Excellence in Research for Australia

ERA 2010 Outcomes
University of Sydney
8 April 2011
Objectives of ERA

• Establish an **evaluation framework** that gives government, industry, business and the wider community assurance of the excellence of research conducted in Australia’s institutions;

• Provide a **national stocktake** of discipline-level areas of research strength and areas where there is opportunity for development in Australia’s higher education institutions;

• Identify **excellence** across the full spectrum of research performance;

• Identify **emerging research areas** and opportunities for further development;

• Allow for **comparison** of Australia’s research nationally and **internationally** for all discipline areas.
# The ERA Clusters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 1</td>
<td>Physical, Chemical &amp; Earth Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 2</td>
<td>Humanities and Creative Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 3</td>
<td>Engineering and Environmental Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 4</td>
<td>Social, Behavioural and Economic Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cluster 5</td>
<td>Mathematics, Information and Computing Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cluster 6</td>
<td>Biological and Biotechnological Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cluster 7</td>
<td>Biomedical and Clinical Health Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cluster 8</td>
<td>Public and Allied Health Sciences</td>
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</table>
ERA Development 2008-2010

• Several major rounds of consultation
• Indicator Development Group (specialist sub-groups)
• Ranked journals and conferences consultation
• Discipline specific indicators
• Full trial in 2009 of PCE and HCA
  – test of systems, processes
  – feedback from sector, RECs, peer reviewers
• Esteem indicators
The ERA Unit of Evaluation

• The **baseline** - the Discipline in an institution = Four-digit Field of Research Code (ANZSRC) eg., **2101** Archaeology

• The **higher perspective** – the division in an institution = Two-digit Field of Research Code (ANZSRC) eg., **21** History and Archaeology

• The ERA Unit is **not** about the department nor the individual researcher
## ERA Process Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volume &amp; Activity</th>
<th>Ranked Outlets</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citation Analysis</td>
<td>Esteem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Income</td>
<td>Applied Measures</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Peer Review**

**International Benchmarks**

**Research Evaluation Committees**
Why a matrix approach to indicators?

• Not all indicators are suitable for all disciplines
• Pick and choose what is right for each discipline
• The indicator suite must ensure comparable quality across a range of indicator types
• Journal Rankings are not THE indicator
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
Stages of evaluation

• Every UoE evaluated by at least three REC members (plus peer reviewers)

• Independent evaluation in the first instance followed by exchange of views

• All evaluations were advice to the full Committee

• All UoEs discussed at the final evaluation meeting

• All final ratings decisions of the Committee as a whole
## The ERA 2010 Rating Scale

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

Background Statement

Volume and Activity
Ranked Outlets
Peer Review
Citation Analysis
Esteem Measures
Research Income
Applied Measures
ERA 2010 at a glance

• All 41 eligible institutions participated

• 2435 units of evaluation assessed at the two- and four-digit level

• Over 330,000 research outputs and 55,000 researchers represented
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
The National Report


- National profile of research activity
- Evaluation outcomes by FoR and institution
- Searchable results on-line by institution and by FoR
Reading the national results

86% of assessed UoEs received a rating at or above world standard (i.e. rating of 3 or above).

Of all assessed UoEs at the four-digit FoR code level (58 UoEs), the average rating is 3.4. See Section 1 for two-digit FoR code average rating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mathematical, Information and Computing Sciences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01 Mathematical Sciences</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FTEs</th>
<th>Esteem count(s)</th>
<th>Average National Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% assessed UoEs rated at or above world standard</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research outputs</td>
<td>8,659</td>
<td>Patent(s)</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research income $</td>
<td>104,624,740</td>
<td>Research commer. income $</td>
<td>22,368,469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UoEs assessed</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Distribution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
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</table>

A total of 58 UoEs were assessed for Mathematical Sciences at the four-digit FoR code level.

There were seven UoEs which received a rating of 2.
Feedback on submissions

• Institutional data submission smoother than in the Trial
• Institutional repositories generally functioned well
• Definition of research – still outputs being submitted which did not meet the definition in the view of the Committees; these are **not** eligible and should not be submitted
• Selection of peer review items – breadth of work in the 20%
• Supporting statements for NTROs and Portfolios
2010 results – where to from here?

- Great deal of information in the National Report
- Citation and benchmark information provided in confidence to institutions
- Extra SRE funding was contingent upon ERA 2010 participation
- ERA is informing mission-based compact negotiations between the Government and institutions
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 – see ARC website – includes open tender process to involve peak bodies in Stage 2

• ARC will review 2010 processes and seek feedback from the sector – keep an eye on the website
Some issues under consideration

• Low volume threshold – including both number and type of outputs
• Eligibility of fractional staff
• Reference period for income, applied, esteem
• Discipline matrix and cluster structure
• Reporting of outcomes
• Expanding peer reviewer pool
• Other issues raised by sector during consultation
Further information?

- www.arc.gov.au/era
- Email: era@arc.gov.au
- Hotline: 02 6287 6755