



Australian Government
Australian Research Council

STRATEGIC PLAN

2011–12 to 2013–14

RESEARCH in the national interest - enabling the future





A message from the Minister

After a decade of service, the Australian Research Council remains at the helm of our journey through the twenty-first century. Australia is recreating itself for different times, building new industries on the strength of new ideas. Scientists and researchers in every field have moved to the front-line for the community. We rely on the jobs and opportunities their discoveries can open. We rely, in turn, on the ARC's ability to support our best and brightest.

This highly professional agency has risen to the demands of the Government's ambitious innovation agenda. This year alone it will administer over 5140 new and ongoing research projects, and in 2011–12 it will administer over \$810 million through the funding schemes of the National Competitive Grants Program. The ARC's advice has proved invaluable in expanding the National Competitive Grants Program, and refocusing its resources on excellence, collaboration and global partnerships. As the architect of Excellence in Research for Australia, one of the world's most comprehensive research quality evaluation tools, it has given Australia the evidence to recognise and support talent.

Today the Government is calling on the ARC to boost once more its contribution to the transformation of our nation. This strategic plan will help guide its mission to build the research workforce and infrastructure of a new Australia.

I welcome, in particular, the measures the ARC will administer to build stronger partnerships between industry and the research community. The new measures will put talented students to work at the heart of emerging and established industries alike, helping them prepare for a clean energy future.

The ARC will also play a central role in the delivery of the Government's research workforce strategy, *Research Skills for an Innovative Future*. It will help attract the world's leading research talent to our shores, and tap the full breadth of the talent pool at home. It will focus in particular on strategies to support groups who remain underrepresented in our research system, including Indigenous Australians and women.

This is a bold agenda for the research system and the nation alike. We can be assured it rests in the most capable hands.

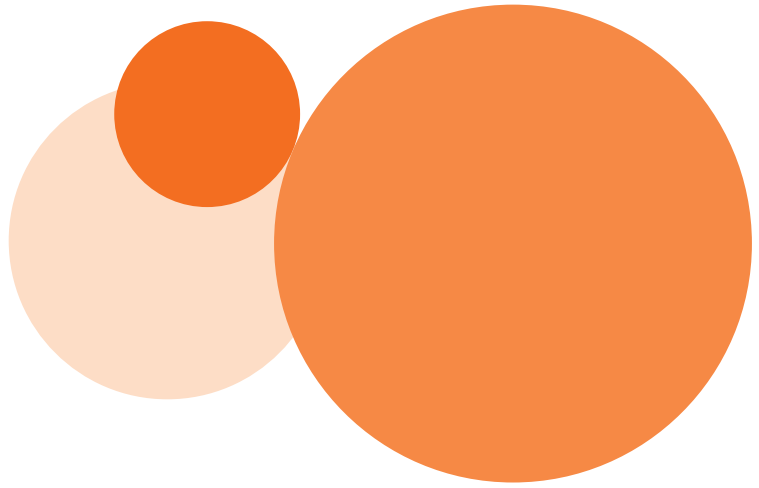
Senator Kim Carr

Minister for Innovation, Industry,
Science and Research

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Australian Research Council

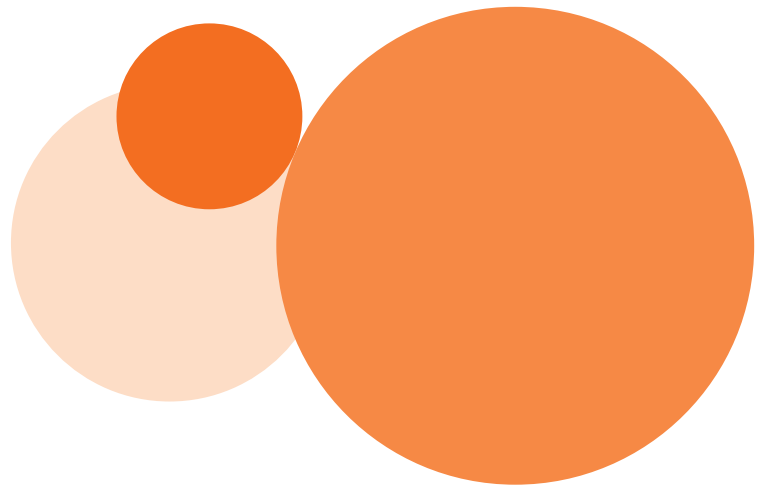
The Australian Research Council (ARC) is a statutory agency within the Australian Government's Innovation, Industry, Science and Research portfolio. It plays a unique role in administering:

- the funding schemes of the National Competitive Grants Program, under which funding is provided to Australian higher education institutions and other eligible organisations through competitive peer review processes; and
- the Excellence in Research for Australia initiative, an evaluation system aimed at identifying research excellence in Australian higher education institutions by comparing Australia's research effort against international benchmarks.

The ARC is also an important source of policy advice on research matters to the Australian Government.

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Chief Executive Officer's foreword

This strategic plan sets the objectives of the Australian Research Council (ARC) for the next three years as well as our priorities for 2011–12.

In 2011–12 the ARC enters its second decade as an independent agency. Over the past ten years the ARC has:

- established itself as an agency with functions and operations independent of the portfolio department;
- established and refined a suite of research funding schemes under the National Competitive Grants Program to support research excellence and build Australia's research capacity;
- developed and implemented a research evaluation framework—Excellence in Research for Australia; and
- contributed to research policy formation through a variety of forums, including the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council.

Through this the ARC has firmly established its place as a pivotal player in the Australian research landscape. We are proud of our achievements to date and look forward to embracing the opportunities and challenges that the decade ahead will bring. An important starting point for that journey is a renewed commitment to our mission as articulated through this plan.

