

Discovery—Projects

Overview

Discovery-Projects combines the previous ARC Large Grants schemes and the Fellowships programme and continues their emphasis on excellence of research projects and researchers.

The objectives of the Discovery Projects scheme are to;

- support excellent fundamental research by individuals and teams
- assist researchers to undertake their research in conditions most conducive to achieving best results
- expand Australia's knowledge base and research capability
- encourage research training in high-quality research environments.

Selection process

Assessment of applications was undertaken by Expert Advisory Committees, which:

- excluded ineligible applications
- assigned independent readers/assessors to review the applications
- sought applicants' comments on assessors' reports
- ranked each application relative to the others on the basis of the application, the assessors' reports and applicants' response to these assessments
- assessed and recommended budgets
- prepared funding recommendations for submission to the ARC Board for endorsement and then to the Minister for approval.

The ARC applied strict procedures for declaring conflicts of interest and for members to withdraw from considering particular applications. Readers for each discipline grouping were drawn from a range of institutions to avoid potential conflict of interest problems.

At the selection meeting held on 20-24 August, the Expert Advisory Committees ranked the applications, taking into account readers and assessors' reports and rejoinders from applicants. The Committee made final checks on eligibility. A list of projects recommended for funding was then prepared for submission to the ARC Board.

Selection criteria

The selection criteria for Discovery Projects are

- track record of the researchers relative to opportunities (40%);
- significance and degree of innovation in the proposed research programme (30%);
- relevance and adequacy of the proposed approach (20%);

- national benefit (10%).

The selection criteria for Fellowships was different, to reflect the importance of the person being provided with a salary to pursue a research project. The primary assessment criterion for fellowships was the track record of individual applicants relative to opportunities (60%). Fellowship applications were also assessed on the basis of their projects (40%).

Summary Outcomes

The Australian Research Council considered 3090 proposals for funding under the Discovery-Projects programme. Of these, 717 were funded (23.2%), 13 withdrew and 56 were ineligible. This represents an ARC commitment of \$52,885,477 in 2002 or \$191,473,765 over five years.

Table 1: Success Rates for Discovery Projects and Large Research Grants 2000-2002

Program	2000	2001	2002
LRG	22.0%	23.7%	
Res Fellows	14.6%	14.4%	
LRG+RF	20.5%	21.8%	
D-P			23.2%

As a result of *Backing Australia's Ability's* increased funding for Fellowships, part of the *Discovery—Projects* scheme, and the payment by the ANU for the phased entry of the Institute for Advanced Studies, funding for *Discovery—Projects* increased by \$16.7 million for 2002. The number of applications (including fellowships) has fallen slightly over the previous schemes. Because the funding for Fellowships with the new salary scales has been substantially increased and there has been a reduction in the total number of applications, the combined success rate has been maintained and the average grant size has increased.

Table 2: Numbers and Success Rates for Discovery Projects by Discipline Group

Discipline Group	Applications Received	Recommended Applications	Success Rate	Requested funds 2002-2006	Recommended funds 2002-2006
BSB	597	140	24.5%	\$232,527,368	\$40,935,835
EE	419	103	24.6%	\$135,486,355	\$28,800,568
HCA	478	98	20.5%	\$120,330,239	\$21,874,086
MIC	368	94	25.5%	\$124,462,144	\$23,451,763
PE	593	141	23.8%	\$246,048,096	\$52,336,405
SBE	633	141	22.2%	\$163,576,899	\$24,075,108
TOTAL	3090	717	23.2%	\$1,022,431,101	\$191,473,765

The average first-year funding per project for Discovery is \$73,759. Under the previous scheme, in 2000, the equivalent figure for the Large Research Grants scheme was \$59,275 and the Research Fellowship figure was \$62,698.

Table 3: Average first-year funding for Discovery and Large Research Grants 2000-2002

Program	2000	2001	2002
LRG	\$55,646	\$59,275	
Res Fellows	\$62,199	\$62,698	
LRG+RF	\$56,551	\$59,728	
D-P			\$73,759

The average total grant size for *Discovery--Projects*, over the life of the projects, is also increased compared to the Large Research Grants scheme.

Table 4: Average total grant size for Discovery and Large Research Grants 2000-2002

Program	2000	2001	2002
LRG	\$157,767	\$162,687	
Res Fellows	\$256,148	\$259,386	
LRG+RF	\$171,431	\$175,504	
D-P			\$267,049

For the first time this year applicants could seek funding for up to five years. This year, 221 applications sought only one or two years funding. Of these, 31 have been recommended for funding. 2269 applications requested three years funding, with 581 being successful. Of the 600 applications that sought 4 or 5 years funding, 105 were recommended for funding.

