



Australian Government
Australian Research Council

ARC

CORPORATE PLAN

2020-21



CEO INTRODUCTION

The *Australian Research Council Corporate Plan 2020–21* provides the strategic direction for the national leadership role it plays in supporting the growth of knowledge and innovation for the benefit of all Australians. The corporate plan is the primary planning document, which together with the portfolio budget statements and annual report, forms the Australian Research Council's (ARC) planning and performance framework. It outlines the specific activities the ARC will undertake and the measures that will determine how well we performed.

2020 is an important year for the ARC as it celebrates 55 years of competitive grants delivery to the research sector. The agency was established in May 1965 and was known as the Australian Research Grants Committee. It has existed in its current legislated form as the ARC since 2001. The agency has seen many changes over this time and I am proud that it continues to play a significant role in delivering economic, cultural, social and environmental research benefits for all Australians.

In this year's corporate plan we are implementing recommendations made by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) as part of their 2019 review of the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP). It was pleasing that the ANAO found the NCGP guidelines to be consistent with all mandatory elements of the Commonwealth Grants Rules Guidelines (CGRGs) and the Government's research and innovation objectives. The review noted that the ARC has mature and effective processes in place to assess grants, manage conflicts of interest and provide funding recommendations that comply with NCGP guidelines. The ARC has also undertaken an extensive review of its performance measures, guided by the analysis of the ANAO, to provide consistency and transparency across all ARC activities.

2020 also marks ten years since the first round of Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) in 2010. This represented a new function for the ARC and Australia's first nationwide evaluation of the quality of university research. There have been four rounds of ERA evaluations since 2010, and in 2015 the Government introduced a new Engagement and Impact (EI) assessment designed to complement ERA. The inaugural EI assessment was conducted in 2018. In 2020–21 the ARC will be undertaking a comprehensive review of these two programs to ensure that they meet the future needs of the university sector, as well as industry and government stakeholders.

The ARC takes great pride in its people and culture, which shapes who we are and how we work. Like all government agencies the COVID-19 disruptions tested our business continuity plans and in particular our ability to temporarily re-locate all our staff to home-based work arrangements. I am pleased to report that as an agency the ARC demonstrated very convincingly that it is agile and adaptable. This is in no small part due to the robust business systems, investment in reliable information technology, and most importantly our dedicated staff. The ARC has commenced transitioning back to its offices, which has assisted with undertaking a range of activities that are enhanced by being back in the office.

As we move towards 2021, I look forward to the ARC continuing to promote the importance, value and role of Australian research.

As the accountable authority of the ARC, I present our Corporate Plan 2020–21, prepared for the 2020–21 reporting period and covering the four years from 2020–21 to 2023–24, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.



Sue Thomas
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Research Council



ARC CEO Professor Sue Thomas
Norman Plant Photography

ARC SNAPSHOT

VISION Research for a creative, innovative and productive Australia

The ARC receives
and processes

5,000+

applications per year



The ARC is overseeing
13 GRANT SCHEMES



The ARC
administered

8.2% of the

Australian Government's
2019-20 investment in

**RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT**



The ERA 2018
assessment included

506,294

research outputs from

76,261

researchers

90%

of Units of Evaluation
were rated as being

AT WORLD STANDARD

or better in the
ERA 2018
assessment



The ARC has

14 POLICIES

supporting
the NCGP

The ARC funds

1,100+ NEW

research projects
per year

78.3%

of the ARC's 2019-20
research projects involved

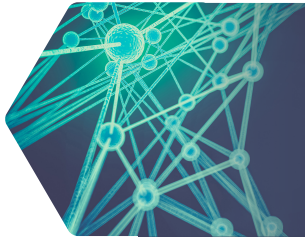
**INTERNATIONAL
COLLABORATION**



The ARC's Research
Management System
supports over

110,144

active users



CONTENTS

CEO INTRODUCTION	2
PURPOSE	5
OVERVIEW	6
ENVIRONMENT	7
ACTIVITIES	8
NCGP—Funding Excellent Basic and Applied Research and Research Training	8
Assessing the Quality, Engagement and Impact of Research	9
CAPABILITIES	10
RISK MANAGEMENT	13
PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK	14
NCGP—Funding Excellent Basic and Applied Research and Research Training	16
Assessing the Quality, Engagement and Impact of Research	20
APPENDIX: ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY	22

PURPOSE



To grow knowledge and innovation for the benefit of the Australian community by funding the highest quality research, assessing the quality, engagement and impact of research, and providing advice on research matters.

The Australian Research Council (ARC) is a non-corporate Commonwealth entity established under the *Australian Research Council Act 2001* (ARC Act), located within the Australian Government's Education portfolio, and reporting to the Minister for Education. The ARC's functions are to administer the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP), make recommendations to the Minister on funding for research applications under the NCGP, provide advice to the Minister on matters related to research and assess the quality, engagement and impact of university research.

