ARC Grants

Sarah Howard
Director – Program Operations (Linkage)
Overview

• ARC – who’s who
• ARC Programs (NCGP) and processes – a bird’s eye view
• Proposal life cycle
• NCGP statistics
• New developments
The Australian Research Council

The ARC is a statutory agency within the Australian Government’s Education portfolio under Minister the Hon. Christopher Pyne MP.

The ARC’s main responsibilities are:

• providing funding for research through the competitive funding schemes of the **National Competitive Grants Program** (NCGP);
• evaluating the quality of research in universities under **Excellence in Research for Australia** (ERA);
• providing **policy advice** on research matters to Government; and
• together with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), administering the **Australian Research Integrity Committee** (ARIC).
The ARC Structure
National Competitive Grants Program

The National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP) is comprised of a number of schemes organised under two Programs.

*Discovery Program*
- supports fundamental research by teams and individuals

*Linkage Program*
- facilitates the development of partnerships between research teams and between higher education organisations and other parts of the national and international innovation systems.

Funding under both programs is awarded on the basis of a competitive peer review process.
National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP)

Discovery Program

Discovery Indigenous

Discovery Projects

DECRA

Laureate Fellowships

Future Fellowships

Linkage Program

Centres of Excellence

Co-Funded & SRI

ITRP

Linkage Projects

LIEF

Linkage Program Funding 2013-14 - $332.4 million

Discovery Program Funding 2013-14 - $551.4 million
# NCGP Proposal Numbers and Success Rates for 2013-14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheme Round</th>
<th>Proposals Considered</th>
<th>Proposals Approved</th>
<th>Success Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discovery Projects – 2014</td>
<td>3534</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Laureate Fellowships – 2013</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Fellowships – 2013</td>
<td>1234</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECRA – 2014</td>
<td>1468</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkage Projects – 2013</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIEF – 2014</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discovery Indigenous – 2014</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discovery Program

- **Australian Laureate Fellowships** - aimed at attracting and retaining outstanding researchers in Australia. The scheme provides fellows with project funding in addition to a salary supplement and salary-related (on-cost) support.

- **Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA)** - aimed at supporting early-career researchers 0-5 years post PhD (up to 8 years depending on career interruptions)

- **Discovery Indigenous** - supports the development of Indigenous researchers’ skills and expertise.

- **Discovery Projects** - provides funding for research projects undertaken by excellent individual researchers and research teams.

- **Future Fellowships** - aimed at attracting and retaining the best and brightest mid-career researchers.
Linkage Program

• ** ARC Centres of Excellence** - aimed at building critical mass in areas of research priority.

• **Industrial Transformation Research Program** - funds research hubs and training centres. Focuses on industries vital to Australia’s future. Supports Higher Degree by Research students and postdoctoral researchers in gaining real-world practical skills and experience through placement in industry.

• **Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities** - encourages institutions to develop collaborative organisational arrangements to develop research infrastructure.

• **Linkage Projects** - supports collaborative research and research training between universities and partner organisations.

• **Special Research Initiatives & Co-funded Centres** - the ARC identifies new or emerging areas of research for funding. Applications for funding may be submitted only when invited by the ARC by means of a call for proposal(s).
NCGP Proposal Lifecycle
Proposal assessment

• Eligibility - ARC staff and Executive Directors, throughout Proposal lifecycle
• Assessment against selection criteria, in accordance with weightings
• At least 2 College of Experts members and 2 external assessors
• Selection meeting
• Recommendations to Minister
Panel Process

• Panels selected from College members (not every one used every year)
• Conflicts of interest observed at all times
• Panels cover broad discipline areas
  • Minimum 2 College members per proposal
  • Requires assessment of proposal outside narrow disciplines
• External assessors provide discipline expertise
• Multidisciplinary proposals require consideration across panels
The ARC College of Experts

- play a key role in identifying research excellence, moderating external assessments and recommending fundable proposals.
- assists the ARC in recruiting and assigning assessors and in implementing peer review reforms in established and emerging disciplines as well as interdisciplinary areas.
- experts of international standing drawn from the Australian research community: from higher education, industry and public sector research organisations.
- ARC College nominations are approved by the ARC CEO for appointments of one to three years.
Submission of proposals

• The Proposal must contain all the information necessary for its assessment without the need for further written or oral explanation, or reference to additional documentation, unless requested by the ARC.

• Administering Organisations must submit Proposals through the RMS unless otherwise advised by the ARC.

