

RESEARCH in the national interest - enabling the future



Australian Government  
Australian Research Council

**Academia: a scholarly life**  
University of Western Sydney  
22 July 2011

**Professor Margaret Sheil**  
CEO, Australian Research Council

*Research*

## ARC Strategic Objectives

- To *support* excellence in *research*
- To *build* Australia's research *capacity*
- To *provide* informed high quality *policy advice* to government
- To *enhance* research outcomes through effective *evaluation*
- To *raise the profile* of Australia's research effort and *be an effective advocate* for its benefits

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)

RESEARCH

## The ARC

**National Competitive Grants Program**  
\$810M in 11-12

**Evaluation and Policy**

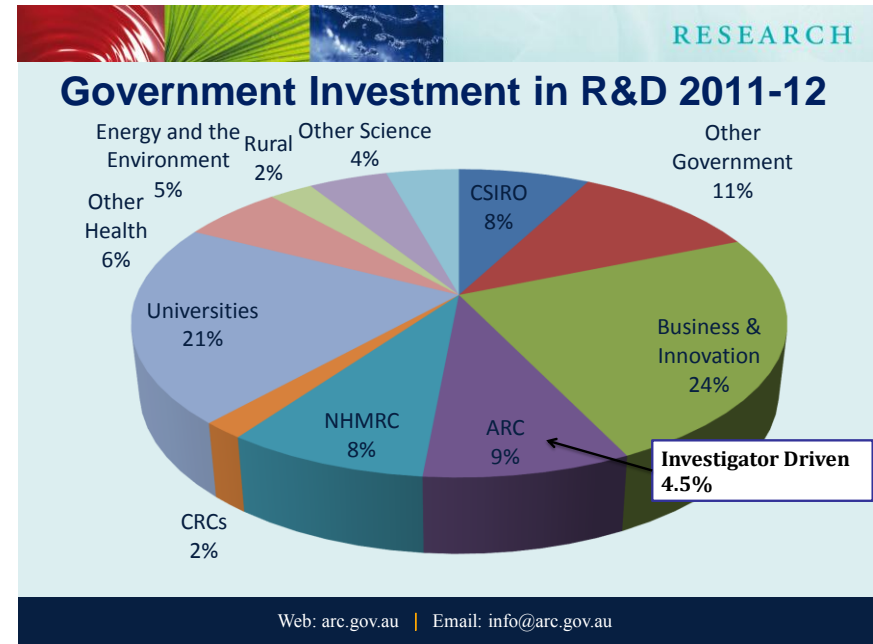
**Discovery & Fellowships**  
\$502 M

**Linkage & Centres**  
\$308 M

**Excellence in Research for Australia**

- Statutory Agency established 2001
- Mission: *to deliver policy and programs that advance Australian research and innovation globally and benefit the community*
- Fund direct costs to Universities and partners
- All disciplines except clinical medicine & dentistry

Web: arc.gov.au | Email: info@arc.gov.au



ERA

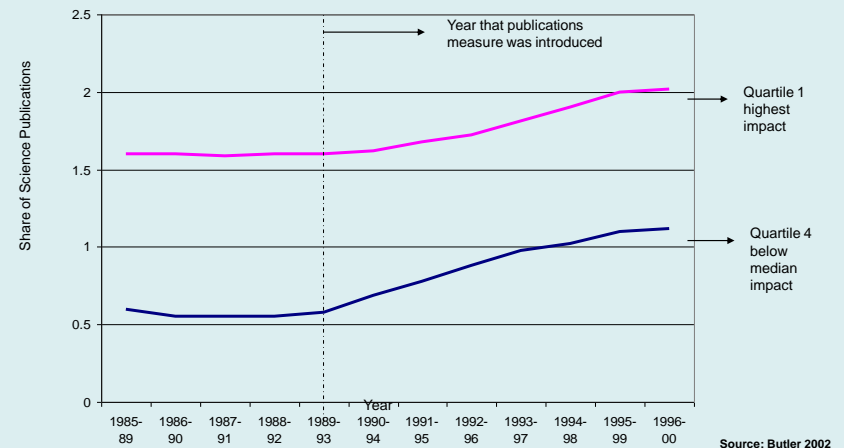
## What problem were we trying to solve?

- Demonstrate quality/value of investment in university research to government
- Raise the quality of Australian research effort

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)

ERA

## Australian academic publishing practices



Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)

ERA

## Scale of ERA 2010

- All 41 eligible institutions submitted data
- Over 330,000 unique research outputs
- 55,000+ researchers represented
- 2,435 units of evaluation assessed at 2 and 4-digit level
- 149 Research Evaluation Committee (REC) members
- 500+ Peer Reviewers
- All aggregated data in the *ERA 2010 National Report*.