Funding the highest quality research

The NCGP funds fundamental and applied research and research training to eligible organisations in all fields across the science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines, as well as the humanities, arts and social sciences disciplines.

The NCGP comprises 13 schemes under two programs, the Discovery Program which focuses on supporting individuals and small teams to undertake fundamental research, and the Linkage Program which creates links between university researchers, industry partners and other community organisations to undertake applied research. Funding under the NCGP is awarded based on competitive peer review processes involving Australian and international assessors.

Assessing the quality, engagement and impact of research

The ARC administers two evaluation frameworks to assess the quality, engagement and impact of research. ERA provides a comprehensive evaluation of the quality of research produced by Australian universities against international benchmarks. In 2018 the ARC conducted its fourth ERA evaluation following the 2010, 2012 and 2015 evaluations. The next ERA evaluation will commence in 2023.

The ARC is also responsible for administering the EI assessment of university research. EI assesses the engagement of researchers with research end-users and shows how universities are translating their research into economic, social, environmental, cultural and other impacts. The ARC conducted the inaugural EI assessment in 2018. The next round of EI will be in 2024. In 2020 the ARC commenced a review of ERA and EI to ensure they continue to reflect world's best practice in research evaluation and respond to the ongoing needs of the university sector, government and the public for a robust and efficient evaluation of Australian university research quality, impact and engagement.



OVERVIEW

Purpose

To grow knowledge and innovation for the benefit of the Australian community by funding the highest quality research, assessing the quality, engagement and impact of research, and providing advice on research matters

Program

NCGP—Funding Excellent Basic and Applied Research and Research Training

Program 1.1 Discovery—Research and Research Training

Program 1.2 Linkage—Cross Sector Research Partnerships

Assessing the Quality, Engagement and Impact of Research

Program 1.3 Excellence in Research for Australia

Activities

Policy and Strategy

Program Implementation and
Management

Assurance

Relationships, Networks and
Engagement

Evaluation and Analysis

Capabilities

Governance

Finance

People and Culture

Communication

Technology

Data and Analytics

ENVIRONMENT



The ARC operates as a significant contributor and participant in the global research system, and its work is influenced by a range of environmental factors including national and international economic conditions, technological change, policy developments, research trends and stakeholder activities.

The ARC's capability to deliver the NCGP and the ERA and EI assessments relies upon the ARC's peer review process, effective stakeholder engagement, and information and communication technology (ICT) expertise. The ARC's peer review process ensures that the best quality research grant applications are recommended to the Minister for funding. The peer review process relies on subject matter experts, many of whom are recognised for their national and international professional standing, and who provide comprehensive advice on complex and highly specialised research topics.

The ARC works closely with the university sector and a range of Australian research and innovation sector stakeholders in the development and delivery of its activities to ensure that it is responsive to the ongoing needs of universities, government and the community.

A major issue for the ARC, like all Australian government agencies and the broader community, in 2020 and in future years, is the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ARC acted quickly to introduce flexibility and streamlining of its post award processes to support researchers and administrators working on projects that have been impacted by COVID-19. These arrangements seek to provide a balance between the ARC's accountability for expenditure of public money and easing the burden on researchers and research offices. The ARC has also implemented measures to take into account the impact of COVID-19 on the careers of researchers. The agency will continue to monitor the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on researchers and institutions and make further modifications as needed.

The role of the ARC is unique in Australia as it is responsible for funding excellence across the spectrum of research from basic to applied and across all disciplines. It is a vital component

of the Australian Government's investment in research and innovation and a key investor in the higher education sector together with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and university research block funding. The ARC provides approximately \$780 million in research funding through the NCGP each year, which represents approximately 8.2 per cent of the Australian Government's investment in research and development.

In the coming year, the ARC will undertake a review of ERA and EI to ensure that it continues to meet the need for a robust evaluation of Australian university research quality, impact and engagement. An external expert advisory committee will provide advice on key issues, including ways to simplify and streamline the programs, and opportunities to adopt developments in technology and big data. The ERA and EI review will ensure that the programs continue to reflect world's best practice.

The ARC will also work with universities through 2020–21 and beyond to implement the updated Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC 2020) in its NCGP, ERA and EI programs. ANZSRC 2020 was released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Stats NZ on 30 June 2020 and was the outcome of a collaborative review project between the ABS, Stats NZ, ARC, and the New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

The ARC is enhancing its research management system for the benefit of all users and, as an adjunct to this, has expanded its capacity to offer research grants services, which will enable it to provide research grants administration for other government and non-government entities for whom research administration is not core business. This is consistent with whole of Australian Government grants administration initiatives. The service will facilitate the delivery of grants that are research related and may require a peer review process. The service will allow others to use the ARC's mature and effective processes to support research grant programs relying on the ARC's robust arrangements to provide efficiency and assurance for the Australian Government.



