



Australian Government
Australian Research Council

Professor Margaret Sheil
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Research Council



Outline

- ARC Update
- Programs
 - Future Fellows
 - Centres
 - Research Networks
 - International Collaboration
- Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA)





ARC Managers

- Margaret Clayton,
ED BSB & Discovery/Fellows
- Krishna Sen,
ED HASS & Outreach
- Leanne Harvey,
GM Research Excellence
- Mary Burton,
GM Legal & Policy





ARC Update

- Advisory Council Established
- Organisational Structure
- Minister's commitment to transparent decisions
- Contribution to Innovation Review
- RMS Project





ARC Advisory Council

- Margaret Sheil (Chair)
- Margaret Seares (UWA)
- Stuart Macintyre (UniMelb)
- Arun Sharma (QUT)
- Terry Hughes (JCU)
- John Ralston (UniSA)
- Elizabeth Jazwinska (J&J)





Future Fellows

- *Future Fellowships* scheme will reward Australia's best and brightest mid-career researchers and outstanding international researchers.
- *Election commitment* waiting on final budget approval before releasing consultation paper and draft funding rules.





Objectives

- Attract and retain outstanding Australian mid-career researchers;
- Build collaboration across industry, research institutions, and disciplines;
- Support research in areas of national priority that will result in economic, environmental, social, health or cultural benefits for Australia; and
- Strengthen Australia's research capability by supporting innovative, internationally competitive research.





Selection Criteria

- **Investigator**
 - consideration will be given to the opportunities the Future Fellowship candidate has had to attain the level of achievement
 - evidence of capacity to conduct high quality, innovative research
 - record of high quality research outputs
 - evidence of international research standing
- **Strategic Alignment**
 - how well does the research project align with and/or complement the research strengths of the host organisation(s)?
 - will the proposed project contribute significantly to the building and sustainability of existing or emerging research strengths of the host organisation(s)?



Selection Criteria



- **Collaboration**
 - evidence of Future Fellowship candidate's capacity to build collaboration across industry, research institutions, and/or with other disciplines.
 - the extent to which the proposed project will build collaboration across industry, research institutions and disciplines.
- **National Priority**
 - will the proposed project contribute significantly to the advancement of knowledge in one or more areas of national priority?





Funding Levels

- Up to 200 new Future Fellowships, will be awarded per year, commencing in 2009 to 2013.
- There are two proposed salary levels
 - Step 1: \$95,000 - \$100,000
 - Step 2: \$135,000 - \$140,000.
- In addition, \$50,000 per year to each Future Fellow's administering organisation to support related infrastructure and equipment for research projects as well as travel and relocation costs.





Timeframe

- Following the consultation process, the ARC envisages the following key dates will apply to the first round of the Future Fellowships scheme:
 - Future Fellowships funding rules made available in May 2008
 - The closing time for submission of proposals will be in July 2008
 - Announcement of Future Fellowships commencing in 2009 to occur in December 2008
 - Future Fellowships to commence in January – July 2009.





International Collaboration

- As of 26 March announced by the Minister
 - *Future Fellowships and others (ARF etc open to international applicants)*
 - Allowing international students for Australian Postgraduate Awards (Industry)
 - ARC funds OK for travel for international collaborators.
- *Enhancing international collaboration will be a priority for all ARC fellowship schemes.*





When?

- Progressively as schemes open. For the next LP round this would mean...
 1. permitting use of ARC funds for international travel for PIs;
 2. removing the citizenship/ residency requirements for APAI students;
 3. making provision so preference may be given to award APDIs to candidates who have the potential to enhance international collaboration.
- Pending Ministerial approval extend the closing date to 23 May (2 weeks later current date).





Centres

- Groundwater Centre, 30 May 2008.
- 2005 Centres being reviewed this year.
- New Centres on a three-year cycle, applications open in 2009, funding commences in 2010 with a life of seven-years.
- Consultation paper released later in the year.





Federation Fellows

- Recommendations for current round later next month.
- Review report and options considered by Advisory Council.
- No formal proposal to the Minister as yet.





Research Networks

- ARC Research Networks is a unique program to bring together best researchers and research teams from across the nation working on specific issues.
- A scheme review is currently under way.
- Review will be in two phases:
 - Phase 1 scheduled to provide preliminary input into the Innovation Review
 - Phase 2 to produce a comprehensive report around September.