While there have been many developments that have brought changes to the ARC over the past ten years, our overall direction has remained the same—to advance Australia's capacity for quality research that will benefit all the community. ARC-supported research spans research disciplines and emerging multidisciplinary areas, and its outcomes

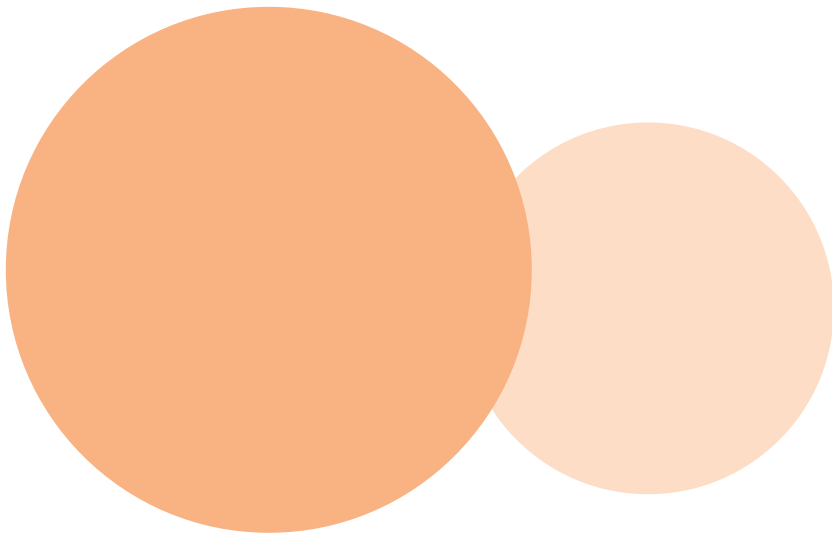
produce a wide range of economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits, some examples of which are provided on page 3.

In this strategic plan we have refined our objectives, identifying three key objectives and two enabling objectives to support our mission in the period ahead. The three key objectives—Research, Capacity, and Policy and evaluation—focus on the ARC's core strategic priorities, while the two enabling objectives provide focus for the corporate governance, ICT, financial management, human resources and communications activities that underpin our ability to deliver against our key objectives.

We have reviewed the key strategies that support those objectives and, reflecting our continually evolving environment, included a small number of new strategies. Monitoring our funding support in strategic areas—including early career researchers, female researchers, collaboration with industry and Indigenous Australian researchers—will continue to be a high priority for the ARC.

As required under the *Australian Research Council Act 2001*, this plan has been provided to the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research. I would like to thank all those who contributed to its development, including members of the ARC Advisory Council and ARC staff.

Professor Margaret Sheil
Chief Executive Officer
September 2011



BENEFITS OF RESEARCH INCLUDE:

Economic benefits

- revenue from new and improved products, services and processes
- improved productivity and high value employment opportunities

Social benefits

- improved health, safety, education and quality of life for individuals and communities
- enhanced skills and capability of people

Environmental benefits

- new knowledge and technologies to help protect ecosystems and minimise negative impacts of human activity on the environment

Cultural benefits

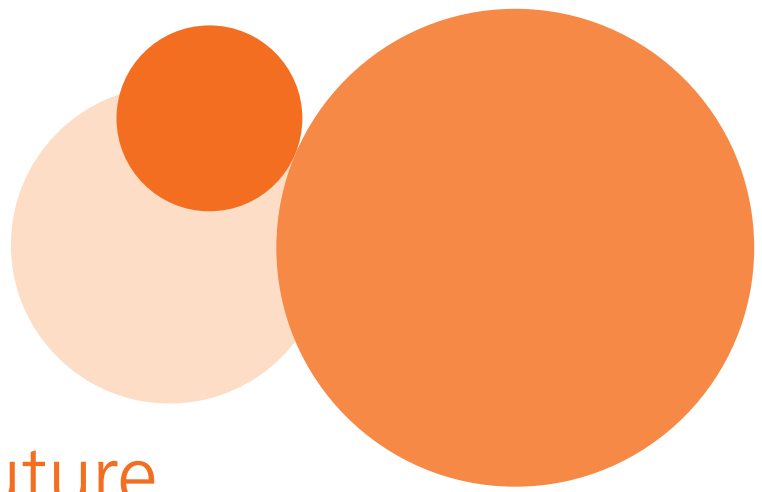
- equipping society to be innovative and embrace and adapt to change
- contribution to building an informed and engaged knowledge-based society
- enhanced understanding of Australian and global cultures and communities

Knowledge

- contribution to global knowledge
- transfer of new knowledge into education and the community

EXAMPLES OF OUTCOMES OF ARC-FUNDED RESEARCH

- **Quantum computing:** progress towards the development of a highly advanced quantum computer
- **Climate:** discovery of the link between variations in sea surface temperature and drought cycles in Australia and other Indian and Pacific Ocean nations
- **Conservation:** breakthroughs in understanding Tasmanian devil facial tumour disease, which could help save the Tasmanian devil from the threat of extinction
- **Indigenous studies:** improved understanding of Aboriginal political and social history of the 1920s
- **Security:** new methods of analysis for rapid identification of explosives used in terrorist attacks
- **New media:** the development of interactive virtual reality technology that offers a new cinematic experience and has been applied in industry settings, including a 3D mine safety-training simulator
- **Bionic Vision:** progress towards the development of a functional bionic eye, including the development of a breakthrough microchip for a high acuity retinal implant



