



Special Research Initiative for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers' Network Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2012

Australian Research Council Act 2001

I, Greg Combet, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency for Minister CHRIS EVANS Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research, having satisfied myself of the matters set out in section 59 of the *Australian Research Council Act 2001*, approve these Funding Rules under section 60 of that Act.

Dated

21 December 2011

GREG COMBET

Minister for Innovation and Industry and Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency for Minister CHRIS EVANS Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research

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Key Dates

| | |
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| Closing time for submission of Expressions of Interest | 5.00 pm (AEDT) Friday, 27 January 2012 |
| Closing time for submission of Proposals | 5.00 pm (AEDT) Friday, 27 April 2012 |
| Deadline for Request not to Assess | 5.00 pm (AEDT) Friday, 27 April 2012 |

Contacts

Researchers should direct requests for information to the Research Office within their organisation.

ARC Contacts

Mail: Australian Research Council
GPO Box 2702
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Courier: Australian Research Council
Level 2, 11 Lancaster Place, Majura Park
CANBERRA ACT 2609

Please address general scheme enquiries to the ***Special Research Initiatives Coordinator***.

Appeals must be addressed to **The Appeals Officer**.

Email: sri@arc.gov.au (general scheme enquiries)
appeals@arc.gov.au (appeals)
rms@arc.gov.au (RMS User IDs)

Phone: 02 6287 6600

Fax: 02 6287 6638

Please visit www.arc.gov.au for more information on the ARC and its funding schemes.

1. Name of Funding Rules

These Funding Rules are the Australian Research Council *Special Research Initiative for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers' Network* Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2012.

2. Commencement

These Funding Rules shall take effect upon registration on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments.

3. Definitions

In these Funding Rules, unless the contrary intention appears:

Adjunct or Emeritus Appointment or equivalent means that an Eligible Organisation has a formal agreement with a researcher which establishes an ongoing association with the Eligible Organisation, of the nature of an emeritus or honorary academic or visiting fellow. The ARC may seek documentary evidence of such an association if it is considered necessary.

Administering Organisation means an Eligible Organisation which submits a Proposal for funding under the Initiative and which will be responsible for the administration of the funding if the proposed Program is approved for funding.

ARC means the Australian Research Council, as established under the ARC Act.

ARC Act means the *Australian Research Council Act 2001*.

ARC College means a body of scholars appointed to assist the ARC to identify research excellence, moderate external assessments and recommend fundable proposals.

Chief Investigator (CI) means a researcher who satisfies the eligibility criteria for a Chief Investigator under these Funding Rules.

Collaborating Organisation means any Eligible Organisation which is identified in the Proposal as a contributor to the Program but is not the Administering Organisation.

Commonwealth means the Commonwealth of Australia.

Commonwealth Fellowship means a position held by a researcher where the salary is funded wholly or partly by the Commonwealth and where the researcher in that position was named in a Proposal.

Conflict of Interest means any conflict of interest, any risk of a conflict of interest and any apparent conflict of interest arising through a party engaging in any activity, participating in any association, holding any membership or obtaining any interest that is likely to conflict with or restrict that party participating in the Program.

Eligible Organisation means an organisation listed in Appendix A.

Expression of Interest (EOI) means a preliminary request to the ARC for a research Program which is submitted in accordance with Funding Rules approved by the Minister.

Funding Agreement means the agreement entered into by the ARC and the Administering Organisation when a Proposal from that organisation is approved for funding.

GST has the meaning as given in section 195-1 of the *A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999*.

Initiative means the specific activity or Program to be implemented under the *Special Research Initiatives* scheme.

In-kind Contribution means a contribution of goods, services, materials or time to the Program from an individual, business or organisation.

Minister means the Minister from time to time responsible for the administration of the ARC Act, or the Minister's delegate.

NCGP means the *National Competitive Grants Program*.

Network Director means the first-named CI on a Proposal.

Partner Investigator (PI) means a researcher who satisfies the eligibility criteria for a Partner Investigator under these Funding Rules.

Partner Organisation means an organisation, other than an Eligible Organisation, which is to be a contributor to the Program.

Program means a Proposal approved by the Minister to receive funding from the ARC in accordance with these Funding Rules.

Proposal means a request to the ARC for the provision of funding which is submitted in accordance with the Funding Rules.

Research Environment means the laboratory, department, school, centre or institute within the Administering Organisation where the majority of the research will be undertaken.

Research Office means a business unit within an Eligible Organisation that is responsible for administrative contact with the ARC regarding Proposals and Programs.

RMS means the ARC's online Research Management System.

Selection Advisory Committee means a group of experts appointed by the ARC who will review and evaluate each Expression of Interest and Proposal and provide a recommendation for funding to the ARC.

Special Studies Program means an approved program providing release from normal duties for research related activity or professional development purposes. This does not include sabbaticals or study leave.

Specified Personnel means the personnel required for this Initiative and may include roles such as Centre Director, Network Director, Research

Director, Chief Operations Officer, Chief Investigators, Partner Investigators or other personnel in the Initiative.

