

RESEARCH in the national interest - enabling the future



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Research Council**

# Excellence in Research for Australia



## MERGE Festival – February 2011

## What is ERA?

- ERA is an **evaluation framework** that gives government, industry, business and the wider community assurance of the excellence of research conducted in Australia's institutions;
- It provides a **national stocktake** of discipline-level areas of research strength and areas where there is opportunity for development in Australia's higher education institutions;
- It is designed to identify **excellence** across the full spectrum of research performance;
- ERA also identifies **emerging research areas** and opportunities for further development;
- It allows for **comparison** of Australia's research nationally and **internationally** for all discipline areas.

# The ERA Approach

1. Unit of Evaluation is the four-digit ANZSRC Field of Research code (ie. 157 possible **Units of Evaluation**); evaluation occurs at the two-digit level too
2. Evaluation by **Research Evaluation Committees** in discipline clusters; eight clusters in total
3. There is a minimum level of output to be considered '**research active**' for evaluation in ERA
4. Evaluations informed by a '**dashboard**' of discipline-specific indicators
5. Some **peer review of outputs** accessed through institutional **repositories** in some disciplines

## The ERA Clusters

Cluster 1	Physical, Chemical & Earth Sciences
Cluster 2	Humanities and Creative Arts
Cluster 3	Engineering and Environmental Sciences
Cluster 4	Social, Behavioural and Economic Sciences
Cluster 5	Mathematics, Information and Computing Sciences
Cluster 6	Biological and Biotechnological Sciences
Cluster 7	Biomedical and Clinical Health Sciences
Cluster 8	Public and Allied Health Sciences

## ERA Development 2008-2010

1. Engaged with other national systems and several major rounds of sector consultation
2. Creative Arts working party
3. Research Statements for non-traditional research outputs (NTROs)
4. Discipline specific indicators
5. Full trial in 2009 of HCA
  - a. test of approach, including evaluation of NTROs
  - b. feedback from sector, RECs, peer reviewers

# The ERA Fields of Research

2-digit

## 19 Studies in Creative Arts and Writing

1901 Art Theory and Criticism

1902 Film, Television and Digital Media

1903 Journalism and Professional Writing

4-digits

### 1904 Performing Arts and Creative Writing

> 190401 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Performing Arts

> 190402 Creative Writing (incl. Playwriting)

> 190402 Creative Writing (incl. Playwriting)

> 190403 Dance

6-digits

> 190404 Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies

> 190405 Māori Performing Arts

> 190406 Music Composition

> 190407 Music Performance

> 190408 Music Therapy

> 190409 Musicology and Ethnomusicology

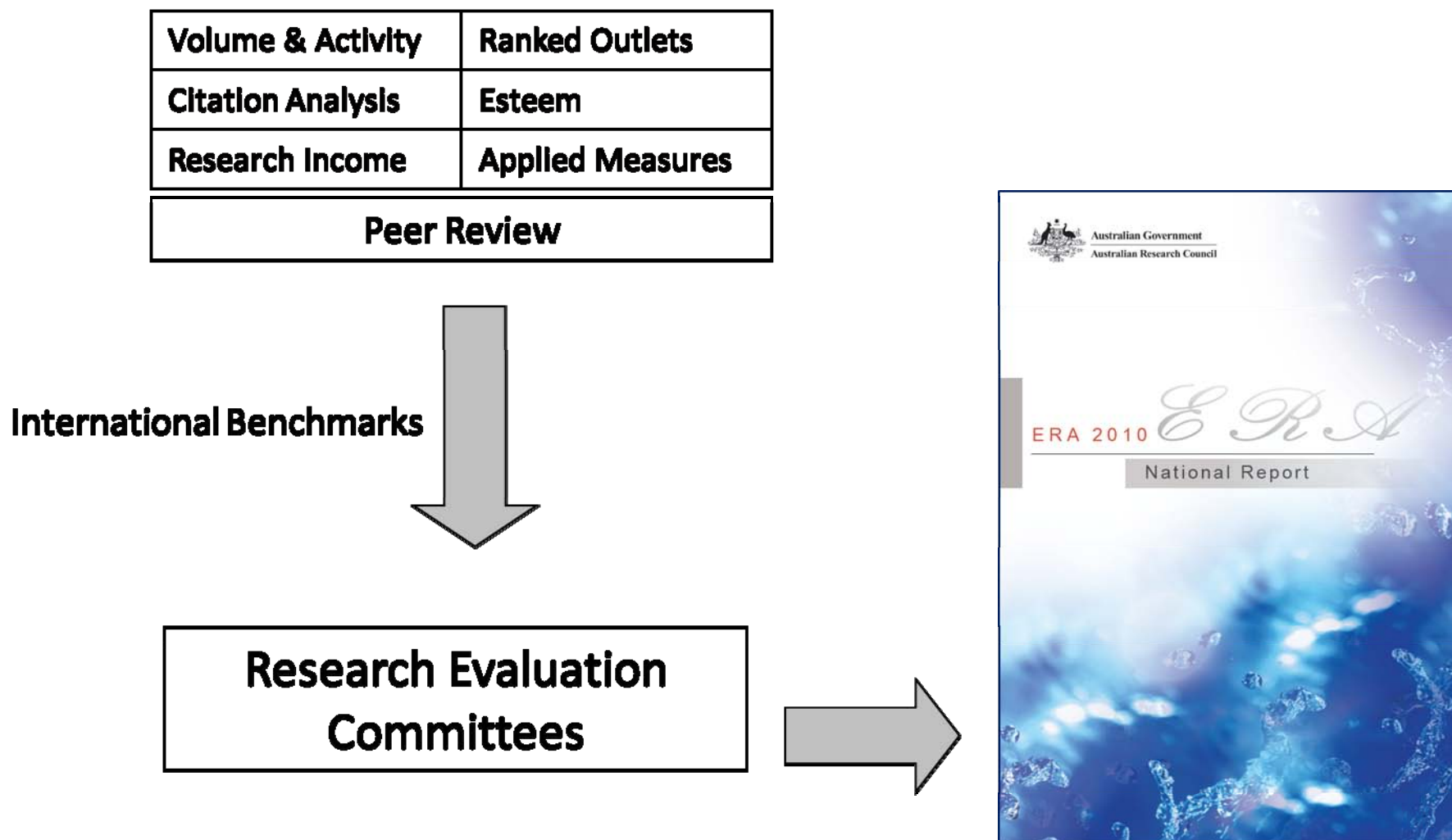
> 190410 Pacific Peoples Performing Arts