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)

ERA

## The ERA 2010 Clusters

<b>Cluster 1</b>	Physical, Chemical & Earth Sciences
<b>Cluster 2</b>	Humanities and Creative Arts
<b>Cluster 3</b>	Engineering and Environmental Sciences
<b>Cluster 4</b>	Social, Behavioural and Economic Sciences
<b>Cluster 5</b>	Mathematics, Information and Communication Sciences
<b>Cluster 6</b>	Biological Sciences and Biotechnology
<b>Cluster 7</b>	Biomedical and Clinical Research
<b>Cluster 8</b>	Public and Allied Health, and Health Sciences

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)

ERA

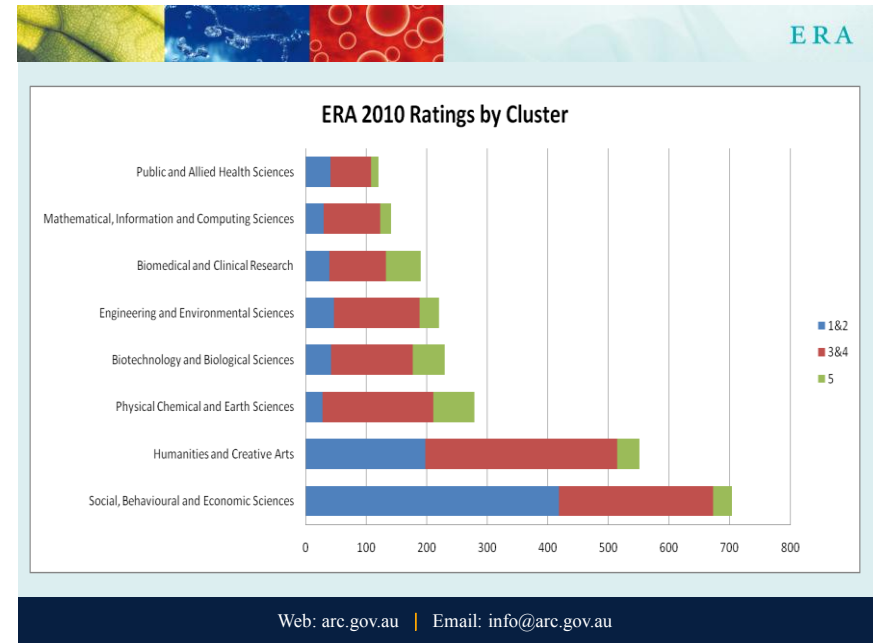
## ERA 2010 Process Overview

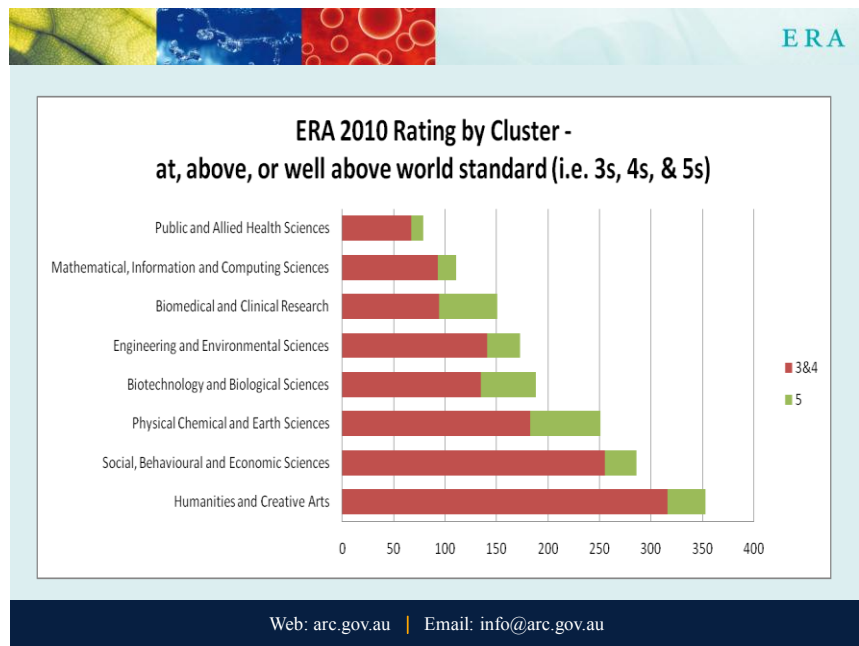
Volume & Activity	Ranked Outlets
Citation Analysis	Esteem
Research Income	Applied Measures
Peer Review	