Our past and the future

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS 2001–02 TO 2010–11

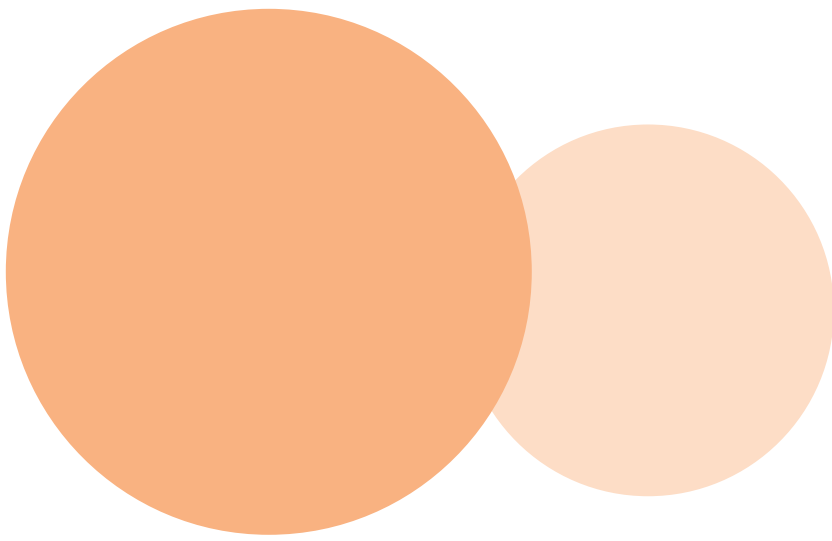
In the ten years since 2001 the ARC has:

- established itself as an agency with functions independent of the portfolio department;
- established a suite of funding schemes under the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP);
- developed and implemented the first-ever comprehensive evaluation of the quality of research in Australian higher education institutions under the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative;
- contributed to national and international policy forums; and
- shared expertise in grant administration and research evaluation with other governments and government agencies.

Specifically through the NCGP the ARC:

- awarded funding to over 16 000 projects involving over 22 000 researchers;
- awarded over 3 000 fellowships to support researchers at all career stages;
- funded 42 research centres, including ARC Centres of Excellence, ARC Centres and Co-funded Centres;
- conducted a number of one-off initiatives under the *Special Research Initiatives* scheme, including e-Research, Thinking Systems, the ARC Centre of Excellence for Policing and Security, Research in Bionic Vision, and Stem Cell Science;

- developed a co-funding model, in collaboration with partner organisations, for large-scale initiatives of strategic national importance, such as the Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics, the Australian Stem Cell Centre, the National Centre for Groundwater Research and Training, and National ICT Australia;
- facilitated collaboration between researchers and end-users of research outcomes, including industry;
- contributed to the development of world-class research infrastructure in Australian higher education institutions;
- provided funding to facilitate access for Australian researchers to major international facilities, such as the Gemini Observatory, the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program and the ISIS Neutron Spallation Source; and
- enhanced international collaboration and mobility through internationalisation of all funding schemes.



LOOKING FORWARD TO 2020

Over the next ten years the ARC will build on the achievements in its first decade, and further consolidate its role within the national innovation system as:

- a leader in research funding program delivery;
- a leader in research evaluation through ERA; and
- an important source of advice on research policy.

The ARC is committed to continuous improvement to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of its funding schemes. We will continue to review implementation of the NCGP, particularly in areas of strategic importance, such as supporting women in research, building capacity for multidisciplinary research, supporting early career researchers and driving closer engagement between universities and industry.

The ARC will also seek to ensure that it is well-positioned and has the flexibility to respond to strategic opportunities, as they arise, to support research that addresses national and global challenges.

The ARC will continue to refine the ERA model in consultation with stakeholders. Future ERA evaluations will allow the ARC to identify trends in research quality across disciplines and institutions and improve our capacity to provide policy advice to government.

The ARC will continue to monitor developments in ICT technologies and upgrade its systems, where appropriate, to improve the efficiency of ARC program delivery and the user experience for stakeholders.

The ARC will work to strengthen its linkages with other research funding agencies both nationally and internationally to ensure it is informed of, and can inform, broader developments in research and innovation policy. We will draw on our expertise in managing research funding programs to guide international benchmarking of grant administration processes.

To increase the ARC's visibility in the research environment and the community more broadly we will continue to promote the ARC and ARC-funded research through a broad range of media sources and participation in key events and forums.

Mission

To deliver policy and programs that advance Australian research globally and benefit the community

Guiding principles

The ARC will be guided by a strong commitment to the following principles:

Excellence

Excellence in achieving our mission through program and organisational objectives

Engagement

Engagement with government, universities, research agencies, business and the wider community nationally and internationally

Benefit

Benefit to the community through economic and social return on investment, engaged and informed decision making, and efficiency of operations

Accountability

Accountability through adherence to ethical standards and government policy using transparent, efficient and effective processes

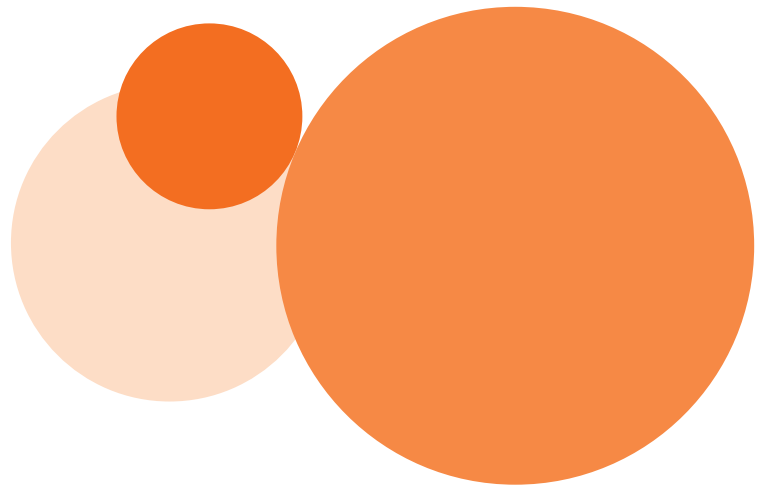
The ARC is committed to the Australian Public Service (APS) Code of Conduct and the APS values.

ARC-funded research is subject to the principles outlined in the:

- *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, 2007;
- *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, 2007;
- *Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes*, 2004; and
- *National Principles of Intellectual Property Management for Publicly Funded Research*, 2001.