ACTIVITIES

NCGP—Funding Excellent Basic and Applied Research and Research Training

Program 1.1 Discovery—Research and Research Training

Program 1.2 Linkage—Cross Sector Research Partnerships

Policy and Strategy	Program Implementation and Management	Assurance	Relationships, Networks and Engagement	Evaluation and Analysis
<p>The ARC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use an evidence-based approach to developing policies and decision making • provide high quality advice to the Minister on research matters • participate in Australian Government policy development on research, innovation and science • ensure ARC policies reflect Australian Government policies and priorities • protect the integrity of publicly funded research through appropriate policies and processes • support the development of a diverse and sustainable research workforce through policies and communications. 	<p>The ARC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fund the highest quality basic and applied research across all disciplines, selected through competitive peer review, to build the scale of Australian research • support a sustainable and diverse research workforce • maintain funding mechanisms that build capacity in, and foster efficient responses to, emerging research areas and Australian Government priorities. 	<p>The ARC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manage a robust peer review system • review the ARC's assurance framework and implement recommendations • undertake post award compliance activities of the NCGP, in accordance with the assurance framework • cultivate a system-wide culture of research integrity. 	<p>The ARC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage national and international research partnerships between universities and government, industry and not-for-profit organisations • improve stakeholder awareness of ARC programs and policies • engage stakeholders in policy development activities • engage in collaborative consultations across the higher education and research sectors. 	<p>The ARC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitor and evaluate program delivery outcomes • manage stakeholder requests for ARC data • ensure the ARC has rigorous data collection systems • assess the efficiency of assessment processes with ARC data • engage internationally to consider different ways of administering grants • maintain the public availability of grant data via the ARC Data Portal.

Assessing the Quality, Engagement and Impact of Research

Program 1.3 Excellence in Research for Australia

Policy and Strategy	Program Implementation and Management	Assurance	Relationships, Networks and Engagement	Evaluation and Analysis
<p>The ARC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> monitor and contribute to international developments in research activity and research evaluation provide strategic policy advice on research quality, engagement and impact use ERA program data to inform Australian Government policies. 	<p>The ARC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> review the ERA and EI programs to ensure they remain at the forefront of research evaluation and maintain ongoing stakeholder support deliver ERA and EI programs that are rigorous, minimise reporting burden and meet Australian Government objectives. 	<p>The ARC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> manage a robust peer review system maintain robust ARC governance frameworks to ensure legislative and financial compliance regularly review and report on ARC risks. 	<p>The ARC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage with stakeholders on ERA and EI processes and outcomes promote the understanding of and use of ERA and EI data to benefit government, industry, universities and the Australian community foster impactful engagement within and beyond the research sector promote the research benefits and value of Australian university research promote the understanding and use of ERA and EI data to benefit stakeholders. 	<p>The ARC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> monitor and evaluate program delivery outcomes use data on university research activity, quality, and university research engagement and impact to inform policy advice to the Australian Government maintain the public availability of a wide range of Australian university research data via the ARC Data Portal.

CAPABILITIES

The achievement of the ARC purpose and activities is dependent on our strong and effective organisational capability. The ARC maintains and builds its capabilities by investing in its people, processes and systems.

All ARC capabilities are regularly reviewed and evaluated to help maintain reliability, resilience and capacity to respond to current and emerging needs. This approach ensures our people, processes, structures and systems are dependable, responsive to change and aligned to our purpose at all times.