4. Introduction

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 These Funding Rules are current as at December 2011 and have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *ARC Act* in force then.
- 4.1.2 *Special Research Initiatives* are established to address specific research priorities and/or to build capacity in strategically important areas.
- 4.1.3 The *Special Research Initiative for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers' Network* provides funding to Eligible Organisations to support a network and research programs led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers.
- 4.1.4 For the purposes of these Funding Rules, research is defined as the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.

This definition of research is consistent with a broad notion of research and experimental development (R&D) as comprising 'creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man [human-kind], culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications'¹.

4.2 Special Research Initiative

- 4.2.1 The successful Program will be a national collaborative Network, led by experienced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers with track records in coordinating team-based cross-disciplinary projects, mentoring research students and early-career researchers. The network's core functions will include building Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research capacity, mentoring new researchers and advancing research in Indigenous Knowledge Systems.
- 4.2.2 The Network itself will have a dispersed presence, administered from a central 'hub' working with collaborative 'spokes' of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers throughout Australia. Each spoke will be linked to a node. The Network will have at least four nodes in two or more states and/or territories.
- 4.2.3 The Network will provide scale and focus for Indigenous research with an effective collaborative governance framework. This structure will support and encourage participants to commit to broader strategic objectives producing collaborative outcomes not independently realisable.

4.3 Objectives

- 4.3.1 The specific objectives for the *Special Research Initiative for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers' Network* are to:

¹ OECD (2002), *Frascati Manual: Proposed Standard Practice for Surveys on Research and Experimental Development*, Paris (Page 30)

- Connect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers across Australian higher education institutes both within and across research disciplines to facilitate collaborative and innovative approaches to planning and undertaking research, and to enrich research training.
- Build capacity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers at all career stages to undertake high quality research and lead research projects through:
 - i. encouraging excellent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers to draw on their experience and expertise to develop and lead research, research training and career development programs and to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research students and early-career researchers;
 - ii. providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research students and early-career researchers to develop their research expertise through structured research and research training programs;
 - iii. supporting a research and research training environment that acknowledges and is sensitive to the needs and cultural backgrounds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers; and
 - iv. applying for additional ARC (and other) research support for the Network's activities.
- Encourage young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to pursue research careers in Australia.
- Undertake integrated research programs that build on research conducted by individual and teams to advance research into Indigenous Knowledge Systems and increase understanding of how Indigenous Knowledge can help address contemporary challenges and bring cultural, social and environmental benefits to Australia.
- Encourage and facilitate collaboration with international research groups working in areas of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and/or Indigenous researcher capacity building.
- Gain repute in the wider community and serve as a point of interaction among higher education institutions, governments, and the private and community sectors.

4.4 Selection Criteria

4.4.1 All Proposals which meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed and merit ranked using the following selection criteria:

- | | |
|--|-----|
| a. Investigator(s) | 30% |
| i. research opportunity and performance evidence (ROPE); | |

- ii. capacity to undertake the proposed research and mentorship; and
- iii. strategy for doctoral and post-doctoral research opportunities.
- b. Program Quality and Innovation 40%
 - i. Does the research address a significant social and intellectual problem?
 - ii. Does the method and approach adopted achieve the objectives of the program?
 - iii. Will the Program build Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researcher capacity?
 - iv. Is the conceptual/theoretical framework, genuinely broad, cross-disciplinary, innovative and original?
 - v. Will the aims, concepts, methods and results advance knowledge?
 - vi. Does the Program have a wide level of collaboration, including the development of national and international networks and linkages?
- c. Feasibility and Benefit 10%
 - i. Are the design of the Program and the expertise of the participants sufficient to ensure the Program can be completed with the proposed budget and timeframe?
 - ii. Will the completed Program produce innovative economic, environmental, social and/or cultural benefit to the Australian and international community?
 - iii. Is the nature and extent of the Program's strategic approach to communication and outreach effective in achieving its objectives?
- d. Governance 10%
 - i. Does the Program have an effective governance arrangement with the capacity to transcend disciplinary, geographical, and institutional boundaries and cultures to achieve the Program's vision?
- e. Research Environment 10%
 - i. Is there an existing, or developing, supportive and high-quality research environment for this Program?
 - ii. Are the necessary facilities to complete the Program available?
 - iii. Are there adequate strategies to encourage dissemination, commercialisation, if appropriate and promotion of research outcomes?

4.5 Organisational Statement in respect to the Research Environment

- 4.5.1 The Administering Organisation must provide a statement in relation to the Research Environment, approved by the Deputy Vice Chancellor

(Research), Chief Executive Officer or equivalent, within the Proposal outlining the:

- a. extent to which the proposed Program aligns with the existing and/or emerging research strengths of the Administering Organisation;
- b. arrangements under which the proposed Program and investigators will be supported in a collaborative Research Environment; and
- c. opportunities for the investigators to demonstrate the level of independence required to be competitive for research and, research and teaching pathways at the Administering Organisation during and after the Program.