The ARC and the National Health and Medical Research Council jointly administer the Australian Research Integrity Committee (ARIC). ARIC provides a system to review institutional processes to respond to allegations of research misconduct.

The ARC is shaping Australia's global future by supporting an innovative economy and society through the strategic management of research funding, evaluation of research excellence and advice on research policy.



Strategic context

The development of the objectives and key strategies in this strategic plan has been informed by the broader environment in which the ARC operates.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT POLICY

The Australian Government’s policy agenda for science and innovation is articulated in *Powering Ideas: An Innovation Agenda for the 21st Century* (2009). The ARC’s activities are directly aligned with the National Innovation Priorities (see page 9).

STAKEHOLDERS

The ARC’s key stakeholders are Australian higher education institutions and their partners in the government, private, and non-profit sectors, the Parliament of Australia, and the Australian public.

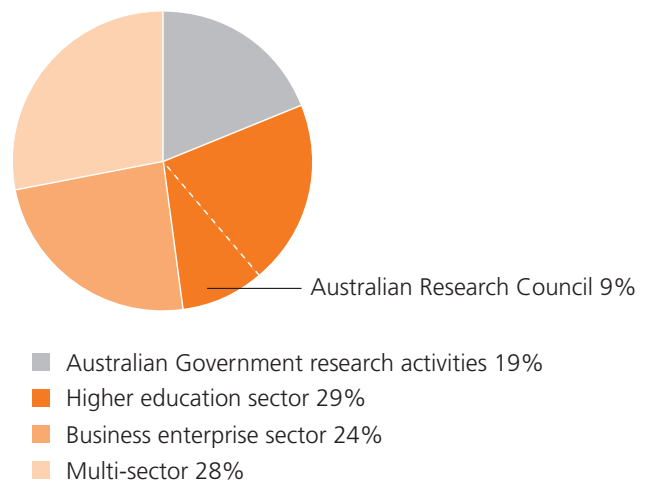
GOVERNANCE

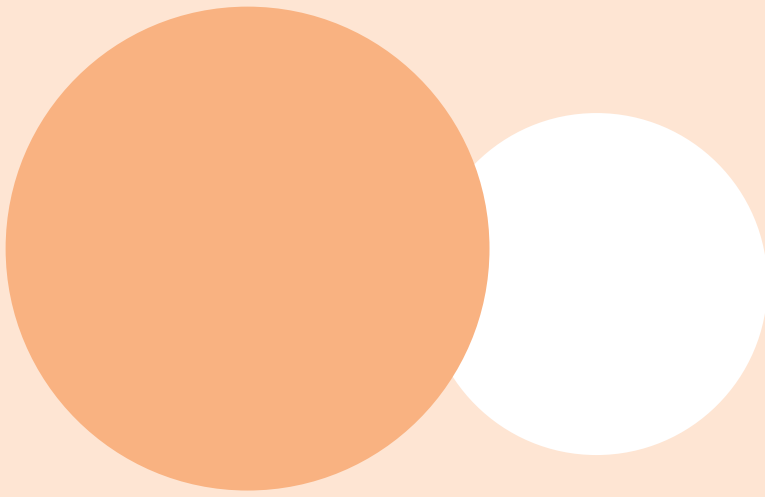
The ARC is established under the *Australian Research Council Act 2001* (ARC Act). Under the ARC Act, the ARC consists of a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) appointed by the Minister, designated committees appointed by the Minister to assist the CEO, and staff engaged under the *Public Service Act 1999*. There is currently one designated committee—the ARC Advisory Council.

RESOURCES

In 2011–12 the total estimated budget of the ARC will be approximately \$845 million, of which \$810 million will be awarded through the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP). Funding for the NCGP represents approximately nine per cent of total Australian Government funding for science, research and innovation. (Source: *Australian Government’s 2011–12 Science, Research and Innovation Budget Tables*.)

Through the NCGP in 2011 the ARC is administering funding to more than 4,900 research projects Australia-wide, involving more than 10,700 researchers.





NATIONAL INNOVATION PRIORITIES

- Public research funding supports high-quality research that addresses national challenges and opens up new opportunities.
- Australia has a strong base of skilled researchers to support the national research effort in both the public and private sectors.
- The innovation system fosters industries of the future, securing value from the commercialisation of Australian research and development.
- More effective dissemination of new technologies, processes, and ideas increases innovation across the economy, with a particular focus on small and medium-sized enterprises.
- The innovation system encourages a culture of collaboration within the research sector and between researchers and industry.
- Australian researchers and businesses are involved in more international collaborations on research and development.
- The public and community sectors work with others in the innovation system to improve policy development and service delivery.

Source: *Powering Ideas: An Innovation Agenda for the 21st Century*, p. 4.

Objectives

Key objectives

- 1: Research
- 2: Capacity
- 3: Policy and evaluation

Enabling objectives

- 1: Organisation
- 2: Communication

Research

To support excellence in research—through funding for research and research training allocated through national competition across all disciplines supported by rigorous peer review processes.

Capacity

To build Australia's research capacity—through support for the training and careers of researchers; critical research infrastructure and research in areas of national need.

Policy and evaluation

To provide informed high quality policy advice to Government and enhance research outcomes through effective evaluation—through participation in policy forums and Government reviews, informed stakeholder consultations, evaluation and ongoing monitoring of performance.

Organisation

To continue to improve organisational performance—by ensuring the ARC has a strong governance framework supported by effective systems and processes to enable staff to deliver against the ARC's objectives.

Communication

To be a key advocate for the benefits of Australia's research efforts and maintain productive relationships with stakeholders—through support for promotion and engagement activities aimed at communicating widely the role of the ARC and the outcomes of ARC-funded research.

International collaboration and internationalisation are cross-cutting themes which underpin the ARC's activities in all of these areas.