Table 5: Duration of Funding for Discovery Projects

No of years	Requested	Allocated	Success Rate
1	30	9	30.0%
2	191	22	11.5%
3	2269	581	25.6%
4	136	20	14.7%
5	464	85	18.3%

It should be noted that in 2002 applications the ARC is funding 75.0% of the average amount requested. For specific panel percentages see Table 6.

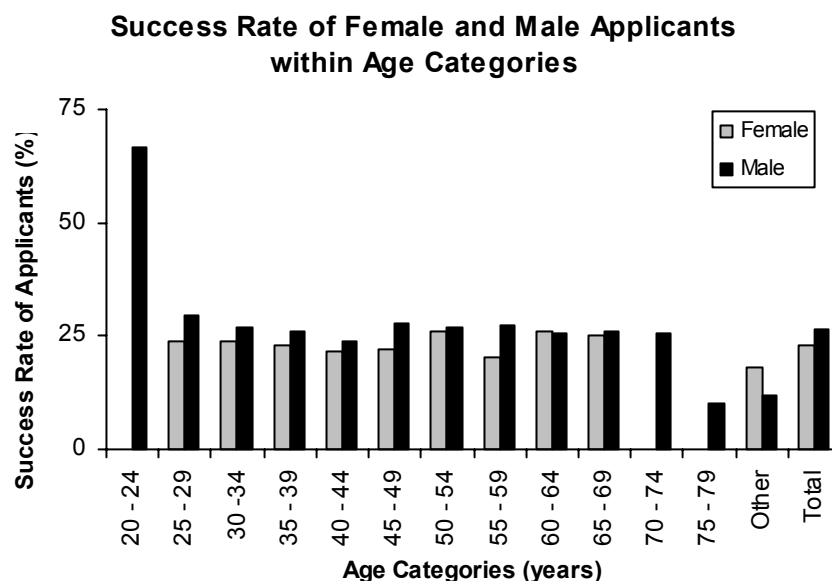
Table 6: Amounts requested and allocated for Year 1 by Panel

Panel	Average amount requested	Average amount allocated	Average amount allocated as a % of amount requested
BSB	\$113,594	\$82,423	72.6
EE	\$101,996	\$75,050	73.6
HCA	\$74,243	\$57,654	77.7
MIC	\$96,810	\$73,429	75.8
PE	\$120,744	\$98,402	81.5
SBE	\$79,921	\$49,265	61.6
All Disciplines	\$98,374	\$73,759	75.0

Success Rates by Gender

In Discovery-Projects 1327 investigators applying were female and 4643 were male. The overall success rate for female investigators was 22.9% and for male investigators it was 26.3%. Success rate by age and gender are shown below:

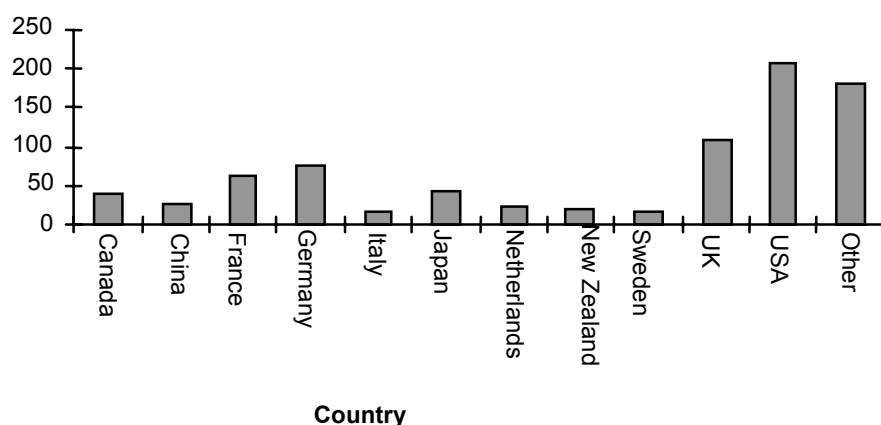
Figure 1



International Collaboration

Applicants reported 2630 international collaborations with 90 countries on 1293 applications. Of the 717 successful applications, 377 reported 822 instances of international collaboration with 59 countries.

The highest incidence of collaboration was with the United States, with 207 applications recommended for funding. The second highest of international collaboration was with the United Kingdom which had 107 applications recommended for funding.