Questions





ERA initiative

*Defining our strengths,
identifying opportunities...*





Objectives of ERA

1. an evaluation framework that provides assurance to government, industry, business and the wider community of the excellence of research conducted in Australia's higher education institutions;
2. identify at a discipline-level areas of research excellence and areas where there is opportunity for development in Australia's higher education institutions;
3. allow for comparisons of Australia's research outputs against national and international benchmarks by discipline; and
4. assist with the development of the government's broader research and innovation agenda.





Ideally, ERA will

- Have the confidence of the research community.
- Identify research excellence wherever it is found.
- Reduce the burden on those making submissions and those doing the evaluations.





Encourage behaviour(s)

- Improved quality of outputs.
- Higher levels of activity.
- Increased Collaboration.
- Interdisciplinary research.
- Engagement with industry/end users.
- Concentration, i.e. Scale and Focus.
- Enhanced Internationalisation.
- Strategic planning and investment.





What ERA will not do





It will also not...

- Try to produce a single score.
- Follow the UK timetable.
- Try to impose a single model or paradigm of research across different disciplines.
- And above all.....





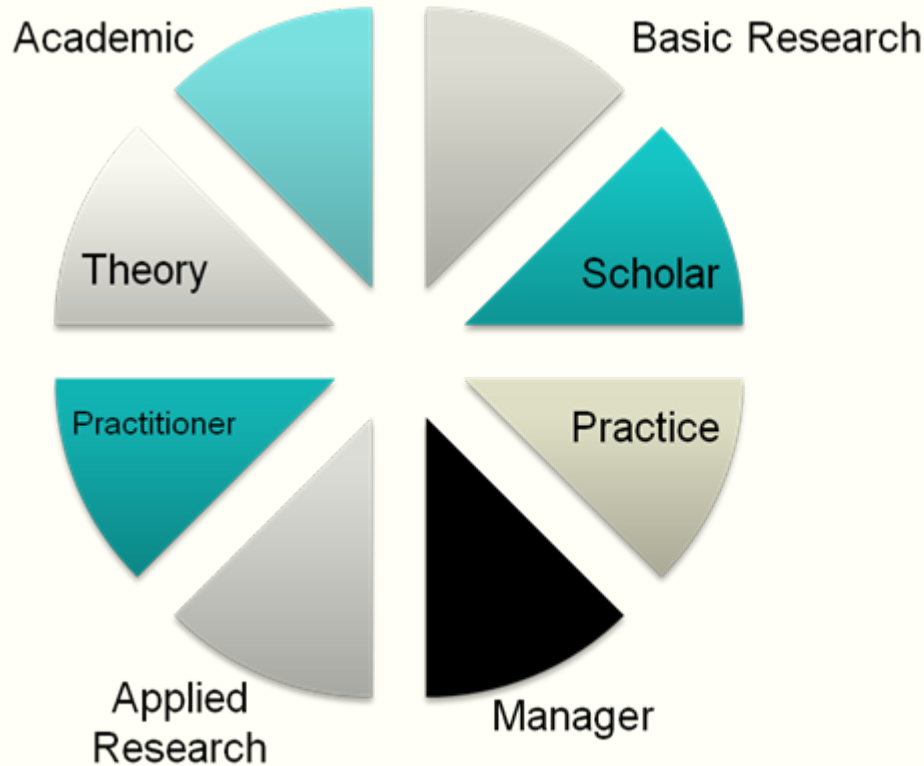
Won't mention the “I” word



ERA does not feature the controversial “impact” measure involving lengthy, time-consuming written descriptions....

Minister Carr, 27 March 2008





- But will recognise excellent outcomes occur across the full spectrum of research and in different ways.





ERA - Key Elements

- Discipline clusters (eight) by institution.
- Successive evaluations up to four per year.
- Research Assessment Committees.
- Produce Cluster Reports.





