Discovery Indigenous Scheme
The University of Sydney
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ARC Executive Director
Indigenous Research Capacity Building—overview of today’s talk

1. Examples of different ARC and Australian Government schemes that are available to support excellent research and research capacity—building

2. Summary of the Objectives of the ARC Discovery Indigenous scheme, including ROPE

3. Important changes to the scheme for funding in 2015 and 2016

4. Overview of assessment process

5. Moving towards Indigenous Cultural Protocols at the ARC—The Protocols were placed on the ARC website on 5 December 2014
National Competitive Grants Program

**Discovery Projects**
- Laureate Fellowships: 5%
- Future Fellowships: 16%
- DECRA: 3%

**Linkage Projects**
- Centres of Excellence: 7%
- Co-Funded & SRI
- ITRP
- Linkage Projects: 18%

Discovery Projects: 41%
Linkage Projects: 18%

5 year averages
Indigenous Research Capacity Building—key examples

- ARC Discovery Indigenous scheme (based on the former Discovery Indigenous Researchers Development scheme)
- ARC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Network Scheme 2011—National Indigenous Research and Knowledges Network (NIRAKN)—Based at QUT
- Department of Industry, Collaborative Research Network scheme - Australian Indigenous Research and Researcher Development Project—based at Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education
Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence 1

The ARC is committed to ensuring all eligible researchers have fair access to competitive funding through the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP). To this end, we promote and encourage within NCGP those approaches that best recognise research excellence in the context of the diversity of career and life experiences. One key element is that the assessment process takes into account the quality rather than simply the volume or size of the research contribution.
“Research Opportunity is designed to provide assessors with an accurate appreciation of career history against a timeline of years since graduation from highest educational qualification. Assessors will recognise research opportunities and experience in the context of employment situations including those outside academia and the research component of employment conditions. Periods of unemployment, or any career interruptions for child birth, carers’ responsibilities, misadventure, or debilitating illness will be taken into account. Access to research mentoring and other research support facilities and any other relevant aspects of career experience or opportunities for research will complete the considerations”.
Discovery Indigenous Scheme

• Funded under the ARC’s National Competitive Grants Program
• 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 researchers, including early career researchers, and provided support (stipends) for higher degree by research and honours students
• Funds projects where at least one Chief Investigator is an Indigenous Australian, who will be the Project Leader
• Funds projects for a period of three consecutive years
• Provides a minimum of $30 000 and a maximum of $500 000 (previously $300 000) each year, per Project, provides funding to Administering Organisations to support research programs
Discovery Scheme Objectives

- To support excellent basic and applied research
- To enhance the scale and focus of research in the National Research Priorities
- To expand Australia’s knowledge base and research capability
- To encourage research and research training in high-quality research environments
- To enhance international collaboration in research
- To foster the international competitiveness of Australian research.
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.
- Expand Australia’s knowledge base and research capability.
Selection Criteria: Proposals will be assessed and ranked using the following selection criteria:

- Project Quality and Innovation 40%
  - Does the research address a significant problem?
  - Is the conceptual/theoretical framework innovative and original?
  - Will the aims, concepts, methods and results advance knowledge?
  - What is the potential for the research to contribute to the Strategic Research Priorities?
Selection Criteria

Investigator(s) 35%

• Research opportunity and performance evidence (ROPE).
• Time and capacity to undertake the proposed research.
Selection Criteria

Research Environment 15%

- Are there strategies for enabling collaboration with Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities where appropriate (for example, dialogue/collaboration with an Indigenous cultural mentor)?
- Is there an existing or developing, supportive and high quality Research Environment for this Project?
- Are the necessary facilities to complete the Project available?
- Are there adequate strategies to encourage dissemination, commercialisation, if appropriate; and promotion of research outcomes?
Selection Criteria

d. Feasibility and Benefit 10%
  – Are the design of the Project and the expertise of the participants sufficient to ensure the Project can be completed within the proposed budget and timeframe?
  – Will the completed Project produce innovative economic, environmental, social and/or cultural benefit to the Australian and international community?
  – Will the proposed research be cost-effective and value for money?
Discovery Indigenous 2012–2014: Success Rates

- **2012**: 34.5% success rate
  - 19 proposals
  - 10 unsuccessful
  - 10 successful

- **2013**: 31.3% success rate
  - 22 proposals
  - 10 unsuccessful
  - 12 successful

- **2014**: 38.5% success rate
  - 16 proposals
  - 10 unsuccessful
  - 6 successful

**Number of Proposals**

- 2012: 28 proposals
- 2013: 32 proposals
- 2014: 26 proposals
Scheme Limits?

