Regional Universities Network meeting
Canberra
24 February 2014
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Overview

• ARC funding schemes (NCGP) – a bird’s eye view
• NCGP Proposals received/funded by 2-digit FoR Code; gender success rates
• Discovery Programs, including new rules:
  – Discovery Projects
  – Discovery Indigenous
  – DECRA
  – Australian Laureate Fellowships
• Linkage Programs, quick summary
• Assessment process
• Questions and discussion
National Competitive Grants Program

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

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

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

**Linkage Program Funding**
2013-14 - $332.4 million
ARC Proposals Received: 2-Digit FOR (%) 2006-2013

- Mathematical Sciences
- Physical Sciences
- Chemical Sciences
- Earth Sciences
- Environmental Sciences
- Biological Sciences
- Information and Computing Sciences
- Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences
- Engineering
- Technology
- Medical and Health Sciences
- Built Environment and Design
- Education
- Economics
- Commerce, Management, Tourism and Services
- Studies in Human Society
- Psychology and Cognitive Sciences
- Law and Legal Studies
- Studies in Creative Arts and Writing
- Language, Communication and Culture
- History and Archaeology
- Philosophy and Religious Studies
ARC NCGP funding by 2-Digit FoR (%) 2006-2013

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- History and Archaeology
- Philosophy and Religious Studies
Participation and success of CIs in DP13 and DP14 by gender and career age
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
Aims of the Discovery Program

• 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
Size of scheme and success rates

*Discovery Projects 2008-2014: Success and Return Rates*
Size of scheme and success rates

**DECRA 2012-2014: Success Rates**

![Bar chart showing the number of proposals and success rates for 2012, 2013, and 2014.](chart)

- **2012**: 2,082 proposals, 12.8% successful
- **2013**: 1,081 proposals, 15.6% successful
- **2014**: 1,268 proposals, 13.62% successful
Size of scheme and success rates

*Discovery Indigenous 2012-2014: Success Rates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Proposals</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>38.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Size of scheme and success rates

Australian Laureate Fellowships 2009-2013: 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

Success rates shown by line graph.
Size of scheme and success rates

Future Fellowships 2009-2013: Success Rates

- **2009**: 775 proposals, 20.5% success rate
- **2010**: 559 proposals, 26.4% success rate
- **2011**: 458 proposals, 30.7% success rate
- **2012**: 394 proposals, 34.7% success rate
- **2013**: 1033 proposals, 16.29% success rate
Key funding features of Discovery schemes

• Discovery Project and Discovery Indigenous schemes award project costs (travel, equipment, support staff, etc.)

• Discovery Indigenous scheme also provides opportunities for Indigenous researchers to apply for a Discovery Indigenous Award (DIA).

• DECRA primarily awards a salary for the awardee, with a small allocation of project costs

• Laureate Fellowships awards a salary top-up plus funding for a team of postdoctoral and postgraduate researchers

• Each scheme has different selection criteria, rules and funding limits, as each serves a different purpose
General budget items

- access to national and international research and infrastructure facilities;
- access to Workshop Services
- expenditure on Field Research
- expert services of a third party
- equipment (and its maintenance) and consumables
- personnel and higher degree by research stipends
- publication and dissemination of Project outputs & outreach activity costs
- specialised computer equipment and software
- teaching relief for CIs (not for recipients of ARC Awards or Fellowships)
- travel costs essential to the Project
- web hosting and web development specific to the Project
- workshops and conferences
Discovery Projects

• DP is the largest scheme, supporting excellent basic and applied research by individuals and teams
• Success rate typically 20% to 22% in recent years
• Selection criteria (more detail on each in Funding Rules):
  – Investigator (40%)
  – Project Quality and Innovation (25%)
  – Feasibility and Benefit (20%)
  – Research Environment (15%)
• Funding up to five years, up to $500,000 per year
• No salaries for CIs/PIs
**Discovery Indigenous**

- Supports fundamental research and research training by Indigenous Australian researchers as individuals and as teams
- Lead CI must be Indigenous
- Selection criteria (more detail on each in Funding Rules):
  - Investigator (40%)
  - Project Quality and Innovation (35%)
  - Research Environment (15%)
  - Feasibility and Benefit (10%)
- Funding up to three years, up to $500,000 per year
- No salaries for CIs/PIs (though note DIAs)
**Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA)**