5. Funding

5.1 Level and Period of Funding

- 5.1.1 All amounts referred to in these Funding Rules are to be read as exclusive of GST (if any), unless expressly stated otherwise.
- 5.1.2 Total funding of up to \$800,000 per year may be awarded over four years, subject to Parliamentary appropriations.
- 5.1.3 The ARC reserves the right to recommend levels of funding for a Program at levels that may differ from those requested in the Proposal.
- 5.1.4 Financial assistance may be payable under *Special Research Initiative for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers' Network* Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2012 in respect of the calendar year 2012 and any subsequent years to which the ARC Act applies. Funding for approved Programs will commence effective August 2012.
- 5.1.5 Funding may be provided for short- or long-term activities. Any funding awarded will be subject to sufficient funds being available for the Initiative, the provisions of the *ARC Act*, and continued satisfactory progress of the Program.
- 5.1.6 The ARC may recommend funding for a Program for a duration different from that requested in the Proposal.

5.2 Budget Items Supported

- 5.2.1 Budget items which directly support a research Program may be funded, including:
 - a. Maintenance, infrastructure and equipment required for this Program. Funding will not be provided for infrastructure or equipment that is deemed to be for general use.
 - b. Specialised computer equipment and software essential to the Program.
 - c. Expert services of a third party if the services are deemed to be directly related to and necessary for the proposed Program. Such services include, but are not limited to:

- i. translation services, transcriptions services;
 - ii. workshop services, data collection and analysis services; and
 - iii. the purchase of bibliographical or archival material (electronic or hard copy).
- d. Personnel (salaries and on-costs) for research associates, technicians and laboratory attendants. Salary support must be requested at an appropriate salary level, including 28 per cent on-costs, for the Administering Organisation.
- e. Publication and dissemination of Program outputs and outreach activity costs may be supported up to two (2) per cent of total ARC funding awarded to the Program. Publication and dissemination costs do not need to be separately itemised in the Proposal's budget. This excludes fees for patent application and holding. The ARC strongly encourages publication in publicly accessible outlets and the depositing of data and any publications arising from a Program in an appropriate subject and/or institutional repository.
- f. Stipends for postgraduate students in whole or in part.
- g. Relocation costs subject to the policies of the Administering Organisation.
- h. Teaching relief for CIs on the Program, up to a total value of \$40,000 per year for the Program.
- i. Travel costs:
 - i. economy, domestic and international travel costs for CIs and research support personnel associated with the Program to foster and strengthen collaborations between researchers in Australia and overseas; and
 - ii. economy, domestic and international travel costs for PIs living overseas to travel to and from Australia, once per year, to work on the Program.

5.3 Budget Items Not Supported

5.3.1 Budget items which will not be supported by ARC funding include:

- a. Capital works and general infrastructure, in whole or in part.
- b. 'Bench Fees' or similar laboratory access fees levied by the institution.
- c. Salaries and/or on-costs, in whole or in part, for CIs and PIs.
- d. Travel and related expenses for researchers when on a Special Studies Program.
- e. Research support for PIs, apart from short-term project support for investigators visiting from overseas and domestic and international travel associated with a project.

- f. Fees for international students or Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) and Higher Education Loan Programme (HELP) liabilities for students.
 - g. Costs not directly related to research or the Program. Examples include but are not limited to costs of a personal nature (visas, insurance, mobile phone purchase, or call charges).
- 5.3.2 The following basic facilities must be provided and funded by the Administering Organisation:
- a. accommodation (e.g. laboratory and office space, suitably equipped and furnished);
 - b. access to film or music editing facilities;
 - c. access to a basic library collection;
 - d. bench fees;
 - e. standard reference materials;
 - f. web hosting;
 - g. provision of computers and basic computing facilities such as printers, word processing and other standard software; and
 - h. use of photocopiers, telephones, mail, fax, email and internet services.
- 5.3.3 Eligible Organisations must ensure that organisational in-kind contributions in the budget section of the Proposal do not include salary for any Commonwealth Fellowships, unless it is salary committed by an Eligible Organisation over and above the Commonwealth component. The inclusion of a Commonwealth Fellow salary as an organisational in-kind contribution may lead to a proposal being excluded and not recommended for funding.

5.4 Research/Activities Not Supported

- 5.4.1 Except where such activities meet the definition of research at 4.1.4, the *Special Research Initiative for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers Network* does not support the production of:
- a. descriptive data compilations, catalogues or bibliographies;
 - b. teaching materials; or
 - c. compilation of data, computer programs, research aids and tools.

6. Organisational Types, Roles, Eligibility and Contributions

6.1 Eligible Organisations

- 6.1.1 A Proposal may only be submitted by an Eligible Organisation listed at Appendix A.
- 6.1.2 The Eligible Organisation which submits the Proposal will be the Administering Organisation and all other Eligible Organisations listed on the Proposal will be Collaborating Organisations.