• Applicants may apply for a maximum of two grants in the Discovery Program, and may hold a maximum of two grants simultaneously.

• There is no limit on the number of grants that an applicant may hold over time.

• A6.2.3 A researcher cannot concurrently hold more than one ARC Fellowship or Award.
# Discovery Indigenous 2016

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## Budget items supported

Focus groups and reasonable hospitality costs such as morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea are now included (A5.2.1m). All requests must be fully justified in the proposal.

## Eligibility Criteria for Partner Investigators

Role of Partner Investigator has been included under Discovery Indigenous in line with Discovery Projects (E6.3)

## Discovery Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Award (DAATSIA)

Name change to Discovery Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Award (DAATSIA) (E7)
The Discovery Indigenous scheme

Offers Discovery Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Awards (DAATSIA):

• offered to Lead Chief Investigators (CIs) who are Indigenous Australians;

• only awarded in conjunction with a funded project; and

• only funded for the duration of a project (three years).
Key Changes for Discovery Indigenous for 2015—$$$$

• Maximum level of funding for a Project is now **$500,000** per year for the three-year period of the grant

• Greater budget flexibility, subject to **full justification** in the Proposal form, so that previous limits on publication and dissemination costs, web-hosting and development, mobile phone purchase, and workshop and conference funding have been removed.
Key Changes for Discovery Indigenous for 2015 and 2016—Research

• **A DAATSIA** candidate must demonstrate how the Project quality would be enhanced by the Award…in terms of the utilisation of the additional research time, such as through field work, archival research or laboratory work.

• **CIs** can now be an employee of an eligible organisation for at least 0.2 FTE.

• **Research environment**: dialogue/collaboration with a cultural mentor added as another example of possible ‘strategies for enabling collaboration’.
Examples

**Promoting positive perinatal mental health, parenting, cultural and spiritual wellbeing, and resilience in Aboriginal parents in Western Australia** (IN120100026)
The University of Western Australia—ARC funding: $735 000

**Summary:** With community engagement, this three year study will use existing and new data to investigate the relationships between selected indicators of perinatal mental health and positive parenting. It will promote positive perinatal mental health, parenting, cultural and spiritual wellbeing, and resilience in young Aboriginal parents in two sites in Western Australia.

*Chief Investigator: Professor Rhonda P Marriott*

**Indigenous persistence in formal learning** (IN120100021)
The University of New South Wales—ARC funding: $693 000

**Summary:** This project will improve knowledge of the learning experiences of Indigenous students transiting from TAFE to university studies. The results will have significant implications for the ways Indigenous students can be supported in their studies in order to achieve better quality learning experiences and learning outcomes.

*Chief Investigator: Professor Nicholas M Nakata*
Examples continued..

*Indigenous women and entrepreneurship in NSW (IN120100053)*

University of Technology Sydney—ARC funding: $104 000

Summary: This research will provide an understanding of the experiences of Aboriginal women in Indigenous enterprises (private and social) in urban, regional and rural New South Wales and investigate the economic and social contributions that they and their enterprises make to Aboriginal communities and Australian society.

*Chief Investigator: Ms Sonya J Pearce*

*Reading the Nation: A critical study of Aboriginal/settler representations in the contemporary Australian literary landscape (IN120100009)*

The University of New South Wales—ARC funding: $41 000

Summary: This project will map literary representations of Aboriginal Australians by non-Aboriginal authors in the post-Mabo period, and the reciprocal representations by Aboriginal Australians. This is a study of the politics of representation that play out between Aboriginal and white Australians in the contemporary literary landscape.

*Chief Investigator: Dr Jeanine A Leane*
 ARC College of Experts

• plays 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.
NCGP process
The ARC has completely redesigned the way that potential assessors are matched to a proposal for assessment purposes.

Multiple areas of the proposal are mined for a set of keywords and presented to the person completing the assignments as a word cloud.
ARC Assignment Information

• This information is then matched to information stored against a potential assessor’s profile and presented in a similar word cloud.

• The most appropriate person is then selected and assigned to the proposal to assess.
Indigenous Cultural protocol guides

Applicants working with Indigenous Australian artists, who are funded by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board, are required to adhere to the Indigenous Cultural protocol guides published by the Australia Council as a funding condition.

Visit the Australia Council website for more information:

Application of the Protocols

These Protocols may also have much broader application, and, as applicable, and may mean that any researchers accessing, using or reproducing music, literature, arts, images or ceremonies of Indigenous peoples, or Indigenous cultural materials conduct their research in accordance with these protocols.
Thank you!

Comments/Questions?