KEY OBJECTIVE 1: RESEARCH

KEY STRATEGIES

- 1.1 Support excellent research through competitive funding schemes
- 1.2 Encourage collaboration among researchers and research teams, and between researchers and end-users of research outcomes, including industry
- 1.3 Encourage international collaboration and mobility
- 1.4 Partner with other organisations to support research policy and program initiatives of strategic importance
- 1.5 Foster interdisciplinary research that will address some of the complex challenges facing society
- 1.6 Ensure peer review processes are effective and transparent
- 1.7 Promote the responsible conduct of research
- 1.8 Encourage researchers to make data arising from ARC-funded research publicly accessible

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2011–12

- Enhance peer review through improved assessor assignment processes
- Engage in international discussions about peer review processes
- Continue to simplify and standardise funding rules and funding agreements
- Provide support to the Australian Research Integrity Committee

To support excellence in research

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

| Indicator | Measures | 2011–12 target |
|--|--|--|
| 1.1 Outputs and outcomes arising from ARC-supported research are of a high quality and produce national benefits | Evidence of impact of ARC-funded research | Significantly exceeds benchmarks where available |
| | Outcomes arising from ARC-funded research that provide social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits | Evidence of benefits arising from the outcomes of ARC-funded research |
| 1.2 There is a high level of collaboration between ARC-funded researchers and those within other components of the national and international innovation systems | Financial commitment (cash and in-kind) from partner organisations for every dollar contributed by the ARC (Linkage Projects scheme) | Greater than \$1.90 |
| | Proportion of partner organisations that indicate that their involvement in projects was beneficial or very beneficial (Linkage Projects scheme) | Greater than 90 per cent |
| | Proportion of projects involving international collaboration (Discovery and Linkage Programs) | Discovery Program: Greater than 65 per cent Linkage Program: Greater than 42 per cent |
| | Average number of organisations involved in projects funded (Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities scheme) | Greater than 3.5 |

KEY OBJECTIVE 2: CAPACITY

KEY STRATEGIES

- 2.1 Support excellent researchers at strategic points in their careers
- 2.2 Help Australia to attract and retain world-class researchers
- 2.3 Expand opportunities for research students and early career researchers
- 2.4 Enhance Indigenous research and build the capacity of Indigenous Australian researchers
- 2.5 Contribute to and enhance national research infrastructure
- 2.6 Support cooperative access to national and international research infrastructure
- 2.7 Retain the flexibility to respond to strategic research opportunities

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2011–12

- Establish new initiatives to strengthen links between industry and the research community
- Conduct a selection round under the *Special Research Initiatives* scheme to establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers' Network
- Conduct an initial assessment of the impact of changes to the *Discovery Projects* scheme and the introduction of the *Discovery Early Career Researcher Award* scheme (both introduced for funding commencing in 2012)

To build Australia's research capacity

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

| Indicator | Measures | 2011–12 target |
|--|---|--|
| 2.1 ARC funding supports excellent researchers | External recognition of the achievements of ARC-funded researchers | Prestigious prizes and awards are received by ARC-funded researchers |
| | Evidence of impact of research conducted by ARC-funded fellows | Exceeds benchmarks where available |
| 2.2 ARC-supported research contributes significantly to high quality research training | Proportion of ARC-funded researchers who are early career researchers (within five years of completion of their PhD) (Discovery and Linkage Programs) | Discovery Program: Greater than 20 per cent |
| | | Linkage Program: Greater than 12 per cent |
| 2.3 ARC-funded research makes a significant contribution to research activity and capability in areas of national need | Proportion of funded proposals that address the National Research Priorities (NRPs) (Discovery and Linkage Programs) | Discovery Program: Greater than 85 per cent |
| | | Linkage Program: Greater than 90 per cent |
| | Evidence of impact in NRP areas (Discovery and Linkage Programs) | Examples of impact in NRP areas |

KEY OBJECTIVE 3: POLICY AND EVALUATION

KEY STRATEGIES

Policy development

- 3.1 Ensure policy advice is evidence-based, innovative and strategic
- 3.2 Monitor best practice international trends in research policy
- 3.3 Monitor and evaluate ARC research funding schemes to maximise their effectiveness
- 3.4 Review and monitor strategic areas to ensure the most effective allocation of resources
- 3.5 Engage with government, industry, research institutions, researchers and learned academies
- 3.6 Maintain dialogue with other funding agencies in Australia and internationally

Excellence in Research for Australia

- 3.7 Assess the quality of research conducted within higher education institutions against international benchmarks
- 3.8 Capture and quantify research activity within and across disciplines in the Australian higher education sector
- 3.9 Use results of ERA to inform future development of policy and programs

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2011–12

- Revise the ARC International Strategy to reflect changes in the national and global environment
- Review the ERA 2010 process, taking into account feedback received through targeted and broad consultation, to inform ERA 2012
- Commence ERA 2012
- Use findings of the evaluation of the *Linkage Projects* scheme and developments in the global environment to inform the enhancement of ARC funding schemes

To provide informed high quality policy advice to government and enhance research outcomes through effective evaluation

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

| Indicator | Measure | 2011–12 target |
|---|---|---|
| 3.1 Policy advice that enhances Australia's capacity and excellence in research | Evidence of impact of policy advice | Policy advice improves the ARC's capacity to contribute to the national innovation agenda |
| 3.2 Contribution to best practice evaluation of Australia's research investment in higher education institutions | Evidence of contribution to best practice evaluation of research investment | Examples of contribution to best practice |
| 3.3 Achievement of milestones for delivery of ERA 2012 | Production of key documentation required for institutions' preparation for ERA 2012 | Successful opening of submission phase for ERA 2012 |
| 3.4 Successful outreach initiatives that further inform and engage the sector and other key stakeholders in overarching ERA policy and implementation | Sector contribution to development of ERA 2012 processes and policy | Sector involved in and informed of enhancements to ERA |