- 6.1.3 In addition to the Administering Organisation the Program will have at least four Collaborating Organisations.
- 6.1.4 To maximise the impact of ARC funding, Proposals must demonstrate a significant contribution of cash, in-kind or other material resources from the Administering Organisation and all Collaborating Organisations, having regard to the total cost of the Program and the relative contribution of each Chief Investigator. Combined cash and in-kind contributions must include:
 - a. the full-time equivalent salary (FTE) of the Network Director; and
 - b. the salary of Network Node Leaders (typically a 0.5 FTE position).
- 6.1.5 The **combined** Administering Organisation and Collaborating Organisations contributions for a Proposal (i.e. the total of the cash and in-kind Contributions of the Administering Organisation and Collaborating Organisations) must approximate the total funding requested from the ARC.

6.2 Partner Organisations

- 6.2.1 Organisations which are not Eligible Organisations but which are listed on the Proposal will be Partner Organisations.
- 6.2.2 Each Proposal must identify at least three Partner Organisations which will be involved in the proposed Program.
- 6.2.3 A Proposal must demonstrate a contribution of cash, in-kind or other material resources from the Partner Organisations, having regard to the total cost of the Program and the relative contribution of each Partner Investigator.

6.3 Collaborative Arrangements

- 6.3.1 A Proposal should include the details of the collaborative arrangements proposed, including how each Organisation is involved in the Program, how the Program fits into each Partner Organisation's overall strategic plan and how the Program is of value to each of the Partner Organisations involved.

7. Roles and Eligibility for Researchers

7.1 Researcher Roles and General Eligibility

- 7.1.1 Roles that may be undertaken by researchers are:
 - a. Chief Investigator (CI); or
 - b. Partner Investigator (PI).
- 7.1.2 The Proposal will include and clearly identify the following Specified Personnel:
 - a. Network Director - will be the first named CI on the Proposal. The Network Director will be responsible for implementing the strategies of the Initiative and managing the research program. The Network Director must coordinate the research effort and reporting structures across the Administering Organisation and the Collaborating and Partner Organisations and nodes.

- b. Network Node Leader - at least four, each being a CI.
 - c. Network Participant - at least fifteen, each being a CI.
- 7.1.3 At the time of the submission of a Proposal, all obligations regarding previously funded Programs involving the nominated CIs on the Proposal must have been fulfilled to the satisfaction of the ARC. Such obligations include the provision of satisfactory Progress and Final Reports.
- 7.1.4 The majority of researchers in the Network will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

7.2 Eligibility Criteria for a Network Director

- 7.2.1 The Network Director must meet the eligibility criteria for a CI. He/she should be employed by the Administering Organisation.
- 7.2.2 The first-named researcher on an EOI or a Proposal will be considered the Network Director. Where this researcher is to be replaced by another researcher as Network Director should the Proposal be successful, the replacement researcher must be included in the EOI or the Proposal and the reasons for replacement justified to the satisfaction of the ARC.
- 7.2.3 The Network Director is expected to be fully committed to the activities of the Program. If a Network Director is unable to meet this undertaking, the ARC may, in its absolute discretion, decide not to recommend the Proposal for funding.
- 7.2.4 If a Proposal has been approved for funding and the Network Director is at any time during the Program no longer able to undertake this role, the Program may be continued under a replacement Network Director provided that:
- a. approval is obtained from the Minister for the change in Network Director; and
 - b. a replacement Network Director meets the eligibility criteria for a Network Director and those for a CI at the time of her/his nomination and for the full term of her/his participation in the Program.

7.3 Eligibility Criteria for Chief Investigators

- 7.3.1 A researcher nominated on a Proposal as a CI must meet at least one of the following criteria as at the commencement date for funding of the Proposal, and for the full term of her/his participation in the Program:
- a. be an employee for at least half-time (50 per cent of FTE) at an Eligible Organisation; or
 - b. be a holder of an Emeritus, Adjunct or equivalent appointment at an Eligible Organisation and not be employed more than half-time (50 per cent of FTE) at another organisation that:
 - i. is outside the higher education sector, and
 - ii. engages in research which is funded predominantly from State/Territory or Commonwealth Government funding sources.

- 7.3.2 The CI must take significant intellectual responsibility for the conduct of the Program and for any strategic decisions called for in its pursuit and the communication of results. The CI must have the capacity to make a serious commitment to carrying out the Program and cannot assume the role of a supplier of resources for work that will largely be placed in the hands of others.
- 7.3.3 The CI must reside predominantly in Australia for the full life of the Program. The CI may seek approval from the Administering Organisation to undertake fieldwork, or study leave, directly related to the Program. Such absences must not total more than half the Program funding period.

Notwithstanding the eligibility under the criteria above or below in this Section, researchers cannot be eligible to be CIs if undertaking undergraduate studies.

- 7.3.4 If a Proposal has been approved for funding and a CI is, at any time, no longer able to work as proposed on the Program, the Program may be continued provided that any replacement CI is approved by the ARC and meets the CI eligibility criteria.
- 7.3.5 If a Proposal has been approved for funding and the sole CI is, at any time, no longer able to work as proposed on the Program, the Program may be terminated.