No. of reported collaborations by country**Funding by institution**

The following table shows application numbers and total ARC funding by institution for the Discovery-Project scheme.

Administering Institution	Total Applications	Total Funded Applications	Success Rate (%)	Total Allocation (2002-2006)
Australian Catholic University	20	1	5.0	\$187,109
Charles Sturt University	15	1	6.7	\$22,000
Macquarie University	107	20	18.7	\$4,944,851
Southern Cross University	11	1	9.1	\$218,095
The University of New England	46	7	15.2	\$1,029,150
The University of New South Wales	252	75	29.8	\$19,517,424
The University of Newcastle	91	30	33.0	\$7,499,389
The University of Sydney	257	77	30.0	\$25,740,493
University of Technology, Sydney	44	10	22.7	\$2,242,836
University of Western Sydney	33	5	15.2	\$840,932
University of Wollongong	68	17	25.0	\$6,648,936
Deakin University	78	14	17.9	\$2,420,954
La Trobe University	67	13	19.4	\$3,054,714
Monash University	215	41	19.1	\$7,706,062
RMIT University	44	1	2.3	\$122,000
Swinburne University of Technology	41	6	14.6	\$1,415,000
The University of Melbourne	319	82	25.7	\$23,101,460
University of Ballarat	5	1	20.0	\$321,658
Victoria University of Technology	24	2	8.3	\$230,000
Central Queensland University	8	2	25.0	\$390,000
Griffith University	81	14	17.3	\$3,070,835
James Cook University	37	14	37.8	\$5,409,236
Queensland University of Technology	71	10	14.1	\$1,721,818
The University of Queensland	288	71	24.7	\$20,539,692

University of Southern Queensland	14	0	0.0	
University of the Sunshine Coast	2	0	0.0	
Curtin University of Technology	47	9	19.1	\$2,255,122
Edith Cowan University	11	3	27.3	\$605,121
Murdoch University	39	3	7.7	\$1,615,443
The University of Western Australia	152	35	23.0	\$10,202,878
The Flinders University of South Australia	50	9	18.0	\$1,492,300
The University of Adelaide	146	39	26.7	\$8,972,958
University of South Australia	32	8	25.0	\$1,147,298
University of Tasmania	84	13	15.5	\$3,094,436
Northern Territory University	7	2	28.6	\$330,865
University of Canberra	10	1	10.0	\$141,000
Australian Maritime College	1	1	100.0	\$175,000
The Australian National University	147	43	29.3	\$13,548,445
Australian National University - Institute of Advanced Studies	85	23	27.1	\$5,962,480
Museum Victoria	3	0	0.0	
Australian Museum	4	1	25.0	\$237,000
Queensland Museum	2	0	0.0	
South Australian Museum	4	0	0.0	
Queensland Institute of Medical Research	2	1	50.0	\$231,000
St Vincent's Institute of Medical Research	2	2	100.0	\$546,000
The Heart Research Institute	2	2	100.0	\$479,000
Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute	2	1	50.0	\$231,000
Walter & Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research	3	3	100.0	\$1,118,084
CSIRO, Division of Plant Industry	2	0	0.0	
Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority	3	1	33.3	\$155,000
Howard Florey Institute of Experimental Physiology and Medicine	1	1	100.0	\$246,000
Marine and Freshwater Resources Institute	1	0	0.0	
Mater Medical Research Institute	1	0	0.0	
Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory	1	0	0.0	
Prince Henry's Institute of Medical Research	1	0	0.0	
Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne	1	0	0.0	

The Bionic Ear Institute	1	1	100.0	\$50,000
The National Ageing Research Institute	1	0	0.0	
The National Ageing Research Institute (NARI)	1	0	0.0	
VPS Research Pty Ltd	1	0	0.0	
Private (NSW)	1	0	0.0	
Private (Qld)	1	0	0.0	
<i>Provision for Allowances</i>				<i>\$243,000</i>
	3090	717	23.2	\$191,473,765

Reserve projects

Two reserve lists for one-year funding have been prepared. The first identifies 20 Innovation projects; the second identifies 50 ECR projects. Award of these is subject to DOFA approval of the expenditure of unallocated funds carried-forward, supported by the Board, out of session 16 August 2001.

Scheme Budget

The following allocations from the Discovery Projects budget have been recommended for new grants to commence in 2002.

2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
\$52,885,477 *	\$58,679,490	\$55,810,966	\$13,121,046	\$10,976,786

* The amount in 2002 includes provision for relocation expenses of new fellows of \$243,000.