ENABLING OBJECTIVES

ENABLING OBJECTIVE 1: ORGANISATION

To continue to improve organisational performance

KEY STRATEGIES

Management and accountability

- Governance: ensure governance arrangements support sound decision-making and accountability, and comply with relevant legislation and better practice guides
- Strategic planning and reporting: communicate the ARC's strategic direction to stakeholders and continue to strengthen the agency's performance reporting capability
- Risk management: maintain a strategic risk management framework and embed risk management in day-to-day operations

Resources

- Financial management: make sound financial decisions and maintain a strong control framework to minimise risks
- ICT: support the delivery of the ARC's objectives with sustainable high quality ICT services and resources

- Knowledge and information management: develop and maintain appropriate knowledge management systems to ensure corporate memory is retained and demonstrate accountability to the Australian public

People

- Recruitment and retention: attract and retain skilled, professional staff that will boost the ARC's capacity to deliver against its objectives
- Internal communication: promote communication at all levels to ensure sound decision making and an informed and engaged workplace
- Staff development: create a supportive work environment that values staff efforts, nurtures talent and is respectful of individual circumstances
- Occupational health and safety: provide a safe work environment underpinned by a commitment to long term health and well being

Services

- Program delivery: ensure delivery of the NCGP and ERA continues to reflect the ARC's guiding principles

ENABLING OBJECTIVE 2: COMMUNICATION

To be a key advocate for the benefits of Australia's research efforts and maintain productive relationships with stakeholders

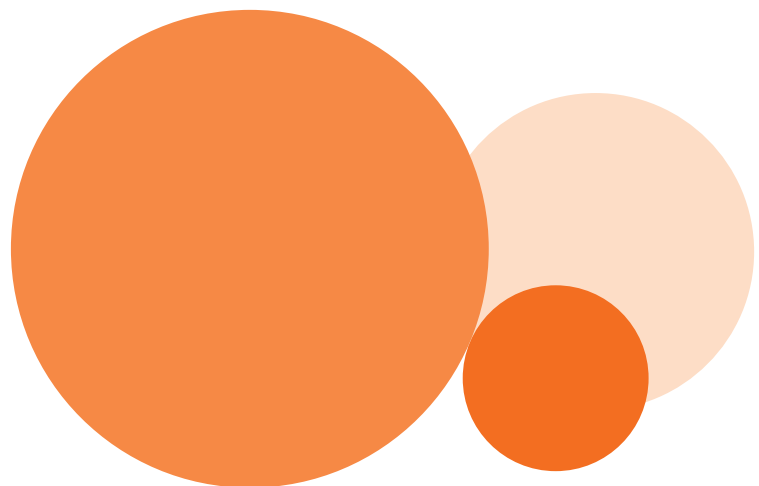
KEY STRATEGIES

Promotion

- Communication: disseminate information about ARC-funded research and its outcomes to the general community through media releases, events and interviews
- Education: encourage researchers and research institutions to communicate publicly the outcomes of their research
- Advocacy: communicate the accomplishments of Australian research and researchers in the national and international arenas

Engagement

- Consultation: maintain commitment to consulting with stakeholders about proposed policy developments
- Participation: contribute to public policy formation in national and international fora and support *Inspiring Australia: A national strategy for engaging with the sciences* in an advisory capacity
- Information: provide clear and accessible information to institutions and researchers about ARC initiatives through email, the ARC website, and participation in key forums and events
- Communication: continue to use a wide range of communication modes to engage effectively with stakeholders, including the latest e-communications tools



Appendix 1: National Competitive Grants Program

The National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP) offers a range of schemes to support Australian researchers and research training with funding awarded on the basis of excellence through a competitive peer review process. The NCGP supports research across all disciplines, however, clinical medical and dental research is only supported under the *Future Fellowships* scheme. The NCGP comprises two Programs—Discovery and Linkage.

DISCOVERY PROGRAM

Discovery Projects provides funding for research projects that can be undertaken by individual researchers or research teams.

Australian Laureate Fellowships is a prestigious awards scheme aimed at attracting and retaining outstanding researchers in Australia.

Future Fellowships is aimed at attracting and retaining outstanding mid-career researchers in Australia.

Discovery Early Career Researcher Award is aimed at supporting and advancing promising early career researchers.

Discovery Indigenous supports the development of Indigenous researchers' skills and expertise.

LINKAGE PROGRAM

Linkage Projects supports collaborative research and research training between higher education institutions and partner organisations.

Research Centres include Co-funded Centres of Excellence and ARC Centres of Excellence, which build critical mass in areas of research strength.

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

Linkage Learned Academies Special Projects funds the Learned Academies and the Australian Council of Learned Academies to undertake research-related projects.

Special Research Initiatives allows the ARC to identify opportunities for strategic investment in innovative research areas that will build national and international linkages and the scale and focus of research.

TABLE A1.1: NCGP RESOURCES

| Schemes (2011–12 dollars) | FY 2010–11 (\$m) Actual | FY 2011–12 (\$m) Budget | FY 2012–13 (\$m) Budget | FY 2013–14 (\$m) Budget |
|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Discovery | | | | |
| Discovery Projects ¹ | 314.403 | 343.062 | 358.625 | 405.414 |
| Australian Laureate Fellowships | 16.380 | 25.869 | 35.757 | 44.614 |
| Federation Fellowships | 16.422 | 10.920 | 4.148 | 0 |
| Future Fellowships | 62.374 | 112.174 | 151.814 | 113.690 |
| Super Science Fellowships | 7.069 | 9.285 | 9.426 | 4.714 |
| Discovery Indigenous | 1.461 | 1.920 | 1.573 | 1.227 |
| Sub-total Discovery | 418.129 | 503.230 | 561.343 | 569.659 |
| Linkage | | | | |
| Linkage Projects ² | 149.580 | 157.698 | 154.082 | 154.344 |
| Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities | 37.070 | 31.894 | 30.400 | 28.000 |
| Research Centres | 81.309 | 93.851 | 102.240 | 118.517 |
| Linkage Learned Academies Special Projects | 0.736 | 0.968 | 0.480 | 0.480 |
| Special Research Initiatives | 21.907 | 22.531 | 32.808 | 20.647 |
| Sub-total Linkage | 290.603 | 306.942 | 320.010 | 321.988 |
| Total ARC Program Budget | 708.7332 | 810.172 | 881.353 | 891.647 |
| Percentage splits | | | | |
| Discovery | 59% | 62% | 64% | 64% |
| Linkage | 41% | 38% | 36% | 36% |