**Research Evaluation Committee**

**Please note – no weightings**

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)





ERA

## Changes for 2012

- Changes to the ranked journals and conferences
- Interdisciplinary Research
- Raising the Threshold
- Capturing Applied Research
- Eligibility for fractional staff

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)

RESEARCH in the national interest - enabling the future

RESEARCH

McClintock  
Cornell ~ 1931

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)

RESEARCH

Barbara McClintock  
Nobel Prize  
Physiology and Medicine 1983

- >30 years after initial research on controlling elements of genes
- Work done in plants (not animals or humans)
- Woman without tenure
- #7 in sciences
- Science took a long time to catch up (communication?)
- Sole winner
- Published relatively few papers

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)

## RESEARCH

*“The Dept of Botany does not wish to reappoint her, chiefly because they realise her interest is entirely in research .....; partly as she was not entirely successful as a teacher of undergraduate work. The Dept. Obviously prefers a less gifted person who will accept a large amount of routine duty.”*

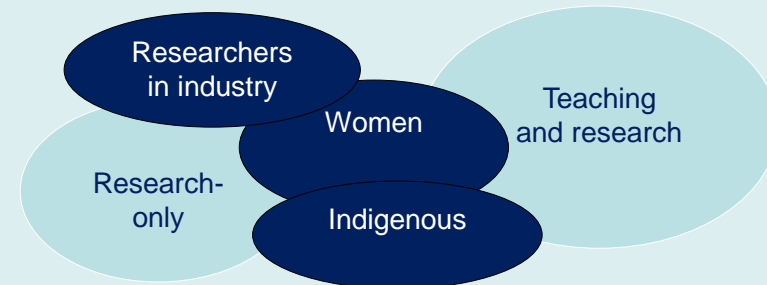
- **Weaver on McClintock 1933**

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)

## Strategic Objectives

## The ARC aims to

- Provide opportunities for researchers at every career stage
- Foster a range of different cohorts



Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)



## Strategic Objectives

### The ARC does not .....

- Employ researchers directly
- Aim to provide a complete externally funded career structure
- Funds all the excellent research proposals it receives

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)



## GRANTS

### ***Discovery Projects for funding commencing in 2012***

- A new senior career award within *Discovery Projects* -DORA
- ARC Discovery Fellowships no longer available (APD, ARF/QEII, APF)
- Funding for 3 yrs maximum
- Simplification of Funding Rules, application & assessment processes
- Revision of the selection criteria & assessment

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)

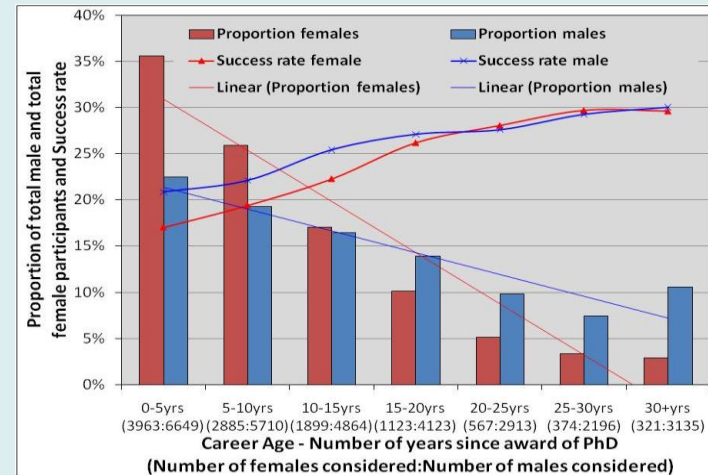
## GRANTS

## What problem were we trying to solve?

- Range of diverse & overlapping Fellowships across the National Competitive Grants Program
- Success rates of ECRs within *Discovery Projects*
- Gender disparities identified in *Discovery Projects*
- Consequences of uniform selection criteria
- Need to build Australian research capacity
- Need to simplify a complex scheme

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)

## GRANTS



Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)



## Encouraging Opportunity

### *What is the ARC doing?*

- More women (re workload) and “well trained” men on committees
- Ease restrictions on fellowships (PT, longer entry periods)
- Track record replaced with ROPE

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)



## GRANTS

### Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA)

- Provide career opportunities for early-career researchers who have been awarded a PhD within five years or, commensurate with significant career interruption, within eight years
- Up to 200, three year Awards will be available each year, commencing in 2012.
- Funding of up to \$125,000 will be provided to support a fixed salary (\$85,000) and project costs.