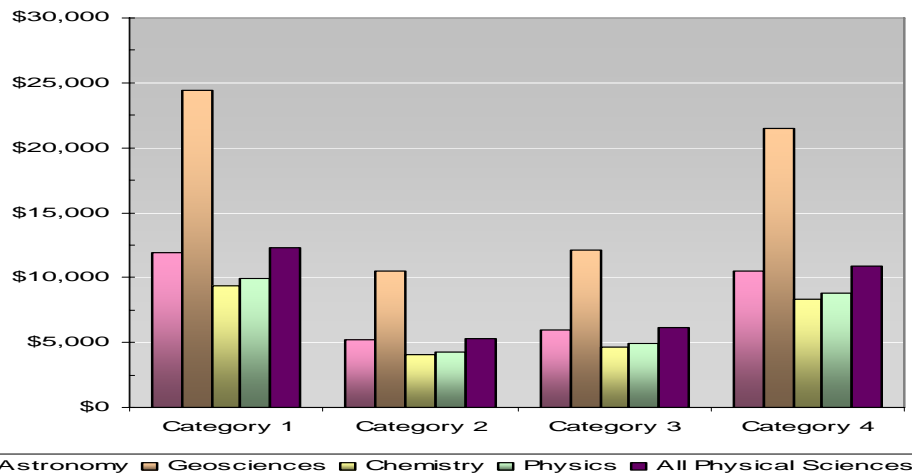
By institution and discipline(s)

- Level of activity
 - FTE, Income, HDR Students, Outputs.
- Quality of the activity
 - Publications and other outputs of research.
- Performances against benchmarks
 - # citations
 - proportion of internationally competitive publications, performances, etc
 - national benchmarks (income/FTE, publications/FTE, etc).