> 190499 Performing Arts and Creative Writing not elsewhere classified

1905 Visual Arts and Crafts

1999 Other Studies in Creative Arts and Writing

## ERA Process Overview



## ERA 2010 Reviewers

- Expert review and specialist disciplinary knowledge were essential – not a mechanical process
- 8 Research Evaluation Committees
- 149 Australian and international REC members
- 500+ Peer Reviewers from Australia and overseas
- REC members also conducted peer review

## The ERA 2010 Rating Scale

Rating	Descriptor
5	The Unit of Evaluation profile is characterised by evidence of outstanding performance <b>well above world standard</b> presented by the suite of indicators used for evaluation.
4	The Unit of Evaluation profile is characterised by evidence of performance <b>above world standard</b> presented by the suite of indicators used for evaluation.
3	The Unit of Evaluation profile is characterised by evidence of average performance <b>at world standard</b> presented by the suite of indicators used for evaluation.
2	The Unit of Evaluation profile is characterised by evidence of performance <b>below world standard</b> presented by the suite of indicators used for evaluation.
1	The Unit of Evaluation profile is characterised by evidence of performance <b>well below world standard</b> presented by the suite of indicators used for evaluation.

# ERA

## Background Statement

Volume  
and  
Activity

Ranked  
Outlets

Peer  
Review

Citation  
Analysis

Esteem  
Measures

Research  
Income

Applied  
Measures

# Creative Arts Research in ERA

- Creative Works have been included as eligible types of research output
- Peer review NOT citation analysis
- 2-digit Background Statement
- Portfolio approach
- Research statement for peer review of non-traditional research outputs

## Research Statements

A Research Statement must accompany the research outputs that are selected for the peer review pool, which identifies the research component of the output. The statement must be a maximum of 250 words and address the following categories:

1. Research Background—Field, Context, Research Question.
2. Research Contribution—Innovation and New Knowledge.
3. Research Significance—Evidence of Excellence.

# Portfolios

- Group of individual works submitted separately which together constitute a single non- traditional research output.
- For example
  - collection of poems by a single author
  - group of photographs or paintings from an exhibit.
- Should demonstrate coherent research content.
- Must be accompanied by a research statement.

## ERA 2010 outcomes: context

- ERA is a **retrospective** evaluation of research performance: 2003-2008 for research outputs, 2006-2008 for other data
- The ERA unit of evaluation is the discipline within the institution, **not** individual researchers or institutional units
- ERA does not rank institutions or units; each UoE is evaluated on its merits against the rating scale

## ERA 2010 at a glance

- All 41 eligible institutions participated
- 2435 units of evaluation assessed at the two- and four-digit level
- 330,000 research outputs and 55,000 researchers represented
- 15,247 outputs submitted in 19 code
  - 10,902 non-traditional outputs (72%)
  - 307 portfolios submitted in 19 code

## The National Report

- [http://www.arc.gov.au/era/outcomes\\_2010.htm](http://www.arc.gov.au/era/outcomes_2010.htm)
- National profile of research activity
- Evaluation outcomes by FoR and institution
- Searchable results on-line by institution and by FoR

## ERA 2012

- A new ERA 2012 section has been added to the ARC website – developments will be posted there
- Ranked journal and conference lists public consultation has commenced

## Further information?

- **Web:**     [www.arc.gov.au/era](http://www.arc.gov.au/era)
- **Email:**   [era@arc.gov.au](mailto:era@arc.gov.au)