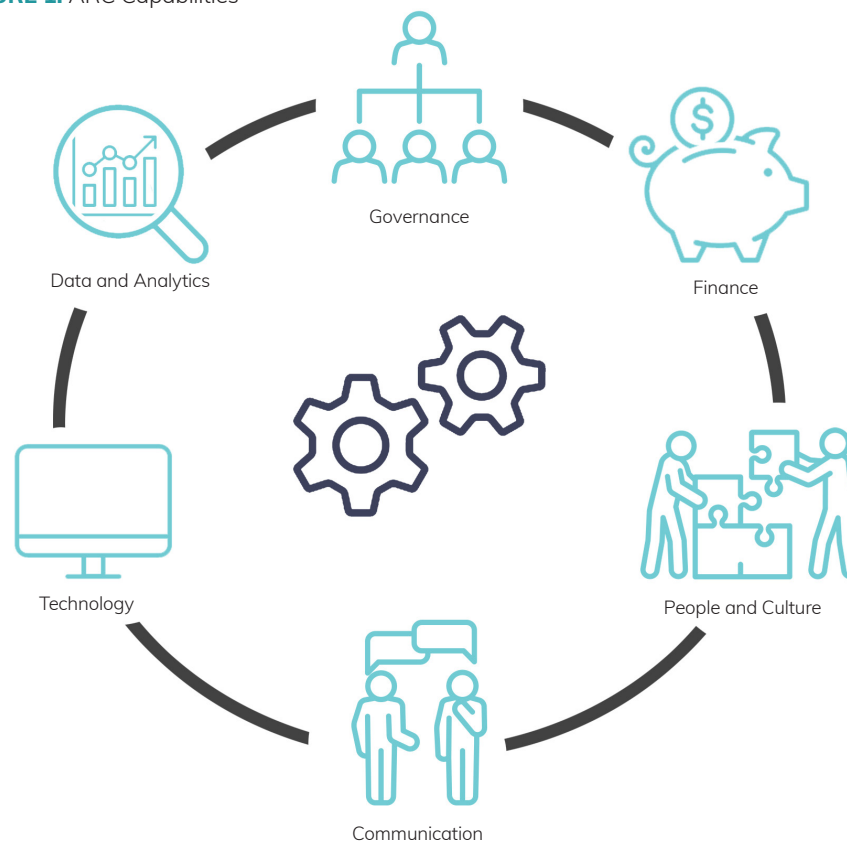
Governance

The ARC maintains high-quality governance structures that include strategies and frameworks for decision making, performance measurement and reporting, audit, and risk management. These frameworks are supported by internal policies, plans and targeted staff training.

All ARC activities are supported by an Audit Committee, Senior Management Group, Planning and Reporting Committee and Information Governance Committee. The ARC regularly adopts recommendations from its audits and other evaluation actions to improve business practices and maintain high standards of ethical conduct in relation to ARC policies and processes.

New technologies, including advanced data visualisation, are being investigated to enhance the evidence-based decision-making capability of the ARC and external grant data users. To adapt to the changing landscape in technology and how we use and access data in our ICT systems, the ARC has developed a robust information security policy and framework to guide access and use of ARC data. The ongoing adoption of new and emerging ICT systems will ensure the ARC remains current, responsive, efficient and secure.

FIGURE 1: ARC Capabilities



Finance

The ARC is committed to financial sustainability, sound financial governance and effective budget management. The use and management of public resources at the ARC is governed by the Commonwealth Resource Management Framework which is underpinned by the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act), *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014* and supporting directions and guidance. These requirements are embedded in our own internal financial policies, guidelines and controls which ensures the ARC achieves its purpose and fulfils the expectations of the Minister and stakeholders.

People and Culture

A highly-skilled workforce which understands the ARC's purpose is central to achieving our desired outcomes. Established policies are in place to support the development of a workforce that is aligned with the key activities and is able to respond flexibly to shifting priorities. Workforce planning processes are focused on identifying capability requirements, both current and emerging, and the development of skill-sets that are well prepared to meet future capability needs.

Strong leadership is also an enduring theme at the ARC and its leaders are supported to steer a high performing culture that aims to be innovative and collaborative. The ARC values the retention of corporate knowledge and expertise and although its overall staffing numbers are small, it maximises opportunities for all staff through formal and informal development opportunities. A range of policies and strategies are in place to ensure that the ARC workplace is inclusive and diverse and facilitates flexible, people-centred working arrangements.

Communication

The ARC plays an important role in promoting the benefits of Australian research to the wider Australian and international communities. The agency engages with its stakeholders through strategic communication and targeted outreach activities to ensure the highest quality performance in the delivery of our program responsibilities. The ARC communication strategy increases our ability as an agency to effectively engage with stakeholders to develop and implement policies and programs that serve the Australian research sector and benefit the wider community. Our internal communication is also premised on ensuring that consistent, effective and efficient communications are maintained to promote continued growth of a dynamic, supportive and productive workplace.

A broad range of strategies and activities are used to support engagement with stakeholders to improve awareness and understanding of ARC programs and policies, and to effectively consult and collaborate across the higher education and research sectors. The ARC's external communications strategy provides an overarching framework for engaging effectively with our external stakeholders—promoting the value of Australian research through communicating the outcomes and benefits of ARC-funded research; improving stakeholder awareness about the ARC's programs, policies and activities; and effectively consulting and collaborating with stakeholders across the higher education and research sector. Some examples of our key communication activities include our website, research sector messaging, publications and social media, while outreach engagement activities carried out by the ARC include consultations, panels, workshops, round tables and surveys conducted before or after outreach for feedback on activities. The ARC strives to be adaptive, proactive and innovative as we engage with our stakeholders and the broader community to respond to Australian research needs.

FIGURE 2: ARC Stakeholders



Technology

The ARC's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems are fundamental to the productivity of its staff and effective delivery of the NCGP, ERA and EI programs. ICT services provide modern workspaces to support flexibility and mobility within the workforce, and efficient and effective business systems to support business processes. This is all underpinned by robust and reliable infrastructure. The ARC plans to focus on ensuring the continuity of existing ICT services while building foundational capability for the future. Business systems will be enhanced to provide further efficiencies to the research sector and support whole of government initiatives.

The ARC Data Portal has aggregated data from ERA on all Australian university researchers by employment type and level, gender and field of research and NCGP data from GrantSearch. There is also metadata for every research output submitted to ERA (over 500,000 outputs). The high rated impact studies and engagement narratives from EI are also available which provide rich qualitative data on university best practice. The ARC collects and holds valuable program and administrative data on the NCGP as well as the ERA and EI assessment processes.