- Support and advance promising early career researchers, and enable research and research training in high quality and supportive environments
- Highly competitive; 200 per round
- Eligibility: up to 5 years post-PhD (note ROPE)
- Selection criteria (more detail on each in Funding Rules):
  - Project Quality and Innovation (40%)
  - DECRA Candidate (35%)
  - Research Environment (15%)
  - Feasibility and Benefit (10%)
- Funding for up to three years
- DECRA salary plus up to $40,000 per year project costs
A DECRA15 Candidate must at the closing time of submission of Proposals:

• have been awarded a PhD on or after 1 March 2009;

• 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.
Key changes to rules

- New format: one set covering all schemes in the Program
- One section dedicated to the Discovery Program covering:
  - Level and Period of Funding
  - Budget Items Supported and Not Supported
  - Eligible Organisations
  - Limits on Projects and Proposals
  - Submission of proposals
  - Selection and approval process
  - Reporting requirements
  - Fundamental principles of conducting research
Key changes to rules

• Discovery Projects now available for 5 years – though note criteria about cost-effectiveness and value for money
• No DORAs in DP15
• Removal of restrictions on a number of budget items for all schemes (publication costs, web hosting, mobile phones, workshops)
• Increase in ICA $$ within DP to promote internationalisation
• Extension of career interruption time available in DECRA; can claim up to four (4) years interruption
• Harmonisation of cross-scheme eligibility rules for clarity and consistency
Key funding features of Linkage schemes

• Linkage Projects provides funding which supports collaboration, particularly with industry and end-users

• LIEF supports Australian research through investment in large equipment and infrastructure

• Centres of Excellence is a major opportunity for funding areas of significant need and innovation over 7-years and promotes collaboration

• ITRP is targeted at promoting academic researchers to work closely with industry and to building post doctoral capacity for industry opportunities
Some Linkage Stats: Funding and Success Rates

Linkage Projects Funding and Success rate

Since 2005 there have been nearly 2200 instances of collaboration with Australian private companies, as partner organisations on linkage grants.
Success Rate: Comparison of Schemes

Success Rate in commencement year 2013

- Linkage - Infrastructure Equipment: 40%
- Linkage - Projects: 39%
- Discovery Indigenous: 30%
- Industrial Transformation Training: 25%
- Discovery - Projects: 20%
- ARC Future Fellowships: 15%
- Discovery Early Career Researcher: 10%
- Australian Laureate Fellowships: 5%

Web: arc.gov.au | Email: info@arc.gov.au
ARC Linkage Program

Summary of Significant Changes to the *Linkage Projects* Scheme:

The Linkage Program has two major changes:

1. The establishment of the Industrial Transformation Research Program (i.e. *Industrial Transformation Research Hubs* and *Industrial Transformation Training Centres*). 

   **ITRP**

2. Revision of the *Linkage Projects* scheme to complement the introduction of the Industrial Transformation Research Program, and to incorporate feedback from ARC consultation and the formal evaluation of the scheme.
ARC Linkage Program

Other significant changes:

• No Australian partner required

• Conflicts of interest handled by Administrating Organisation

• Medical and Dental research not supported
Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities (LIEF) Scheme Objectives

- develop collaborative arrangements to develop and support research infrastructure;
- support large-scale cooperative initiatives thereby allowing expensive research infrastructure to be shared and/or accessed;
- support areas of existing and/or emerging research strength;
- support and develop research infrastructure for the broader research community
LIEF Selection Criteria

- Significance of research to be supported: 20%
- Need and use of the proposed infrastructure: 30%
- Nature of alliance and commitment between organisations: 30%
- Investigators: 20%
Details of the Industrial Transformation Research Program – the Schemes

Overall objectives:

• foster important partnerships between business and universities;
• support researchers (higher degree by research & post doctoral fellows) to gain ‘hands-on’, practical skills and experience in important priority areas.

Consists of two schemes:

*Industrial Transformation Research Hubs*

*Industrial Transformation Training Centres*
Industrial Transformation Research Hubs – Objectives

- encourage collaborative R&D projects to address challenging industry issues solved through innovative research relevant to the Industrial Transformation Priorities;

- attract investment from the local and international business community by underpinning internationally-recognised excellence of Australian universities and their industry partners;
Industrial Transformation Research Hubs

Opportunities for universities and industrial partners to focus on significant collaborative R&D projects with outcomes beyond their independent endeavours.