• All Proposals must meet the format and content requirements, including certification, as set out in the RMS form and the Instructions to Applicants.
Development of Funding Rules

*Update of Funding Rules for existing scheme*

- Feedback
- Strategy
- Feasibility
- PM & C and DOF
- Compliance
- Team Drafts Funding Rules
- Minister for Education
- Finance Minister
- ARC Publishes Rules and documents
ARC Compliance

- ARC Act 2001 - statutory agency
- FMA Act and regulations
- Commonwealth Grant Guidelines, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition released June 2013
- Finance Circulars
Commonwealth Grant Guidelines

Seven key principles:

- **Robust planning and design** – Funding Rules, applications, assessment, post-award
- **Collaboration and partnership** – working with our key stakeholders – that’s you
- **Proportionality** – compliance burden vs risk
- **An outcomes orientation** – what are ‘we’ (researchers, universities, Government, public) getting out of this?
- **Achieving value with public money**
- **Governance and accountability**
- **Probity and transparency**
Size of scheme and success rates (1)

*Discovery Projects 2008-2014: Success and Return Rates*

![Chart showing success and return rates for Discovery Projects from 2008 to 2014.](chart)

- **Number of Proposals**
- **Unsuccessful**
- **Successful**
- **Return rate**
- **Success rate**
DP13 - Submission and success rate by gender and career age

- Male proportion
- Female proportion
- Male success rate
- Female success rate
Size of scheme and success rates (2)

**DECRA 2012-2014: Success Rates**

- **2012**: 1882 proposals, 12.8% successful, 1277 unsuccessful
- **2013**: 1081 proposals, 15.6% successful, 901 unsuccessful
- **2014**: 1268 proposals, 13.62% successful, 1132 unsuccessful

Number of Proposals

- **Unsuccessful**: Red
- **Successful**: Green
- **Success rate**: Triangle
Size of scheme and success rates (3)

*Discovery Indigenous 2012-2014: Success Rates*

Number of Proposals

- **2012**: 19 proposals, 34.5% success rate
- **2013**: 22 proposals, 31.3% success rate
- **2014**: 10 proposals, 38.5% success rate

- **Unsuccessful**
- **Successful**
- **Success rate**
Size of scheme and success rates (4)

Future Fellowships 2009-2013: Success Rates

Number of Proposals

0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000

0.0% 10.0% 20.0% 30.0% 40.0% 50.0% 60.0% 70.0%

Unsuccessful
Successful
Success rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Proposals</th>
<th>Unsuccessful</th>
<th>Successful</th>
<th>Success Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1033</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>16.29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Size of scheme and success rates (5)

*Australian Laureate Fellowships 2008-2013: Success Rates*

- 2009: 133 proposals, 10.1% success rate (15 successful)
- 2010: 82 proposals, 15.5% success rate (15 successful)
- 2011: 122 proposals, 12.2% success rate (17 successful)
- 2012: 91 proposals, 15.7% success rate (17 successful)
- 2013: 95 proposals, 15.2% success rate (17 successful)
ARC developments

● Schemes under assessment:
√ ITRP
√ Centres of Excellence for 2014
√ FT round 6
√ LP14

● Major schemes (DP, IN, DE, FT, LE)
● Revision and harmonisation of funding rules
● Updating of assessor database (FoR codes & keywords, new assessors)
● Open access, open data, research impact
Discussion/questions
Post-award of ARC Grants

Liz Visher
and
Belinda Graham
Program Partnerships team
What is ARC Post-award?

• After ARC announces successful grants, Post-award activities begin. It is the range of reporting requirements when a university is awarded Commonwealth funds from the ARC.

• Each scheme has its own Funding Agreement which outline the Post-award requirements. Once a Funding Agreement is signed and completed, the ARC approves commencement of payment to your institution as the Administering Organisation.

• All requests for changes to a Project must be sent to the ARC Post-award team and not the Pre-award teams.

