



Australian Government
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ARC strategy

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ARC

- ARC budget update and overview of ARC Strategy
- Working Smarter and reviewing our Assessment Processes
- Centres of Excellence
- ERA Update
- Bibliometrics with the experts





ARC Budget measures

- Continued funding for ERA (\$35.8m)
- New Super Science Fellowships (\$27.2m)
- Funding to develop bionic eye (\$50m)
- Continued funding for NICTA (\$92.75m)

- Plus spin off of SRE and indexation and other investments





Positioning the ARC....

2008

- Strong external relationships (with sector and within government)
- ERA and new policy role

2009

- Sustainable organisation, cohesive management team and clear direction
- Working smarter with current resources



2010+



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- Source of information (eg. outcomes of ERA other work)
- Contribution to policy and the public debate
 - development work at the discipline level
 - communication (outcomes)
 - Accessible language
 - Link between funding and employment
- Increase strength of foundations *and minimise vibrations.....*



Working Smarter



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- Review scheme calendar
- Review allowable expenditure
- Centres overlap
 - Letters versus certification
- Definition of medical and dental research
- Eligibility processes
- Post-award administration
- Possible changes to the *Linkage Projects* scheme
 - *Devolve APA(I)s*
 - *One round of the Linkage Projects scheme per year?*



Enhancing Peer Review

- The current peer review structure incorporates
 - College of Experts (100+)
 - detailed(Ozreaders) (~20)
 - specialised assessors (Intreaders) (<5)
- Issues
 - Weighting of different levels
 - Reviewer fatigue and response
 - Expertise matching





Elements of a better system

- ease the workload of assessors;
- facilitate the assignment of proposals to the most appropriate assessors (through matching of FOR codes);
- provide better support for multidisciplinary applications and applications involving research in emerging areas;
- improve the quality of the process with the assessments from specialised reviewers receiving the highest weighting (rather than from generalised reviewers as is currently the case); and
- facilitate the provision of greater feedback for unsuccessful applicants





Possible New Structure

- Current thinking (for consultation/discussion) that the three levels of assessors for the *Discovery Projects* scheme be retained with some changes to the role and composition of each level.
 - Level 1 – An extensive group of specialist assessors matched to proposals at the 6-digit FoR code level (up to say 8)
 - Level 2 – ‘Study/review-groups’ of assessors matched to proposals at the 4-digit FOR code level.
 - Level 3 – A College of Experts comprising the Co-Chairs of the ‘Study/reviews-groups’ constituted under Level 2.



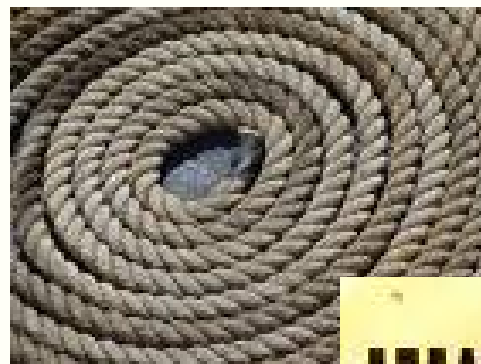
Assessment

- Are the current selection criteria appropriate?
 - Is the weighting right? Is it clear? Does it discourage ECRs and researchers who have experienced career-interruptions?
- Currently, a researchers track record has significant weight
- Concept of “track record” an issue
- Need stronger links to outcomes of previous funding



ROPE (working title)

- Research Opportunities
 - Career breaks
 - Research only?
- Performance Evidence
 - Outcomes of previous funding
 - Publications
 - Other evidence/recognition



WARNING
THE IMPROPER
USE OF ROPE IS
DANGEROUS

please read this
pamphlet before using
your new rope





Reviewer participation

- **We need your support.**
- We propose that payment of the Level 2 assessors (or Ozreaders) be discontinued.
- We are seeking your suggestions as to appropriate mechanisms to encourage the participation of assessors. For example:
 - We provide you (DVCRs) with a list of the assessors from your institution.
 - We could provide feedback to reviewers about the ‘outcomes’ of their assessments.
 - Consider ways of increasing public recognition
- We find it increasingly difficult to obtain an adequate number of external assessments for proposals undergoing peer review.
 - This is despite requirements for participation by ARC grant holders



Ranking proposals



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- An External Working Group will provide advice on alternatives to the ranking system currently used.
 - the Weighted Average Percent Rank (WAPR) system.
- While the current ranking system has drawbacks, a viable alternative may be difficult to find.
- A comparison of the current ranking system and any potential alternative, including risks will be carefully considered.
- Members of the College of Experts currently spend a significant amount of time considering the budgets of individual proposals.
- Possible alternatives:
 - separating responsibilities with the College of Experts focussing on the ranking of proposals and ARC staff providing advice on budgets; and
 - asking applicants to apply for a particular funding allocation (for example, \$100,000 or \$200,000).





Providing feedback

- Length of time between submission and notification
- A revised structure may allow us to provide early notification to applicants of proposals that are likely to be unsuccessful.
 - Prior to consideration by the College of Experts in August
 - Specific and more extensive feedback to applicants.
- The provision of more feedback supports the development of Australia's long-term research capacity.





RMS

- Ambitious
- Big change for the ARC and our user community
- Short term issues mostly fixed
- Long term issues to plan
- Help desk
- Sector reaction





Centres of Excellence

- Consultation closed this week
- *To EOI or not to EOI?*





Super Science Fellowships

- \$27.2 million over four years.
- 100 three-year early-career fellowships
- Will ensure our most promising young researchers continue to have opportunities to work in areas of national significance during the global recession.
- Offered in three areas:
 - Space science and astronomy;
 - Marine and climate science; and
 - Future industries research – biotechnology and nanotechnology.

Considering options for applications now





ERA: What's happening now

- \$35.8 million announced in 2009-10 Budget
- Trial has commenced
 - PCE submission phase is complete
 - HCA submissions phase opens 3 August
- Research Evaluation Committees (REC) established (PCE announced next week)
- Regular contact with ERA Liaison Officers
 - *ERA News*
- Copyright issues sorted (letters to VCs)





Esteem

- Esteem measures are not included in the 2009 ERA trial for Clusters One and Two.
- The ARC is investigating, in consultation with the sector, the collection of esteem measures with a view to including discipline-specific, list-based esteem measures in future ERA evaluations.
- Have consulted with experts and drawn on the indicator principles set down by the Indicators Development Group in 2008.