7.4 Eligibility Criteria for Partner Investigators

- 7.4.1 A researcher nominated as a PI on a Proposal must:
- a. not meet the eligibility criteria for a CI; and
 - b. secure a cash or in-kind contribution or other resources from their own organisation for the Program (having regard to the total cost of the Program and the relative contribution of other investigators).
- 7.4.2 A PI must take significant intellectual responsibility for the conduct of the Program and for any strategic decisions called for in its pursuit and the communication of results. The PI must have the capacity to make a serious commitment to carrying out the Program and cannot assume the role of a supplier of resources for work that will largely be placed in the hands of others.
- 7.4.3 If a Proposal has been approved for funding and a PI is, at any time, no longer able to work as proposed on the Program, the Program may be continued provided that any replacement PI is approved by the ARC and meets the PI eligibility criteria.

8. Governance Structure and Arrangements

- 8.1.1 Administrative operations of the Network will normally be established within the academic, administrative and financial governance structures of the Administering Organisation.
- 8.1.2 A Network may comprise networked nodes, or operate as a 'virtual Centre', or adopt any other appropriate approach to research management, provided

that it meets the objectives and selection criteria and is not contrary to the Funding Agreement.

- 8.1.3 A governing body will oversee the governance of the Network. It will be comprised of pre-eminent Indigenous academics and leaders. Whilst the Network will operate and manage its affairs independently of its Administering and Collaborating Organisations, the Administering Organisation and each of the Collaborating Organisations will be entitled to representation on the governing body.
- 8.1.4 The governing body will ensure that the Network maintains a focussed strategy in undertaking its programs and promoting shared goals and responsibilities. The governing body will be responsible for the Business and Strategic Plan. It will also assist the Network Director in developing the Network's partnerships with national and international Indigenous institutions and research bodies.
- 8.1.5 The governing body will have a Chair who will champion the Network and provide advice and mentoring to the Network Director.
- 8.1.6 All executive positions in the Network will be held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics and must be selected on merit.

9. Proposals

9.1 Number of Proposals and Cross-Scheme Eligibility

- 9.1.1 An Eligible Organisation may submit only one Proposal.
- 9.1.2 Applicants should note the eligibility criteria for access to other funding schemes, as expressed in the funding rules for those schemes. The ARC reserves the right to change these criteria in future funding rounds. Funding Rules for all ARC schemes may be found on the ARC website, www.arc.gov.au.

9.2 Proposal Eligibility and Duplication

- 9.2.1 The ARC will not duplicate funding for research, including infrastructure, funded by the Commonwealth as at 1 July 2012.
- 9.2.2 The Proposal must list all current funding and requested funding for the CIs and PIs under any ARC scheme or any other Commonwealth funding scheme.
- 9.2.3 The ARC will assess whether a Proposal meets the eligibility requirements in these Funding Rules and may recommend that a Proposal that does not meet the requirements be deemed ineligible.
- 9.2.4 A decision under clause 9.2.3 may be made by the ARC at any stage during assessment of the Proposal and may result in non-progression of the Proposal to the next level of assessment.

- 9.2.5 The CIs named on a successful Proposal may retain their current ARC projects provided:
- a. the Proposal clearly demonstrates and explains, to the satisfaction of the ARC, the overlap between the proposed research program and the existing ARC-funded research program(s); and
 - b. funding for the overlapping aspect of the research program is not requested in the Proposal budget — for the duration of the existing non-*Special Research Initiative* funding.

10. Expressions of Interest

- 10.1.1 The *Special Research Initiative for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers' Network* includes a two-stage selection process. An Expression of Interest (EOI) must be submitted to the ARC in the first instance. Full Proposals will be invited by the ARC after assessment and shortlisting of all EOIs.

10.2 Submission of Expressions of Interest

- 10.2.1 An EOI must be submitted as a summary of the proposed Network and not exceed 15 A4 pages in total. The EOI must contain sufficient information necessary for its assessment without the need for further explanatory documentation. The ARC can request further documentation as part of the selection process.
- 10.2.2 All details in the EOI must be current at the time of submission.
- 10.2.3 In submitting an EOI, the Administering Organisation and the Network Director, CIs and PIs nominated in the EOI are consenting to the EOI's being assessed under the ARC's peer assessment procedures and agreeing to the release of the EOI to third parties for assessment.
- 10.2.4 The Administering Organisation must use the EOI form available on the ARC website.
- 10.2.5 Instructions on completing the EOI form are included in the form. These instructions specify a range of requirements for EOIs and will also assist parties in preparing EOIs.
- 10.2.6 All EOIs must be written in English and must comply strictly with the format, content and submission requirements as specified in these Funding Rules and the EOI form issued by the ARC.
- 10.2.7 When completing the EOI form, a highly legible font type must be used, such as Times New Roman, Calibri, Arial, Palatino or Helvetica. Font size must be 12-point, or equivalent to Times New Roman 12-point, and black type must be used. Variants such as mathematical typesetting languages may also be used. References may be reproduced in 10-point font size. All text pages must use a single column with all margins being at least 2cm. Colour graphs or colour photographs should not be included as they will be reproduced in black and white and the reproduction quality may not be optimal. Finely detailed graphics and grey scale may also not be precisely reproduced.