1 Discovery Projects includes Discovery Early Career Researcher Awards.

2 Linkage Projects includes Researchers in Industry Training Awards.

Appendix 2: Excellence in Research for Australia

The ARC is responsible for the implementation of Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA). ERA assesses research quality within Australia's higher education research institutions using a combination of indicators and expert review by committees comprising experienced, internationally-recognised experts.

ERA is an effective and comprehensive evaluation of Australia's research effort. It is crucial to understanding the national research landscape and to strategic research policy development and investment.

ERA 2010

All forty-one eligible institutions participated in the first full round of ERA evaluations in 2010. The *ERA 2010 National Report*, released in January 2011, outlines performance in each of the disciplines evaluated at each institution.

The outcomes outlined in the report:

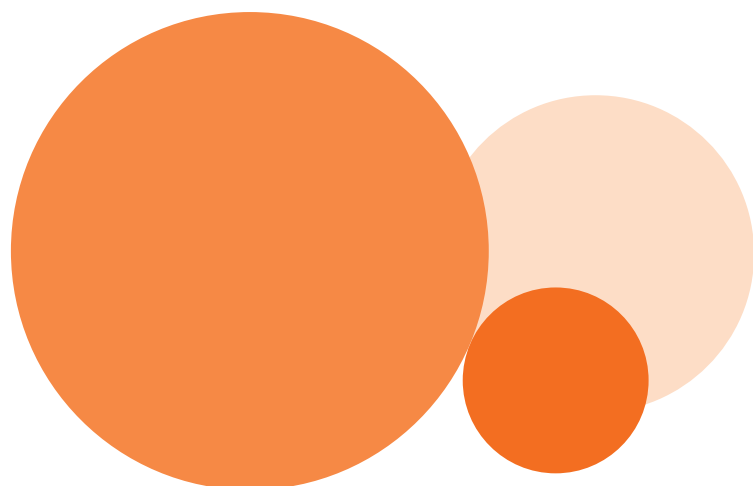
- give Government, industry, business and the wider community assurance of the excellence of research conducted in Australia's higher education institutions;
- provide a national overview of areas of research strength and areas where there may be opportunity for development; and
- allow for national and international comparisons of all research disciplines in Australian higher education institutions.

ERA outcomes assist Government, industry, higher education institutions, academics and students to make informed decisions about higher education research and help foster research collaboration across the public and private sectors and internationally.

They also inform the development of the Australian Government's research policies, strategies and programs.

ERA 2012

A second full round of ERA evaluations will take place in 2012 and will allow for comparisons of Australia's research effort over time.



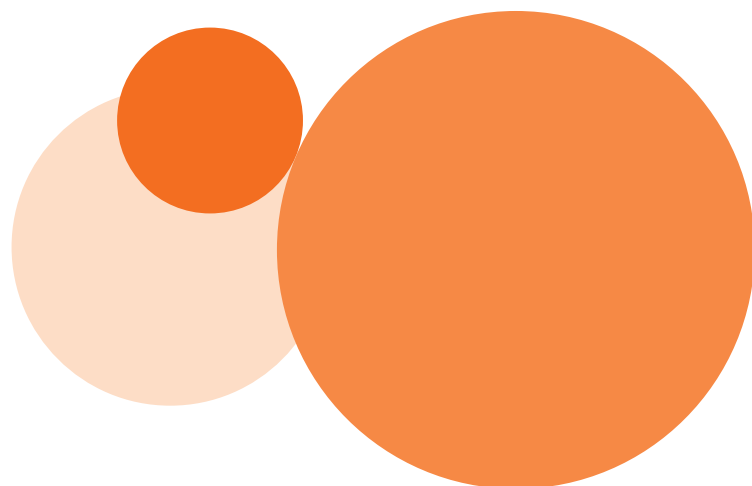
Appendix 3: Planning and reporting framework

FIGURE A3.1: PLANNING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS UNDER RELEVANT LEGISLATION

| | | |
|--------------------|--|--|
| LEGISLATION | <p><i>Public Service Act 1999</i> <i>Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997</i></p> | <p><i>Australian Research Council Act 2001</i></p> |
| PLANNING | <p>Portfolio Budget Statements The ARC must prepare the section of the Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) that provides information to Parliament about the Outcome and Programs of the ARC and funding proposed in appropriation bills.</p> | <p>Strategic plan The ARC must prepare a strategic plan each year for the Minister's approval. The plan must cover three years and include objectives and performance indicators.</p> |
| | <p>Outcome 1 Growth of knowledge and innovation through managing research funding schemes, measuring research excellence and providing advice</p> | <p>Mission To deliver policy and programs that advance Australian research and innovation globally and benefit the community</p> |
| | <p>Programs 1.1: Discovery 1.2: Linkage 1.3: ERA</p> | <p>Objectives Key objective 1: Research Key objective 2: Capacity Key objective 3: Policy and evaluation Enabling objective 1: Organisation Enabling objective 2: Communication</p> |
| | REPORTING | <p>Annual report The ARC must provide a report on operations which adheres to the guidelines of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit. The annual report must report against the Outcome and Programs identified in the PBS.</p> |

