ARC strategy

Professor Margaret Sheil
Australian Research Council

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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+

- 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

- 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
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

• 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

- Consulation 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.