- 10.2.8 The Administering Organisation's Research Office must submit one electronic copy (in PDF format) and one paper copy of completed EOIs to the ARC by **5.00pm AEDT Friday, 27 January 2012**. Submissions must be made to the address and email address listed under 'Contacts' on p4 of these Funding Rules.
- 10.2.9 EOIs may be withdrawn, but additions, deletions and modifications will not be accepted after the closing date for submission unless invited by the ARC. To withdraw the EOI, the Administering Organisation must notify the ARC in writing.
- 10.2.10 Applicants must note that Administering Organisations may have internal closing times which precede ARC closing times.

10.3 Assessment and Selection Process for Expressions of Interest

- 10.3.1 Assessment of EOIs is undertaken by the ARC, which reserves the right to make recommendations solely on the basis of its expertise and which may:
- a. consider if an EOI satisfies the eligibility criteria set out in the Funding Rules;
 - b. identify and consider any other matters that these Funding Rules state may result in the ARC's recommending that an EOI not be shortlisted;
 - c. assign assessors to review EOIs;
 - d. merit rank each EOI relative to the others on the basis of the EOI and any assessors' reports; and/or
 - e. shortlist EOIs and call for full Proposals from applicants for those shortlisted EOIs.
- 10.3.2 The ARC may exclude EOIs at any time during the selection process. Grounds for exclusion include, but are not limited to:
- a. submission after 5.00pm AEDT Friday, 27 January 2012 unless:
 - i. exceptional circumstances apply in the opinion of the ARC; and
 - ii. evidence is provided by the Administering Organisation that all EOIs were dispatched in sufficient time to reach the ARC by the closing time in the normal course of events;
 - b. not meeting the eligibility criteria set out in these Funding Rules;
 - c. providing incomplete, inaccurate or misleading information; or
 - d. designating some or all of the EOI as Commercial-in-Confidence.
- 10.3.3 Excluded EOIs will not be shortlisted.
- 10.3.4 The Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) may assist with the assessment of EOIs. The ARC has procedures for managing organisational and personal Conflicts of Interest experienced by members of the SAC, the ARC College, members of other ARC committees, ARC staff, and other assessors, and for enabling individuals to withdraw from the assessment process for particular EOIs where any actual or perceived conflict may exist.

10.4 Selection Criteria – Expressions of Interest

10.4.1 All EOIs that meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed and merit ranked using the following selection criteria:

- a. Research program 40%
 - i. the proposed research to be undertaken and its innovative nature;
 - ii. the researcher/institutional collaboration proposed, focusing on the integration of expertise and knowledge;
 - iii. the development of collaboration and critical mass in the research field; and
 - iv. the goals of the proposed research program.
- b. Institutional Support 30%
 - i. level of support and commitment, both in cash and in-kind contributions, from non-ARC sources including the proposed Administering Organisation, Collaborating Organisations and Partner Organisations.
- c. Investigators 30%
 - i. evidence of performance relative to opportunity, expertise, capacity and suitability of the Network Director;
 - ii. evidence of performance relative to opportunity and expertise of senior researchers; and
 - iii. capacity and suitability of senior researchers for the proposed roles.

11. Submission of Proposals

11.1 Proposals

11.1.1 Proposals for the *Special Research Initiative for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers' Network* may be submitted only when invited by the ARC and must be at the specified dates. The ARC may invite Proposals from one or more organisations.

11.1.2 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.

11.1.3 All details in the Proposal must be current at the time of submission.

11.2 Submission of Proposals in the RMS

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

11.2.2 All Proposals must meet the format and content requirements, including certification, as set out in the RMS form and the Instructions to Applicants.

11.3 Closing Time for Proposals

- 11.3.1 The online form completed within the RMS must be submitted by **5.00pm Friday, 27 April 2012**.
- 11.3.2 Additions, deletions and modifications will not be accepted after submission, unless invited by the ARC.

11.4 Certification in the RMS

- 11.4.1 The Administering Organisation must certify a Proposal online in the RMS. Research Offices should ensure that the Research Office delegate role is authorised in the RMS to certify and submit Proposals.
- 11.4.2 The ARC reserves the right at any point in the process to seek evidence from the Administering Organisation to support the certification of Proposals.

11.5 Conflict of Interest

- 11.5.1 All parties involved in or associated with a Proposal must disclose at the date of submission any Conflict of Interest that exists or is likely to arise in relation to any aspect of the Proposal.
- 11.5.2 If a Conflict of Interest exists or arises, the Administering Organisation must have documented processes in place for managing the Conflict of Interest for the duration of the Program. Such processes must comply with the *NHMRC/ARC/UA Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007)* and any relevant successor document.

12. Selection and Approval Process

12.1 Assessment and Selection Process for Proposals

- 12.1.1 Assessment of Proposals is undertaken by the ARC, which has the right to make recommendations for funding to the Minister based on any number of assessments or solely on the basis of its expertise.
- 12.1.2 All Proposals will be considered against eligibility criteria and compliance with the Funding Rules.
- 12.1.3 Proposals may be:
- a. Assigned to independent assessors from a range of organisations, who will assess and report — which may include written comments — on the Proposal against the selection criteria.
 - b. Ranked and allocated a budget — relative to other Proposals, by the Selection Advisory Committee (SAC), on the basis of the Proposal, any assessors' reports and rejoinder.
 - c. Subject to additional assessment, including interviews, in a format to be determined by the ARC (including required participants). Applicants will be advised by the ARC if they are required to participate in interviews. The ARC will not fund interviewee participation.
- 12.1.4 The ARC has procedures in place for managing organisational and personal Conflicts of Interest for assessors, members of the SAC, members of other ARC committees and ARC staff.