The ARC will continue its move to cloud based services. The infrastructure service will be modernised to reduce the physical footprint and utilise contemporary technologies to provide reliable end user services. Remote working capabilities will continue to be enhanced, with greater focus on the support for collaboration within multi-disciplinary teams.

Data and Analytics

The ARC values data as a strategic asset and collects a range of NCGP, ERA and EI program and administrative data as well as information on Australia's research and innovation systems. The ongoing collection of NCGP data is used to gain a comprehensive picture of ARC's research funding and to monitor trends over time for NCGP programs and schemes. It contributes to evidence-based decision-making, ARC performance reporting and evaluation, and informs policy development and implementation. This resource is utilised by a diverse range of stakeholders including universities, researchers, policy makers and the broader community.

The ARC is committed to promoting the outcomes of the research it funds and ensuring that non-sensitive data is made publicly available to extend the value and use of ARC-funded research. Ensuring that non-sensitive data are made publicly available to extend their value and use is a key driver of our data activities. One of the ways we meet the challenge of balancing the demands from stakeholders for access to data, against the requirements of legislation and the resources of the agency, is by optimising the functionality of the ARC Data Portal.

The ARC is extending its data visualisation capability through the Data Portal, including development of dynamic data displays and other data products, allowing stakeholders to access NCGP data in new ways beyond the static spreadsheets, tables and lists currently available on the ARC website.

RISK MANAGEMENT



The ARC has four strategic risks which are managed through its Risk Management Framework. The risks are:

Strategic Risk 1—The ARC is perceived to not be funding the best research

Strategic Risk 2—Outcomes from ERA and EI do not meet the needs of the Government and/or stakeholders

Strategic Risk 3—The ARC is not engaging effectively with its stakeholders (including across Government and with the research sector)

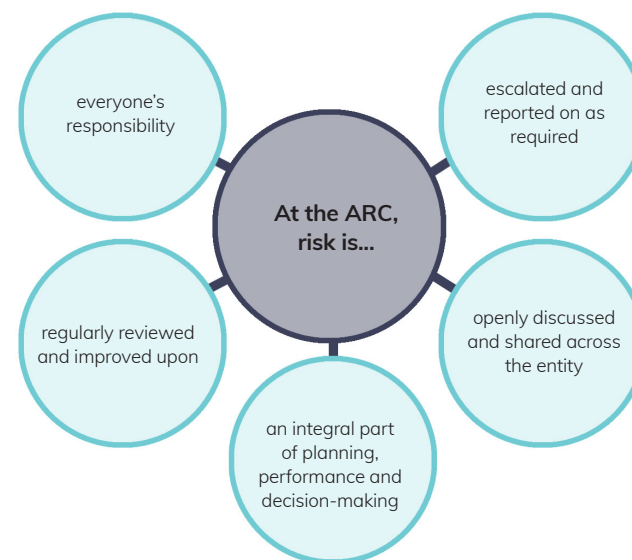
Strategic Risk 4—The ARC fails to comply with its legislative requirements.

The ARC's Risk Management Framework (the framework) is a comprehensive package designed in accordance with section 16 of the PGPA Act, for the management and oversight of the ARC's risks and controls. The framework has been developed to comply with the nine elements outlined in the *Commonwealth Risk Management Policy* and meets the needs of the ARC giving consideration to the unique context of the entity's functions.

The framework is underpinned by the ARC Risk Management Policy (the policy) and Risk Management Plan and Toolkit (the plan). These documents define the ARC's approach to risk management, the organisation's appetite and tolerance to risk plus key accountabilities and responsibilities for managing risk across the agency. The plan details the process for effective management of risk. The policy and plan together support all other elements of the framework including the strategic risk register, operational risk register and the fraud risk register. The ARC also has an established risk champions network to ensure that risk management responsibility is widely communicated, embedded in our culture and that risks are carefully considered and proactively managed in all areas of business.

The ARC recognises the potential impact of a number of its risks could be significant. In light of the ARC's role as a key funding agency, the agency is vigilant in the management of financial risks as well as having a low tolerance for risks that damage the ARC's reputation or impact on the safety of ARC staff and stakeholders.

FIGURE 3: Risk at the ARC



The ARC will continue to develop and improve processes and systems to record and analyse emerging and realised risks. It will also continue to build capacity, awareness and expertise in risk management through formal risk management training and systems training to assist with communication and interaction of stakeholders with risk management, activities and outcomes across the agency.