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)

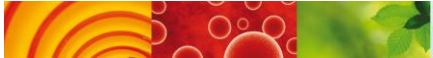


GRANTS

## DECRA Objectives

- support and advance promising early career researchers
- promote enhanced opportunities for diverse career pathways
- focus research effort in the National Research Priority areas to improve research capacity and policy outcomes
- enable research and research training in high quality and supportive environments.

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)



GRANTS

## DECRA Selection Process

- Selection criteria: 50% project quality; 30% candidate; 20% institutional support
- The National Research Priorities are not a separate selection criteria
- Selection process is separate from Discovery Projects using the A-E assessment
- Proposed improved feedback to unsuccessful applicants
- No rejoinders

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)

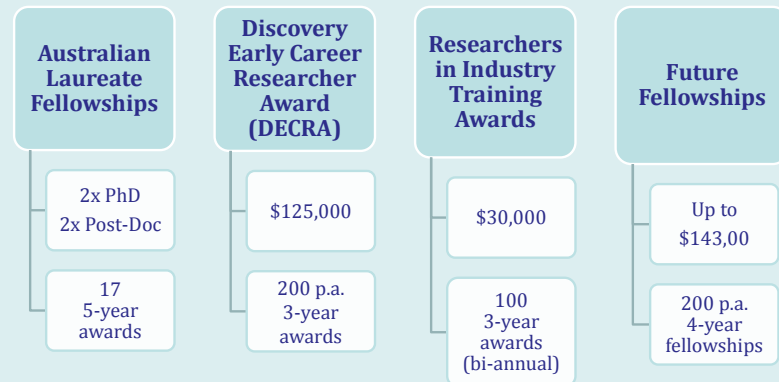
## GRANTS

## DECRA Support

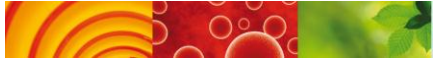
- ARC funding will be provided to support salary (\$85K fixed p.a. including on costs) and project costs (at up to \$40K p.a.)
- Administering Organisations may 'top up' the salary and/or project costs
- Funding will be available for up to three years FTE from the ARC
- Flexibility for extending the period of the Award up to six years

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)

## Encouraging Opportunity



Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)



GRANTS

## Tips on writing a quality research proposal

- Write down a 100-word summary of your proposal
- Show it to a neighbour/friend/family member and talk about it with them

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)



RESEARCH

## Quality of the Project

- Must be a good idea
- Right Scope and Scale
- Innovation and novelty
- Carefully temper ambitious goals with plausible approaches

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)

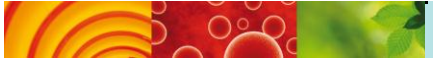


GRANTS

## Top Ranked Proposals

- Manage to balance technicality and accessibility
- Present problems and/or controversies and explain how they will solve them
- Explain how the momentum of the issues demands funding now
- Show how Australian work fits into the international picture
- Back up compelling claims with evidence and others' judgments
- Display evidence of responsible but often daring approaches to the problem

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)

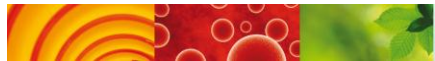


Changing Language

## Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE)

- Changing how we measure excellence  
Track record v. Performance evidence
- Assessors take into account any career interruptions, such as:
  - Childbirth
  - Carer's responsibility
  - Misadventure
  - Debilitating illness

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)



GRANTS

## Low Ranked Proposals

- Use too much technical jargon
- Make grandiose and implausible claims about outcomes
- Don't support claims of excellence or progress with evidence
- Don't relate to cutting edge research areas
- Are weakly linked into national and international research networks
- Emphasize the collection of data rather than the solution of controversies

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)



RESEARCH

## Avoid sense of entitlement

We need to do this  
because the rest of the  
world is doing it...

---

Demonstrate that your research  
offers an advantage for  
Australia and you are in the  
right place to do it

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)

## Communication

*“If you have an important point to make, don’t try and be too subtle or clever. Use a pile driver. Hit the point once and then come back and hit it again.”*

## Whole of Government

- Commitment to Budget Surplus in 2013
- Natural Disasters and Australian dollar impacting on revenue
- Tight political situation raising expectations and requirements
  - Stakeholders
  - Reporting
- Big ticket items-health, mining tax, carbon tax etc.



**RESEARCH**

<b>Would (why?)</b>	<b>Should (why not?)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Outcomes</li><li>• Broader benefits (including to higher education)</li><li>• Australian natural advantage</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health</li><li>• Welfare</li><li>• Defence</li><li>• Infrastructure etc.</li></ul>

Web: [arc.gov.au](http://arc.gov.au) | Email: [info@arc.gov.au](mailto:info@arc.gov.au)