- The ARC will invest up to $1 million per year in each Research Hub with matching investment by industry partners up to a maximum of five years
Industrial Transformation Training Centres – Objectives

• foster opportunities for Higher Degree by Research candidates and postdoctoral fellows to pursue industrial training and to enhance competitive research in collaboration between universities and organisations outside the Australian higher education sector; and

• Strengthen Australia’s Industrial Transformation Priorities to supplement the capabilities of industries and other research end-users.
To foster close partnerships between university-based researchers and industry to provide innovative training for early career researchers vital to Australia’s future industry.

Over the life of the five year program the ARC will:

• support Higher Degree by Research candidates and postdoctoral researchers in gaining real-world practical skills through placement in industry

• provide a minimum of $600,000 and a maximum of $1 million per year for three years for each Training Centre.
Industrial Transformation Priorities 2.2
Currently open-Hubs.

- Industrial Transformation Priorities addressed challenges in a broad range of areas:
  - manufacturing;
  - food and agriculture;
  - oil and gas, including petroleum;
  - mining and mining services; and
  - medical devices and biotechnology.
Overview of ARC Centres of Excellence

- The ARC Centres of Excellence scheme was originally established in 2002 to support research intended to build national capability in areas of national importance and develop the scale and focus necessary for Australia to achieve international standing in those areas.

- The scheme funds world class, internationally competitive research teams investigating, and finding solutions to, challenging and important Australian and international problems.
The ARC Centres of Excellence – objectives

a. highly innovative and potentially transformational research
b. interdisciplinary, collaborative approaches
c. develop relationships and build new networks
d. build Australia’s human capacity
e. postgraduate and postdoctoral training
f. large-scale problems over longer periods
g. points of interaction between unis, business, govt, private sector
Consultation

• The ARC consulted universities in December 2012 on the application process
• Following feedback, for 2014 there was a competitive three-stage process for selection (similar to 2011)
• $1 million to $4 million a year for seven years was allocated per Centre
NCGP Proposal Lifecycle

Development of RMS

Eligibility

Selection of College of Experts or Selection Advisory Committee

Proposal Submission

Eligibility

Request Not to Assess

Assessment Process

Rejoiner

Selection Meeting

Approval of Outcomes

Announcement

End of Year and Progress Reports

Funding Agreements and Appeals

Post Award

Final Report
NCGP and Peer Review

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Proposal assessment – overview

• 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
Assessment Process

- The peer review process designed to be fair, thorough and transparent
- The ARC relies on two types of assessors - **Detailed** and **General**
- Detailed assessors drawn from the Australian and international research community
- Detailed assessors complete in-depth assessments of proposals by providing scores and comments against the scheme specific selection criteria
- These assessments are then taken into consideration by General assessors (ie College or SAC members) in the later stages of the peer review process
Assessment Process

• General assessors are members of the College of Experts or a Selection Advisory Committee

• General assessors take into consideration the ratings and comments provided by Detailed assessors and the applicant’s rejoinder, and assign their own ratings to the relevant scheme selection criteria

• Once all assessments have been finalised and submitted to the ARC, Detailed and General assessments and Rejoinders are considered by the panels at the final selection meeting
Rejoinder

• Where the ARC seeks external assessments, applicants are often given the opportunity to submit a Rejoinder

• The Rejoinder process allows applicants to respond to assessment comments made by external assessors

• Rejoinders are not viewed by external assessors but are considered by an ARC College of Experts Panel or SAC when deciding on the final recommendation for a Proposal

• Timeframes for applicants are typically up to ten working days
Selection Meeting

- The Selection Meeting is the final face-to-face meeting of the panel of General Assessors and is the conclusion of the peer review process.

- The panels meet to consider which proposals to recommend to the ARC for funding, and recommended budgets for those proposals.

- All recommendations are given to the ARC CEO, who then makes recommendations to the Minister.

- All funding decisions are made by the Minister under the ARC Act.
More information

• ARC staff are available to assist via email and phone

• Huge amount of valuable information on the ARC website
  – Funding rules and Instructions to Applicants
  – FAQs
  – Additional pages on various policies
  – Detailed outcomes for all schemes for recent years, arranged by institution and by discipline (FoR code)
Discussion/questions