Appendix 4: Glossary

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| APS | Australian Public Service |
| ARC | Australian Research Council |
| ARC Act | <i>Australian Research Council Act 2001</i> |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| ERA | Excellence in Research for Australia |
| NCGP | National Competitive Grants Program |
| national innovation system | encompassing the people, organisations, activities and relationships involved with undertaking research and development (R&D); investing in, and providing incentives for, R&D; and using the outcomes of R&D for new or improved products, processes and services in the private, government and non-profit sectors. |
| PBS | Portfolio Budget Statements |
| peer review | a specialist assessment of the merit of a research proposal (or group of research proposals) undertaken by a peer. A peer is an independent, internationally recognised researcher who is active in the same (or similar) field of research to that described in the proposal(s). |



Highlights of 2010–11

- Awarded funding of \$255.9 million over seven years to 13 innovative ARC Centres of Excellence selected through a rigorous peer review process
- Established the Australian Research Integrity Committee jointly with the National Health and Medical Research Council
- Completed a full evaluation of all 41 Australian higher education institutions under the ERA initiative and released the *ERA 2010 National Report*
- Established a new scheme for early-career researchers following consultation with higher education institutions
- Announced funding of \$21 million over seven years for Stem Cell Australia (awarded under the *Special Research Initiative in Stem Cell Science*)
- Expanded the membership of the ARC Advisory Council, which provides advice on strategic issues to the Chief Executive Officer
- Completed evaluation of the *Linkage Projects* scheme
- Implemented changes to the *Australian Laureate Fellowships* scheme (for funding commencing in 2011) to incorporate two new fellowships for women
- Consolidated the ARC's three Canberra offices into one new location at 11 Lancaster Place, Majura Park

Cover photos



Dr Sandy O'Sullivan from the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education is the recipient of an Indigenous Researcher Fellowship under the *Discovery Indigenous Researchers Development* scheme. She is reviewing Indigenous cultural representations in conventional, interactive media and online exhibitions, and best practice approaches for Indigenous participation in curatorial and management processes of leading national and international museums.



Dr Deanna D'Alessandro, a chemistry researcher at The University of Sydney, has been awarded a Queen Elizabeth II Fellowship under the *Discovery Projects* scheme to develop nanoporous materials for use in devices for solar harvesting and other applications.



Professor Mahananda Dasgupta from The Australian National University was awarded the inaugural Georgina Sweet Australian Laureate Fellowship for an exceptional female researcher in science and technology. Professor Dasgupta is an international leader in accelerator-based nuclear fusion and fission. Her current research is focussed on understanding the reactions of exotic isotopes.



With the support of a *Linkage Projects* grant, Associate Professor Serdar Boztas (RMIT University) is collaborating with an industry partner, Computer Associates, to develop techniques to prevent insider threats to the security of systems and databases.

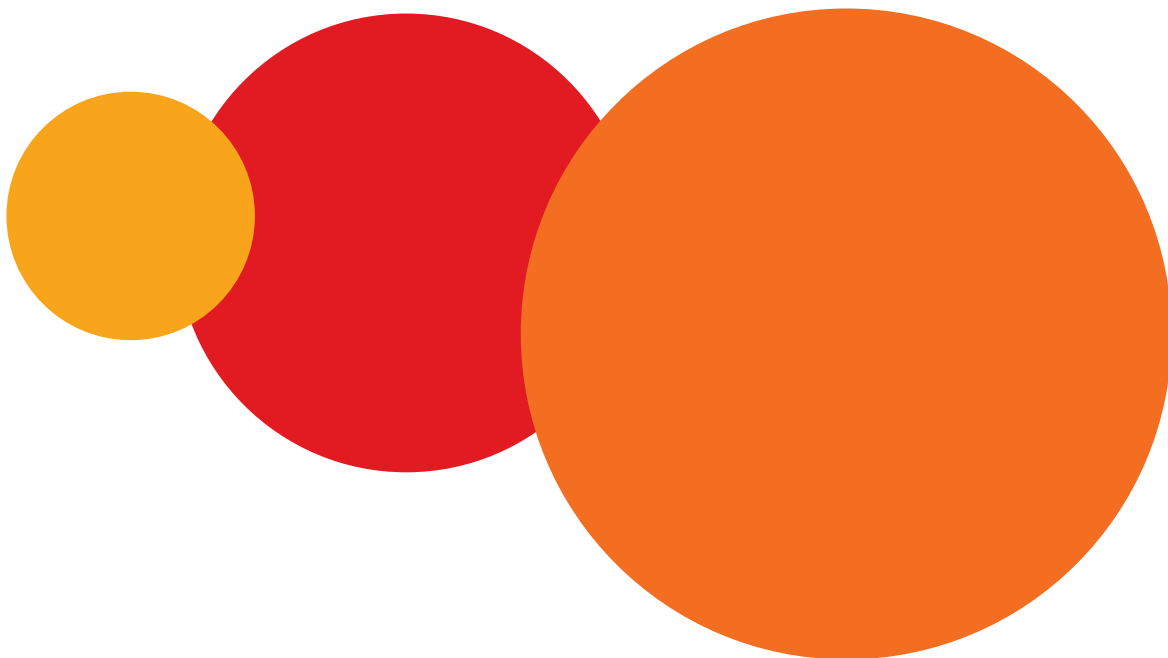


Phytoplankton expert Professor Gustaaf Hallegraef from the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) at the University of Tasmania and Dr Marius Mueller (a German postdoctoral research fellow) review cultures of *E. huxleyi*. With the support of a *Discovery Projects* grant, Professor Hallegraef is studying how this microscopic organism and others respond to climate change. Photo: Chris Crerar/UTAS.



Professor Yong Wang from The University of Queensland is the recipient of an Australian Postdoctoral Fellowship for his project 'Understanding of nanostructures and magnetic properties of Ge-based diluted magnetic semiconductors for spintronic devices'. Photo: The University of Queensland.

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