12.2 Rejoinder

- 12.2.1 The Administering Organisation may be given the opportunity for a rejoinder to assessors' written comments, and to provide any additional information requested by the ARC. Names of assessors will not be provided to the Administering Organisation.

12.3 Request Not to Assess

- 12.3.1 Administering Organisations may name any person or persons whom they do not wish to assess a Proposal on a Request not to Assess form. The notification must be sent to the email address advised under Contacts on p4 of these Funding Rules and received by the ARC by the closing time for Proposals. The ARC will consider the justification put forward to exclude any person as an assessor, but may choose not to give effect to such a request.

12.4 Recommendations and Offer of Funding

- 12.4.1 In accordance with the ARC Act, the ARC Chief Executive Officer will submit funding recommendations to the Minister for consideration. The Minister will determine which Proposals will be approved and the amount and timing of funding to be paid to Administering Organisations for approved Proposals.
- 12.4.2 Under the ARC Act, the Minister must not approve funding for any Proposal that fails to meet the eligibility criteria set out in these Funding Rules.
- 12.4.3 Administering Organisations whose Proposals are approved will be notified in a letter of offer that will indicate the funding to be offered; and provided with a copy of a Funding Agreement for signing.
- 12.4.4 The Minister may vary the funding approval if the ARC recommends that the particular circumstances of the Program warrant variation. Any variation or change will accord with the *Special Research Initiative for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers' Network* Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2012 and Funding Agreement.
- 12.4.5 If the ARC funding approved for a Program varies from the amount requested, pro rata adjustments may be made to the Partner and Collaborating Organisation contributions.

13. Appeals Process

- 13.1.1 Applicants for funding under the schemes of the NCGP are able to submit an appeal against administrative process issues. The appeals process is designed to ensure that the applicant has been treated fairly and consistently in the context of the selection procedures.
- 13.1.2 Appeals will be considered only against administrative process issues and not against committee recommendations, assessor ratings and comments or the assessment outcome.
- 13.1.3 Appeals must be submitted by the Administering Organisation on the ARC Appeals Form, authorised by a Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), Chief

Executive Officer or equivalent. Appeals must be received **within 28 days** of the date of the notification to the Administering Organisation of the outcome of Proposals. The ARC will not accept appeals later than 5pm (AEDT) of the date of submission of the appeal.

- 13.1.4 Appeals must be addressed and sent to the address advised under Contacts on p4 of these Funding Rules. The ARC will accept both electronic and hard copy appeal submissions.
- 13.1.5 Applicants for funding may at any time seek to appeal ARC decisions using available external appeal options.

14. Reporting Requirements

14.1 Progress Reports

- 14.1.1 Administering Organisations must submit reports to the ARC concerning the Network in the format and by the due dates detailed in the Funding Agreement.
- 14.1.2 The Network will be required to report on a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be developed within the first six months of operation and approved by the ARC.
- 14.1.3 The Network will be required to submit annual reports to the ARC covering both their financial operations and their research performance.
- 14.1.4 If the ARC is not satisfied with the progress of any Program, further payment of funds will not be made until satisfactory progress has been made on the Program. If satisfactory progress is still not achieved within a reasonable period of time, the funding may be terminated and all outstanding funding will be recovered by the ARC.

14.2 End of Year Reports

The Administering Organisation must submit an End of Year Report by 31 March in the year following each full calendar year for which the funding was awarded. The ARC will provide instructions on the End of Year Report process each year.

14.3 Final Report

- 14.3.1 A Final Report must be submitted for the Program within 12 months of the final payment or within 12 months of the final approved carryover of funds.
- 14.3.2 The Final Report must justify why any publications from the Program have not been deposited in appropriate repositories within 12 months of publication. The Final Report must outline how data arising from the Program has been made publicly accessible where appropriate.
- 14.3.3 If any reports are not submitted or are not satisfactory to the ARC this will be noted against future Proposals submitted by the CIs associated with the Program.

14.3.4 The ARC may also seek additional information about subsequent publications after submission of the Final Report.

14.4 Audited Financial Statement

14.4.1 In accordance with section 58 of the ARC Act, the Administering Organisation must submit an Audited Financial Statement by 31 March for each year following each calendar year for which the funding was awarded.

14.4.2 In completing the Audited Financial Statement, the Administering Organisation must ensure that the amount shown in that statement as 'approved carry forward funds' is the same as the amount (if any) for which approval was given by the ARC to carryover in the End of Year Report.

14.5 Performance Reviews

14.5.1 The Network will undergo an external performance review arranged by the ARC mid-term through the funding period. Continuation of funding for the remaining years of operation will be dependent on the outcome of the review.

