ARC Centres of Excellence

Centre Directors’ Forum
17 March 2015

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Biological Sciences and Biotechnology
Australian Research Council
Topics

• 2005 Centres final reports
• 2011 Centres mid-term Reviews
• 2014 Centres establishment
• Governance
• 2017 Centres round—timelines
• CE17 - consultation
  - learnings from reviews
• Leadership
• Questions
2005
ARC Centres of Excellence
Lessons learnt: 2005 ARC Centres of Excellence

*Extracted from Final Reports*

- Creating a Centre culture and international reputation
- Managing staff and students and maximising potential (scale)
- Governance and managing nodes
- Financial management
  - coordinating
  - reporting
  - flexibility with contingency funds for emerging research areas
Lessons learnt: 2005 ARC Centres of Excellence (cont)

• Host university issues

• IP and translation challenges

• Communication
  – strategies
  – developing and resourcing
  – communication and outreach

• Publications—ensuring high quality

• Maintaining the focus on cutting-edge research
  – managing distractions
2011

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2011 ARC Centres of Excellence
Mid-term Reviews

What Centres do well

• Engagement
  – with partners, government and industry
  – involvement in strategic planning

• People
  – gender equity, family friendly and flexible working arrangements
  – co-supervision of students
  – “leading team” vs leading the team

• Research environment
  – multi-disciplinary research and training
  – innovative education and outreach
What Centres do well (cont)

• Culture
  – striving for a culture of organisational excellence
  – buying into the vision of the Centre

• Integration and collaboration
  – of nodes and across nodes
  – success of annual workshops

• Communication Strategy and Facilitation
  – websites
  – tool kit for outreach
Communication Strategy and Facilitation

Examples of high-hitting websites:

- ARC Centre of Excellence for Integrated Coral Reef Studies
- ARC Centre of Excellence for Environmental Decisions
- ARC Centre of Excellence for Quantum Computation and Communication Technology

Web: arc.gov.au  |  Email: info@arc.gov.au
2011 ARC Centres of Excellence
Mid-term Reviews

What Centres need to consider

• Research
  – A view to their legacy (roadmap)
  – leadership and mentoring

• Culture
  – establishing a unique national identity
  – outwardly focused culture—translating the research
  – strategies for involvement and inclusion
  – involving all levels in strategic planning
2011 ARC Centres of Excellence
Mid-term Reviews

What Centres need to consider (cont)

• People
  – career planning for the postdoctoral researchers and PhD students
  – research leadership training/succession planning

• Administration
  – Administrating Organisation-centric issues
  – advise the ARC of major program changes issues of Commonwealth overlap
  – financial expenditure and more leveraging
  – managing success
2011 ARC Centres of Excellence
Mid-term Reviews

Broad recommendations

• Strategic Plan including a clear goal, transition into the future and translation of outcomes

• Progressing collaborations as an entity, rather than researcher based

• Increased breadth of student training

• Increased connection with nodes and wider community

• Succession planning and research leadership

• Governance matters—committee roles, longevity and looking to the future
2014
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ARC Centres of Excellence—2014 Centres establishment

- Underestimating the amount of time and effort involved in gaining agreement between parties
- Negotiating the final multi-institutional agreements with different universities and organisations
- Altering the culture of Administering Organisation for a National Centre
- Coping with success and bringing in new players while remaining focused
ARC Centres of Excellence—2014 Centres establishment (cont)

- Acknowledging the ARC properly in the media and outreach
- Establishing a common understanding of the Centre’s vision and direction and ensuring buy-in from nodes/people
- Establishing a common framework for ethics across Centre nodes
- Changes to the research program—double dipping
- Allow contingency funds for emerging research priorities from the outset
Observations on governance

• Boards and Advisory Committees should provide sound advice on Centre *business* now and in the future
• Membership should be refreshed as required to ensure the best value for the Centre
• Professionalism of the members and ambassadorial role
• Advisory Committee responsibilities should be clear
• Managing conflicts of interest—rigorously
2017
ARC Centres of Excellence
## ARC Centres of Excellence for funding in 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>November 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding round opens</td>
<td>First quarter 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expression of interest</td>
<td>Second quarter 2015</td>
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<td>First stage assessment and shortlisting</td>
<td>Mid–2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Call for full proposals</td>
<td>Third quarter 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment of full proposals</td>
<td>First quarter 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Second quarter 2016</td>
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<td>Announcement of successful projects</td>
<td>Mid–2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commencement of new projects</td>
<td>January 2017</td>
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CE17 consultation and learnings from reviews

- Objectives—adding research impact and more clarity
- Assessment and selection criteria—feedback
- Marriages
- Time commitment for Chief Investigators (0.2 FTE)
- Funding increase
- Institutional contributions/pro-rata
Just for our interest…

• How many of you have universities that provide formal leadership programs?

• What leadership opportunities or training are provided to postdoctoral researchers or students?

• Is this accessible to you and Centre participants?
Questions?