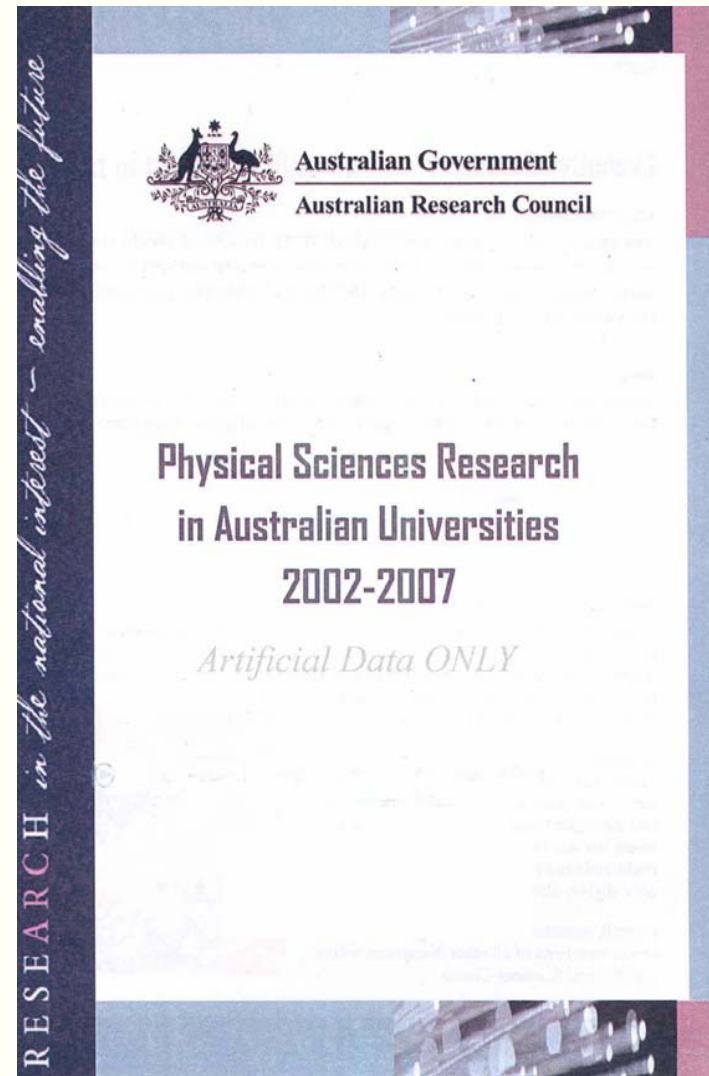




Average grant value per FTE
(Physical Sciences)
2002-2007



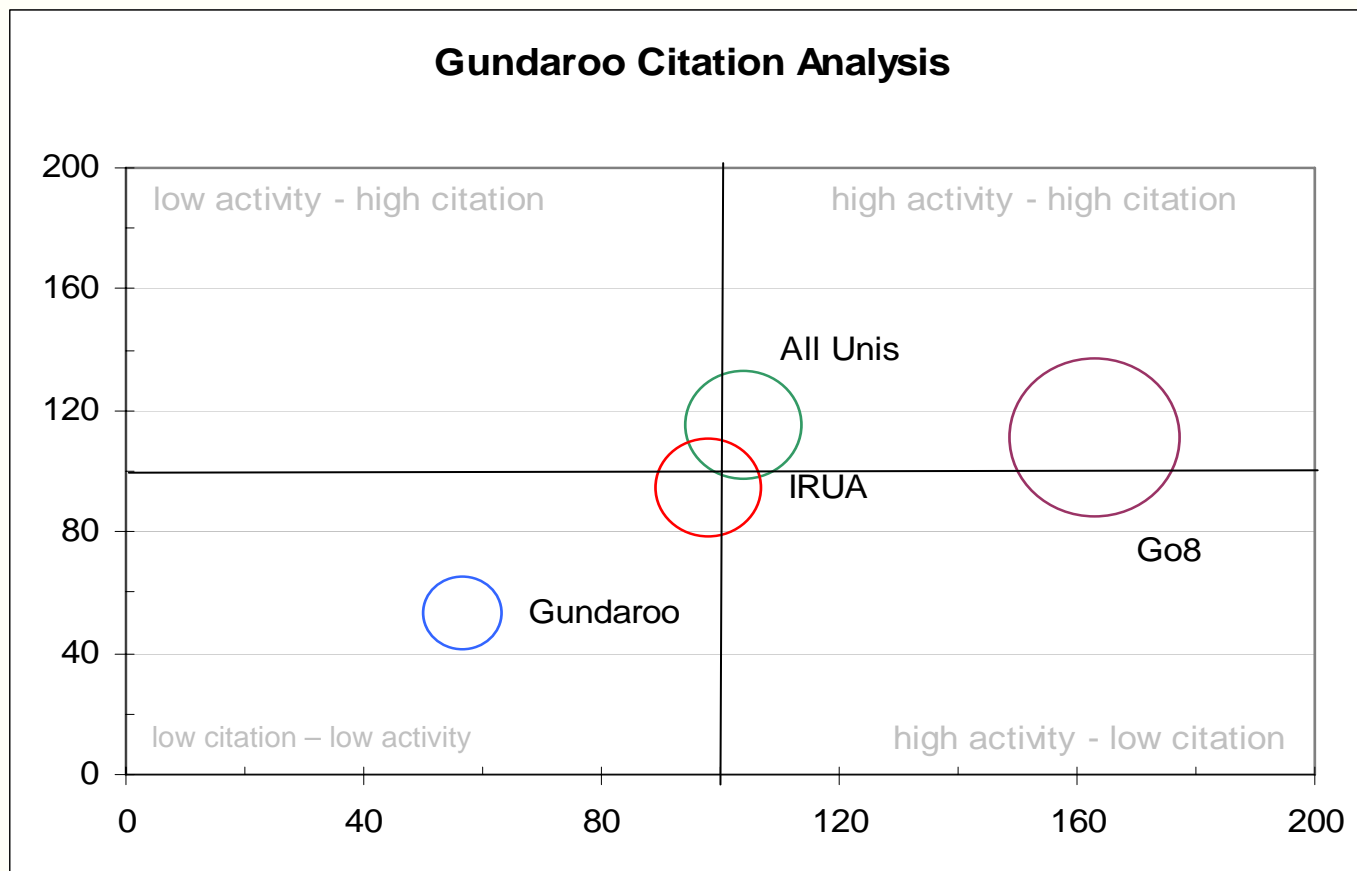
Institution	Geology	Chemistry	Geosciences	Materials
Perth	international	national	international	not competitive
Illawarra	not competitive	emerging	international	international
Keating	not competitive	not competitive	not competitive	national
Fraser	international	national	n/a	not competitive
Geelong	national	not competitive	emerging	not competitive