14.5.2 Ad hoc reviews of the Network may be held at any time. A review will be triggered in special circumstances including, but not limited to:

- a. change of Network Director; or
- b. proposed transfer of Administering Organisation.

15. Fundamental Principles of Conducting Research

15.1 Ethics and Research Practices

15.1.1 All Proposals and ARC-funded research Programs must conform to the principles outlined in the following and their successor documents:

- a. *NHMRC/ARC/UA Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007)*;
- b. as applicable, the *NHMRC/ARC/AVCC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*;
- c. as applicable, codes on animal research promulgated by the NHMRC; and
- d. If there is any conflict between a successor document and its predecessor, then the successor document prevails to the extent of any inconsistency.

15.2 Applicable Law

15.2.1 The ARC is required to comply with the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1988* and the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

15.3 Confidentiality

- 15.3.1 The ARC will treat information contained in a Proposal as confidential. However, the ARC may disclose information contained in a Proposal, or otherwise provided to the ARC, to the extent that the information is:
- a. disclosed by the ARC to its advisers (including external assessors), officers, employees or other third parties in order to assess, evaluate or verify the accuracy or completeness of a Proposal;
 - b. disclosed to the ARC's personnel to enable effective management or auditing of the ARC *Special Research Initiatives* scheme or any Funding Agreement;
 - c. disclosed by the ARC to the Minister;
 - d. shared by the ARC within the ARC's organisation, or with another Commonwealth Department or agency, where this serves the Commonwealth's legitimate interests;
 - e. authorised or required by law to be disclosed;
 - f. disclosed in accordance with any other provision of these Funding Rules or the Funding Agreement; or
 - g. in the public domain.
- 15.3.2 Where information contained in a Proposal is made available to third parties for evaluation or assessment purposes the ARC will require the third parties to maintain the confidentiality of the material.
- 15.3.3 Notwithstanding the above, and in addition to the exemptions listed at subsection 15.3.1, the ARC may publicise and report offers or awards of funding, including information about the proposed research; the name of nominated CIs or PIs and their organisations; the name of the Administering Organisation and any other parties involved in or associated with the Program; the title and summary descriptions of the Program and its intended outcomes; and the level and nature of financial assistance from the ARC. Administering Organisations should ensure that information contained in the Program title and summaries would not, if released, compromise their own requirements for confidentiality (such as future protection of intellectual property).
- 15.3.4 In making public information about a Proposal which has been approved for funding, the ARC may use a Program description, including title and summary, which may differ from that provided in the Proposal.

15.4 Intellectual Property

- 15.4.1 The ARC does not claim ownership of any intellectual property in a Proposal or in any research arising from the Program.
- 15.4.2 The Administering Organisation must adhere to an intellectual property policy, approved by the Administering Organisation's governing body, which has as one of its aims the maximisation of benefits arising from research. Unless otherwise approved by the Commonwealth, the Administering Organisation's Intellectual Property policy must comply with the *National*

Principles of Intellectual Property Management for Publicly Funded Research as amended from time to time.

15.5 Incomplete or Misleading Information

- 15.5.1 It is a serious offence to provide false or misleading information to the Commonwealth.
- 15.5.2 If the ARC considers that a Proposal is incomplete, inaccurate or contains false or misleading information, the ARC may in its absolute discretion decide to recommend that the Proposal not be approved for funding.
- 15.5.3 Examples of misleading information and misconduct include:
 - a. providing fictitious research opportunity and performance evidence;
 - b. plagiarism;
 - c. making false claims in publications records (such as describing a paper as accepted for publication when it has only been submitted);
 - d. making false claims in relation to qualifications and/or appointments;
 - e. making false certifications in the RMS certification; or
 - f. failing to disclose to the ARC the existence, and nature, of actual or potential Conflicts of Interest of any of the parties involved in the Proposal/Program (such as any affiliations or financial interest in any organisation that has a direct interest in the matter or outputs of the Program).

Appendix A. Eligible Organisations

Eligible Organisations

The organisations listed below are eligible to apply for funding under these Funding Rules.

New South Wales

Charles Sturt University
Macquarie University
Southern Cross University
The University of New England
The University of New South Wales
The University of Newcastle
The University of Sydney
University of Technology, Sydney
University of Western Sydney
University of Wollongong

Victoria

Deakin University
La Trobe University
Melbourne College of Divinity
Monash University
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT University)
Swinburne University of Technology
The University of Melbourne
University of Ballarat
Victoria University

Queensland

Bond University
Central Queensland University
Griffith University
James Cook University
Queensland University of Technology
The University of Queensland
The University of the Sunshine Coast
University of Southern Queensland

Western Australia

Curtin University of Technology
Edith Cowan University
Murdoch University
The University of Notre Dame Australia
The University of Western Australia

South Australia

Flinders University

The University of Adelaide
University of South Australia

Tasmania

University of Tasmania

Northern Territory

Charles Darwin University
Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education

Australian Capital Territory

The Australian National University
University of Canberra
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
(AIATSIS)

Multi-State

Australian Catholic University