• All projects must abide by the Post-award requirements and be in accordance with the Funding Rules and Funding Agreement for that particular scheme rounds and year. E.g. a DP10 project must only refer to the DP10 Funding Rules and Funding Agreement for information. Do not use other scheme/rounds Funding Rules and Funding Agreement as an information source.
# Post-award contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director, Program Partnerships</td>
<td>Liz Visher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Director, Post-award</td>
<td>Belinda Graham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Project Officer</td>
<td>Elspeth Langford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Officer – LP</td>
<td>Liz McCallum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Officer – DP</td>
<td>Ema Falez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Officer – LE, IN, FT, FL, DE, ITRP</td>
<td>Ilona Drozd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Officer – Progress Reports</td>
<td>Joshua Hatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Officer – Final Reports</td>
<td>David Hine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The rest of the team**

**Email:** [ARC-Postaward@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-Postaward@arc.gov.au)

**Web page for Post-award updates and requirements**

[http://www.arc.gov.au/applicants/reported_requirements.htm](http://www.arc.gov.au/applicants/reported_requirements.htm)
# Post-award Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The requirements</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variations to Funding Agreements</td>
<td>Can be requested at any time during the project duration. Please be sure to address all the requirements for the appropriate scheme/round as each scheme/round has different requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress Report by Exception</td>
<td>Due by 31 March each year but we will accept reports in late April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Reports</td>
<td>Due within 6-12 months after ARC funding ceases (including approved carry forward).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of Year Reporting</td>
<td>31 March each year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Post-award – The news!

• **Going fully electronic** in our paperwork. All documentation including VFA approvals, letters and filing.

• **Progress Reports by exception** – plans to go through RMS in future.

• **Final Reports** in RMS – we will give you the list today.

• **End of Year Reporting module** to be available through RMS.

• **Feedback** on Progress and Final Reports including all the Annual Reports submitted by ARC Centres.

• Some **policy issues** to consider.
Variations to Funding Agreements

What are the common issues with VFAs we see:

- **Investigators**: changes to role, people on the project, eligibility.
- **Transfers** between universities, including the reporting correct funds for transfers of projects with VFA.
- Confusion between scheme/round requirements.

Generally – incomplete documentation, missing information/approvals, retrospective timing, poor case given for variation.

Breaking the Funding Rules/Agreement – e.g. DP sole CI replacement, No Partner Org on the Project, not requesting a deferral or suspension, not informing the ARC of personnel/org changes.
Variation to Funding Agreements requests and Progress Reports by Exception submission correlation was really good for the 2012 calendar year.

- VFA’s processed in 2012 – 1,037.
- 2012 Progress Reports by Exception – 706 received, 24 outstanding.

*This difference between the number of VFA’s to reports received could be due to multiple VFAs being processed for certain Projects or because certain VFAs (for example, a Funding Extension or Change of Personnel) did not significantly affect the progress of the Project.*

As of 22 Nov 2013, we have processed 1200 VFA’s for the 2013 calendar year.
Progress Reports by Exception

- **Feedback letters** will now be sent out once all the Progress Reports are assessed for that year.

- Main issues in 2012…..

- Examples of when we do/don’t expect a report to be submitted.

- Due date for 2013 reports – **31 March 2014**, but we will be more generous with late submission of Progress Reports than End of year reports.

- Updated form and guidelines are now on the web.

- Spreadsheets have been sent out to you – due back **31 January 2014**.

- Future development in RMS.

- Annual Reports for ITTC and ITRH.
Final Reports

• Final Reports – as of February 2013 are submitted via RMS only.

• Each Final Report is being assessed by the ARC.

• The list of schemes that are currently in RMS: DI07-11, DP02-09, FF03-08, LE05-11, LP02-10.

• Schemes that will be in RMS shortly: DP10-11, FT09, FS10-11, LP11.

• Funding from 2012 onwards – lots of changes within schemes, new questions are needed.

• Within the next 12 months, most schemes will be available when the scheme finishes its original allocated funding.

• Within the next two years, we aim to have them available prior to the scheme finishing.
Final Report outcomes

• To date, over 550 reports have been reviewed and approved in RMS.

• Feedback letters has been sent for unsatisfactory reports. If the report is satisfactory, the RMS status will change to ‘ARC Accepted’.

What’s being done well in Final Reports?

• A marked improvement in the standard of Final Reports submitted.

• Good detailed explanation of changes to projects. For example: reduced funding and delays.

• Research outputs, publications, journal articles etc, are better referenced and documented.

• Higher submission rate of Final Reports.
What can be done to improve Final Reports?

- Clear and concise information so that Final Reports can be easily assessed and reviewed.
- Ensure information is relevant to Final Report questions. In particular:
  - **Part C Question 2 - New Research Directions**: focus on new research directions and partnerships and what they may lead to.
  - **Part C Question 3 - National Benefits**: link research to national benefit outcomes including economic, social, cultural and/or environmental contribution rather than academic output or training.
  - **LIEF projects Part C Question 5 - Access to the facility or equipment**: quantify researcher usage of the facility or equipment.
  - **Part C Question 4 – Is there evidence that this Project has had an impact in the research field or the broader public domain**: Provide as much detail as possible on media coverage of the project. Include all outreach activities associated with the project.
What does the ARC use Final Reports for?