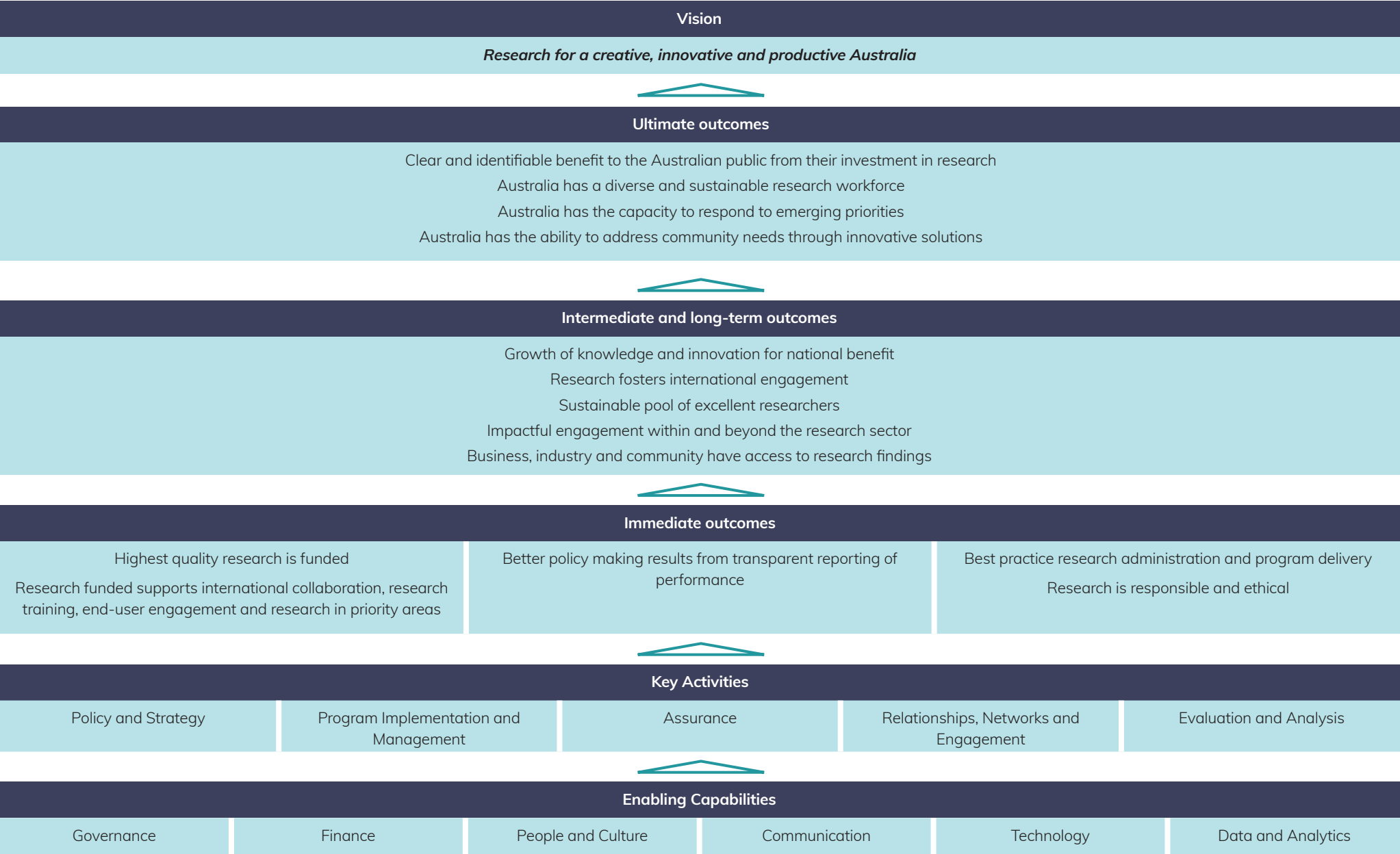
PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

The ARC's performance measures are designed to demonstrate the value of the ARC's work in funding the highest quality research, assessing the quality, engagement and impact of research, and providing advice on research matters. The ARC recognises the importance of reliable and relevant performance measures, designed to capture its success in achieving its purpose. The ARC's performance measures demonstrate how its work influences the growth of knowledge and innovation.

The underpinning logic of the ARC's performance measurement framework is represented below. This figure outlines the relationship between the ARC's capabilities, activities and outcomes, and captures the organisational logic underpinning the development of the ARC's performance measures. The ARC's performance outcomes may be influenced by factors beyond its control which are considered in its risk management strategies.

New performance measures have been included in the *ARC Corporate Plan 2020–21*. The new measures were introduced to respond to the ANAO's performance audit of the NCGP undertaken in 2018–19. One of the recommendations was that "The ARC ensure that its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the NCGP are reliable and include efficiency." The ARC has undertaken a review of all its performance measures. The new measures reflect both efficiency targets and, where appropriate, the changing nature of the ARC's business over the four years of the corporate plan. The corporate plan also includes relevant performance measures that have been valuable for tracking activities in areas such as the composition of the research workforce.