Please Note - Artificial Data



Publications – Activity and Relevance

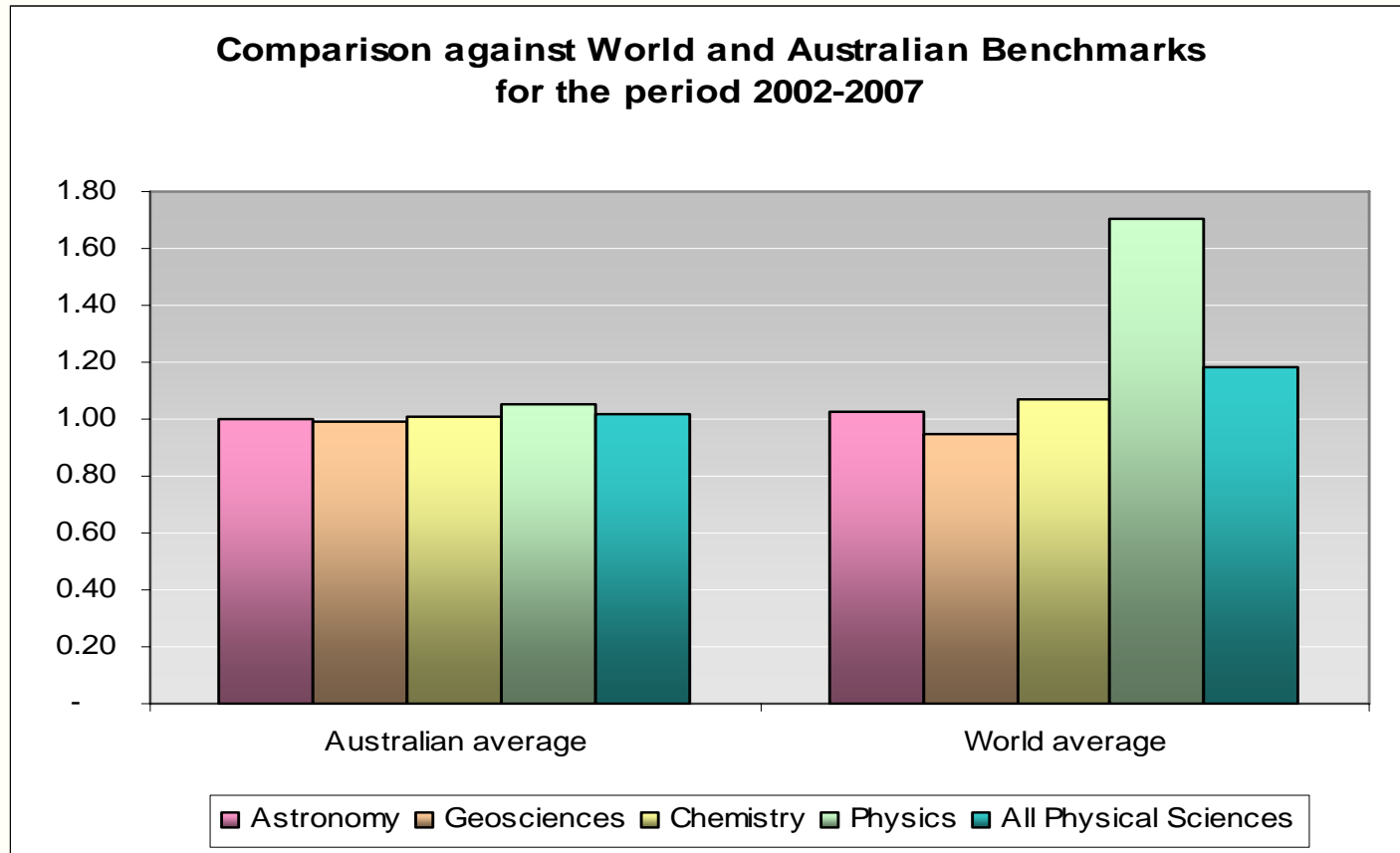


Please Note - Artificial Data





Publications – Activity and Relevance



Please Note - Artificial Data





Next steps

- Address some fundamental questions
 - are there areas/disciplines where there are no proxies?
 - what defines a discipline(s)?
 - how robust are the tiered outlets?
 - do we need other elements (HDR students, engagement etc)?
 - entry point?
- Further develop submission system.



Next Steps cont...



- Consultation paper to Advisory Council & other stakeholders on 22 April for release shortly after.
- Feedback on consultation paper by mid-year.
- Engagement with international activity (HEFCE, Leiden).
- Discussions with individual disciplines on-going.
- Further system building during 2008.
- Limited trials in latter half of 2008 if necessary.
- First cluster evaluation (physical sciences) in early 2009.
- Commence other clusters ASAP thereafter.





Questions

