation system and with innovation systems internationally.

• Promote national and international research partnerships between researchers and business, industry, community organisations, archives and museums, and other publicly funded research agencies.

• Support the development of partnerships, and encourage the transfer of skills, knowledge and ideas as a basis for securing commercial and other benefits of research.

• The main Linkage schemes are:
  – *Linkage Projects; Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities (LIEF); ARC Centres of Excellence; and Special Research Initiatives.*
NCGP and Peer Review

- Under larger schemes, such as *Discovery Projects (DP)* and the *Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA)*, all five panels of the ARC College convene for selection meetings. In other schemes, such as *Australian Laureate Fellowships* and *Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities* schemes, a single interdisciplinary Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) may be utilised. SAC members may be ARC College members and/or other eminent researchers.

- The five panels are: Biological Sciences and Biotechnology (BSB), Engineering, Mathematics and Informatics (EMI), Humanities and Creative Arts (HCA), Physics, Chemistry and Earth Sciences (PCE), and Social Behavioural and Economic Sciences (SBE).
Peer review: assessment process

• ARC staff and Executive Directors assess eligibility etc., but do not decide whether 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
• 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
Peer review: assessment process 2

- Peer review by experts who assess individual research proposals within their field of research or across a broader disciplinary area on the basis of established selection criteria
- Processes under which arrangements for assessment are clearly articulated in published documentation
- Robust conflicts of interest processes to ensure conflicts are managed and transparent
- The receipt of proposals in confidence, except where required to be released under law, for example under the Freedom of Information Act 1982
- The provision of a right of reply to assessments (in most ARC schemes).
Enlarged College

• In 2011 for 2012 meetings the ARC College of Experts was enlarged, the number of schemes it assessed was increased and the membership rotated between the major meetings.

• Previously the entire ARC College of Experts sat at the April and August meetings, and separate selection advisory committees met for specific schemes, e.g. Future Fellowships.
Proportion of proposals received in selected disciplines of SBE (commencement year 2002 and 2014)

- Policy and Administration: 6%
- Political Science: 7%
- Psychology: 18%
- Social work: 1%
- Sociology: 9%
- Economics: 11%
- Education: 13%
- Commerce, Management, Tourism and Services: 15%
- Other SBE disciplines: 20%
Total success rate (all schemes, Start Year 2002 to 2013) and number of proposals received in NCGP panels
Number of proposals received in DP (commencement year, DECRA not included)
Number of projects funded in DP (DECRA not included), by commencement year
Total success rate in Discovery Projects and Linkage Projects (start year 2002 to 2014)

- SOCIAL WORK
- Education
- Commerce, Management, Tourism and Services
- All-SBE
- ECONOMICS
- PSYCHOLOGY
- POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION
- POLITICAL SCIENCE
Total Success rate in all schemes
(start year 2002 to 2014) - (2014 data FT14, FL14)
Proportion of 
of and 
f of type of researchers
(including 
investigator) on 
project 
jects proposals each year for
comparison.
Average number of researchers (including Partner Investigators) on each Discovery Projects proposal.
Combined success rate by discipline and scheme (proposals between commencement year 2002 to 2014)

- Linkage - Projects
- Linkage - Infrastructure Equipment and Facilities
- Discovery Early Career Researcher Award
- Discovery - Projects
- Discovery - Indigenous
- Australian Laureate / Federation Fellowships
- ARC Future Fellowships
• Linkage Grants 2011-2014
Total number of ARC projects, Partner Orgs (PO) and ARC funding for Linkage Projects (2002 to 2014)
Average number of Partner Organisations on each Linkage Project

- Sociology
- Political Science
- Policy and Administration
- Education
- Economics
- Commerce, Management, Tourism and Services
Thank you

Questions? Comments?