FIGURE 4: Performance Measurement Framework



NCGP—Funding Excellent Basic and Applied Research and Research Training

Program 1.1 Discovery—Research and research training

Program 1.2 Linkage—Cross sector research partnerships

Performance Indicators

ARC-funded research supports the sustainability of Australia's research workforce				
Indicator		Metric/Outcome	Methodology/Data Source	Baseline Data
A	Proportion of researchers (unique individuals) on ARC-funded research who are early career researchers	Immediate outcome at time grant is awarded The number of unique chief investigators who are early career researchers	Takes into account new and ongoing funding for Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA) and the Discovery Program (DP) Data extracted from the ARC NCGP administrative database (measure adjusted for career age with Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE))	New Indicator
B	Proportion of researchers (unique individuals) on ARC-funded research projects who are women	Immediate outcome at time grant is awarded The number of unique chief investigators who identified as female	Data extracted from the ARC NCGP administrative database	19–20: 32.3% 18–19: 30.9% 17–18: 29.2% 16–17: 26.7%
C	Proportion of chief investigators (unique individuals) on ARC-funded research projects who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	The number of unique chief investigators who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and the total number of unique researchers	Data extracted from the ARC NCGP administrative database	19–20: 1.2% 18–19: 1.1% 17–18: 1.2% 16–17: 1.0%
D	Number of researchers (unique individuals) on ARC-funded grants	Total number of unique chief investigators on all research projects awarded for funding commencement year	Data extracted from the ARC NCGP administrative database Researchers are counted once per program Researchers who participated in both programs are counted once for total NCGP	19–20: 2,783 18–19: 2,464 17–18: 2,521 16–17: 2,938
E	Number of researchers on ARC-funded research projects who are fellows or awardees	Total number of researchers who are awarded DECRA, Future Fellowships (FT), Laureate Fellowships (FL) or Discovery Indigenous which supports Discovery Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Award (DAATSIA) for funding commencement year	Data extracted from the ARC NCGP administrative database	19–20: 321 18–19: 320 17–18: 309 16–17: 320

Performance Measures for 2020–24

Process

Measure		Metric/Outcome	Methodology/Data Source	Target	Baseline Data	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
ARC has an efficient competitive process which is transparent, fair and equitable									
1.1	NCGP applications and assessment processes are conducted in a timely manner	Recommendations are made to the Minister within six months of scheme round closing dates for Linkage Projects and within eight months for all other schemes	Data extracted from the ARC NCGP administrative database	100%	Expanded Measures	100%	100%	100%	100%
1.2	ARC meets Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRG) requirements to publish information about grant opportunities and grant awards	ARC publishes all NCGP grant opportunities and grant awards on GrantConnect	GrantConnect	100%	New Measure	100%	100%	100%	100%
1.3	ARC manages equitable expert assessment of NCGP applications	Minimum of two detailed assessments are received per application across all NCGP schemes with the exception of SRIs	Data extracted from the ARC NCGP administrative database Note: due to the variable nature of SRIs, assessment processes may vary from standard ARC processes	100%	New Measure	100%	100%	100%	100%
1.4	ARC reviews all completed final grant reports in a timely manner	Final reports are reviewed within three months	Data extracted from the ARC NCGP administrative database	100%	New Measure	100%	100%	100%	100%
1.5	ARC reviews all submitted End of Year Reports, Progress/Annual Reports in a timely manner	Reports are reviewed within three months	Data extracted from the ARC NCGP administrative database	100%	New Measure	100%	100%	100%	100%
1.6	ARC manages NCGP application and assessment processes fairly and in accordance with Grant Guidelines	The number of upheld appeals against administrative processes is very low compared to applications submitted	Data extracted from the ARC NCGP administrative database	<1%	New Measure	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

Process Outcome

Measure	Metric/Outcome	Methodology/Data Source	Target	Baseline Data	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
ARC has an efficient competitive process which is fair and equitable								
1.7	Proportion of Linkage Program funding to support industrial research training under the <i>Industrial Transformation Training Centres</i> (ITTC) scheme	Immediate outcome at time grant is awarded	New and ongoing funding for ITTC and the Linkage Program Data extracted from the ARC NCGP administrative database	Maintain, ±5% of the three year rolling average	19–20: 10.4% 18–19: 11.5% 17–18: 8.1% 16–17: 5.8%	Maintain, ±5% of the three year rolling average	Maintain, ±5% of the three year rolling average	Maintain, ±5% of the three year rolling average

Research Outcome

Measure	Metric/Outcome	Methodology/Data Source	Target	Baseline Data	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
ARC supports collaboration to enable high quality research								
1.8	Proportion of ARC-funded research projects that involved international collaboration	The number of projects which involved international collaboration	Data extracted from the ARC NCGP administrative database Source final reports	70%	New Measures	70%	70%	70%
1.9	Maintain or increase the level of co-funding from partner organisations involved in ARC funded research (<i>Linkage Projects</i> scheme)	Immediate outcome at time grant is awarded	Data extracted from the ARC NCGP administrative database	≥ \$1 for every ARC dollar	19–20: \$1.64 18–19: \$1.91 17–18: \$1.76 16–17: \$1.98	≥ \$1 for every ARC dollar	≥ \$1 for every ARC dollar	≥ \$1 for every ARC dollar