• Valuable source of information on research outcomes.

• Data used to evaluate programs and in ARC annual report.
  
  o E.g. awards, patents, licenses, companies formed, academic impact (journal articles etc).

• Communication summaries of research outcomes used to develop media stories.

• ARC newsletter and website articles.
End of Year Reporting

- Now online for 2013 End of Year Reports

- **Issues in previous years:** hacking cells, negative figures, reporting non-Arc funds, expenditure breakdown in to 6 month blocks.

- **Benefits:** less information required to be manually entered into the spreadsheet, immediate submission, ability to track the status of a End of Year Report in RMS.

- Transfer reporting requirements: Admin Orgs are responsible for reporting all expenditure. Collaborating Orgs must report correct expenditure to the Admin Orgs.

- New remittance advice will have the prior year payments.

- End of Year Reporting extracts available in RMS. Can be extracted at any time.

- Recoveries must be done by the first week of May.

- Due date – **31 March 2014** but can submit before.
### Points to remember:

- You must have ‘RO staff’ or ‘End of Year Reports delegate’ access in RMS to be able to see the End of Year Reports link.
- RO staff can only submit to the End of Year Reports delegate. The delegate can then submit to the ARC.
- You will only be able to see your University’s projects.
- If you were not listed as the Administering Organisation during Pay 1-12, 2013 you will not see the project in your list.
- The new system will allow you to extract a report at any stage that will list all the Projects that require an End of Year report, including the details listed in the project and its current status in RMS at the time of the extraction.
- The projects are separated by scheme in the same way as the previous spreadsheets.

- On this screen, the total number of Projects that are listed against that scheme will appear in green.

- To see the Projects click on the relevant scheme name.
Once selected, the scheme list will show all 51 projects in that scheme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Status in RMS</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not started</td>
<td>The report has <strong>not</strong> been altered and/or saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft</td>
<td>The report has been altered and/or saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>Not all the mandatory fields have been completed in the Draft report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submitted to delegate</td>
<td>The report has been completed and submitted to the delegate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once you have started entering in data, the validations will be triggered.

The carryover will be altered once the expenditure is entered.
Error – incomplete fields

- The error has appeared because the report has been saved without an expenditure amount.

Draft – All mandatory fields have been completed

- In this example the carryover is <75% or <12mths, no justification required.
- Comment field is optional.
As the carryover is +75% +12mths, a justification is needed.
Submit to Delegate

Can submit individually or in bulk

Submit to ARC

Can submit to ARC or de-submit to RO, individually or in bulk
Post-award Policy Issues - Summary

• Correct expenditure reporting.
  o What are their key issues
  o Actual cash requirements

• Eligibility requirements.

• Poaching / anti-poaching business policy.

• Industry agreements, cash contributions and Partner Organisation expectations.

• Shopping for advice in the ARC.

• Research impact.
ARC Research Centres

The ARC current funds three types of Research Centres

• *ARC Centres of Excellence*
• *ARC Special Research Initiatives*
• *Co-funded Centres of Excellence*

**Establishment:** *ARC Centres of Excellence:* occurs every 3 years. *Special Research Initiatives* and *Co-funded Centres:* occasional calls for proposals to meet priority needs.

**Mid-term reviews:** all ARC Research Centres.

**Post-award:** high level of governance and oversight: Annual and Mid-year reports; Key Performance Indicators; CODIES; Variations.

**25 Annual Reports** for *ARC Centres of Excellence* were submitted in 2013.

Key things for **Improvements**:

• Missing a detailed activity plan for the next year,
• estimates of future income and expenditure, and past income.
• Also often missing, though not always applicable, was info on progress towards commercial outcomes and technological/knowledge transfer.

*Centre directors forum in March 2014*
Centres contacts

Assistant Director, Penny Bambrick
Centres of Excellence
Email centres@arc.gov.au

Assistant Director, Jane Graham
Co-Funded Centres
Email: co-funded@arc.gov.au
Web page for Co-funded: http://www.arc.gov.au/ncgp/centres/co-funded_centres.htm

Special Research Initiatives
Email: sri@arc.gov.au
Issues in your RO?

Any questions?