Measure		Metric/Outcome	Methodology/Data Source	Target	Baseline Data	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
ARC supports collaboration to enable high quality research									
1.10	Proportion of participating organisations satisfied with the research partnership supported through the Linkage Program (<i>Linkage Projects</i> scheme)	Immediate outcome at time grant is awarded	Data extracted from the ARC NCGP administrative database	Maintain; with baseline based on four year rolling average	19–20: 94.8% 18–19: 96.0% 17–18: 97.0% 16–17: 98.0%	90%	90%	90%	90%
ARC funding grows Australia’s research knowledge and innovation									
1.11	Proportion of ARC-funded research projects that indicate their research will involve research in one of the Australian Government’s National Science and Research Priority areas	Immediate outcome at time grant is awarded	Data extracted from the ARC NCGP administrative database The number of projects indicating their research in a National Science and Research Priority area and the total number of projects	Maintain the proportion of ARC-funded research projects and awards that involve research in one of the Australian Government’s National Science and Research Priority areas (with baseline based on four year rolling average)	19–20: 64.2% 18–19: 61.0% 17–18: 60.4% 16–17: 66.0%	60%	60%	60%	60%

Assessing the Quality, Engagement and Impact of Research

Program 1.3 Excellence in Research for Australia

Performance Measures 2020–24

Measure		Metric/Outcome	Methodology/Data Source	Target	Baseline Data	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
ERA provides assurance of the quality of research in Australia									
2.1	ERA methodology is reviewed	Immediate	Qualitative, ARC records (report and recommendations on changes for future ERA rounds)	Review report completed	New Measure	X	–	–	–
2.2	Review outcomes are implemented through revised methodology, where required	Intermediate	Qualitative, ARC records and published material	Publication of ERA 2023 submission and assessment documentation	New Measure	–	X	X	–
2.3	Research quality of participating universities is assessed and reported on	Intermediate	Quantitative, ARC data records	100% of eligible submissions are assessed in accordance with relevant criteria and results are published	19–20: n/a 18–19: Met 17–18: n/a 16–17: n/a 15–16: Met	–	–	–	X
2.4	Use of ERA program data to assist in the development of Australian Government policies	Immediate, Intermediate	Qualitative, information gathering—ongoing activity	ERA program reports and activities inform Australian Government policy	19–20: Met 18–19: Met 17–18: Met 16–17: Met 15–16: Met	X	X	X	X
ERA encourages excellent, internationally competitive research									
2.5	Use of ERA program data to inform the strategic planning of Australian universities	Immediate, Intermediate	Quantitative/qualitative, survey and analysis of Australian university planning and reporting documents	ERA program reports and activities inform strategic planning at eligible Australian universities	19–20: Met 18–19: Met 17–18: Met 16–17: Met 15–16: Met	X	X	X	X

Measure		Metric/Outcome	Methodology/Data Source	Target	Baseline Data	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
The EI Assessment encourages impactful engagement within and beyond the research sector									
2.6	EI assessment methodology reviewed	Immediate	Qualitative, ARC records (report and recommendations on changes for future EI rounds)	Review report completed	New Measure	X	–	–	–
2.7	Review outcomes are implemented through revised methodology, where required	Intermediate	Qualitative, ARC records and published material	Publication of EI 2024 submission and assessment documentation	New Measure	–	–	X	X



APPENDIX: ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY

Acronyms

ARC	Australian Research Council
ARC Act	<i>Australian Research Council Act 2001</i>
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CGRG	<i>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines</i>
EI	Engagement and Impact
ERA	Excellence in Research for Australia
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
NCGP	National Competitive Grants Program
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
PGPA Act	<i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i>
RMS	Research Management System

Glossary

Activities	What the ARC does with its inputs to fulfil its purpose
Applied research	Research that aims to address real-world problems by applying existing research theories or practices in a novel or innovative way
Basic research	Research that contributes to understanding the world through discoveries and the creation of new knowledge, theories and practices
Early career researcher	Researchers who have held a PhD or equivalent qualification for a period less than or equal to five years at the time of their application
Inputs	Resources for ARC activities
National Science and Research Priorities	Nine research priority areas identified by the Australian Government which are Food, Soil and Water, Transport, Cybersecurity, Energy, Resources, Advanced Manufacturing, Environmental Change and Health. Each priority has a number of practical challenges.
Outcomes	Benefits or changes to individuals or populations resulting from ARC activities
Outputs	Direct products of ARC activities, for example, grants
Partner Organisations	National or international organisations that satisfy the eligibility criteria for partner organisations under the NCGP including business, industry, not-for-profit, government and international higher education organisations
Peer review	Evaluation of research by experts, usually in the same research discipline
Purpose	The strategic objective(s) that the agency intends to pursue over the reporting period

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