



Australian Government

Australian Research Council

**Administration of competitive research
funding in Australia**

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Backing Australia's Ability

Support for research and innovation – Backing Australia's Ability

- ▶ Announced in 2001 – additional \$AUS 3 billion over five years, including doubling funding for national competitive grants
- ▶ Extended in 2004 – further \$AUS 5.3 billion over a further five years



Australian Government support for R&D (estimated 2004-05)

CATEGORY	(\$AUS million)
Funding for major government research agencies (CSIRO, DSTO, etc)	1180
Support for business / industry	820
Higher education	1680
Competitive funding schemes	1040
Other	290
TOTAL	5010

Source: DEST – Australian Science and Technology at a glance 2004 - see also www.dest.gov.au/science/analysis/default.htm



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A mix of approaches

Very broadly ...

- ▶ Government R&D agencies are largely block funded.
- ▶ Business R&D activity is supported by tax concessions, and by competitive funding schemes targeted at start-up and commercialisation activities
- ▶ Universities receive block funding to support costs such as salaries and basic infrastructure
- ▶ Competitive funds provide partial funding (some proportion of the direct project costs for R&D)



Primary Australian competitive funding mechanisms for research

(estimated 2004-05)

	(\$AUS million)
Australian Research Council	452
National Health and Medical Research Council	402
Cooperative Research Centres	181
TOTAL	1035

Source: DEST – Australian Science and Technology at a glance 2004 - see also www.dest.gov.au/science/analysis/default.htm



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The Australian Research Council

- ▶ Is an Australian Government organisation established under the *Australian Research Council Act 2001*, within the Education, Science and Training portfolio.
- ▶ Administers funds on behalf of the Australian Government for the purpose of competitive funding of research and research training in Australia
- ▶ Provides policy advice to the Australian Government regarding research and research training



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Key Principles

- ▶ Excellence – the most effective outcomes arise from excellent research
- ▶ Competitive, peer-reviewed selection
- ▶ National Benefit and National Research Priorities

Key Features

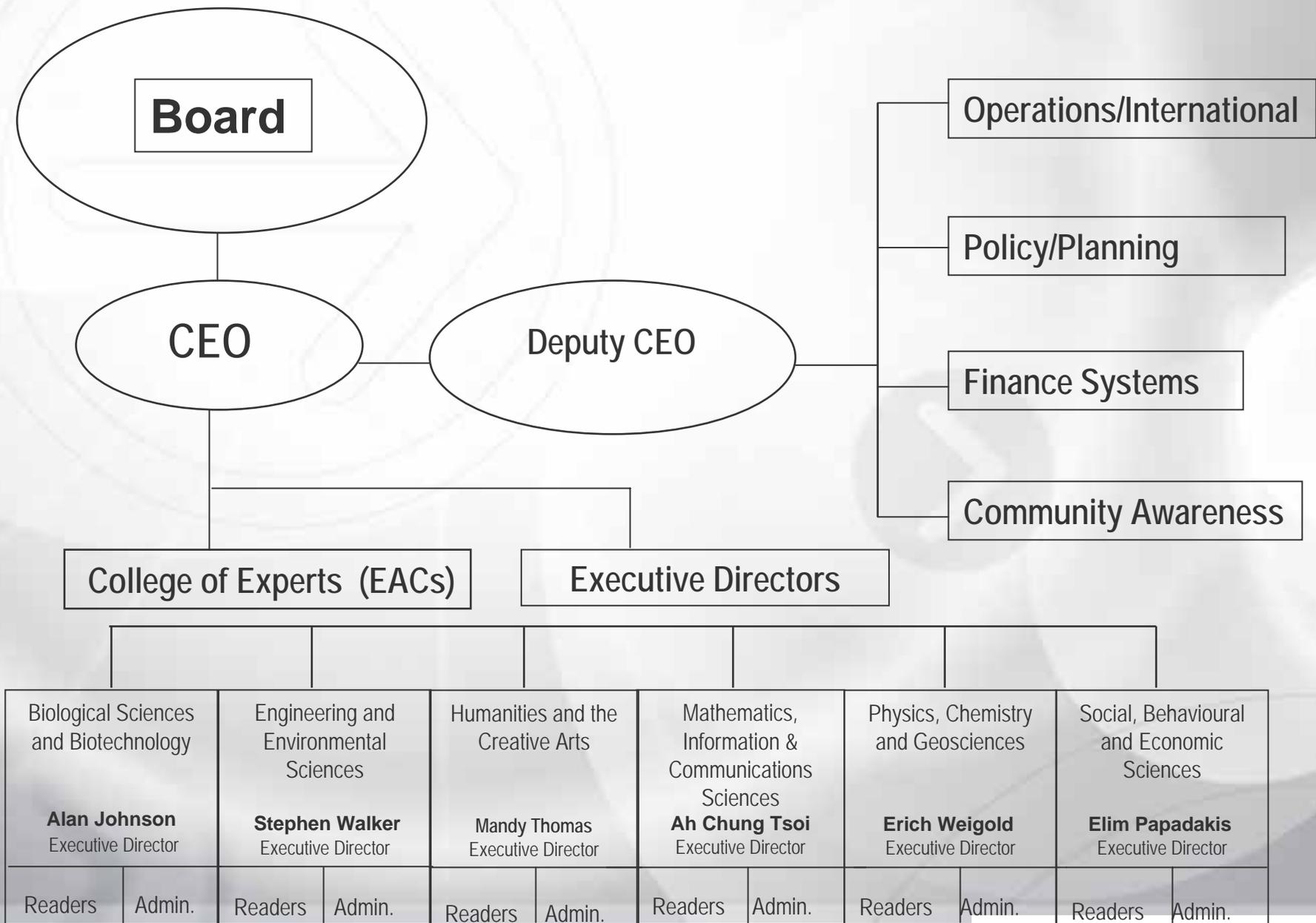
- ▶ Positioned between the cultures of academic research and policy
- ▶ Responsive, flexible structure containing staff with senior government and/or senior research backgrounds



ARC Funding

- ▶ Base funding about \$270M pa, increasing via BAA up to \$540M pa in 2006.
- ▶ Total funding about \$450M in 2004, with roughly two-thirds funding existing grants, and one third available for new grants (across all schemes)
- ▶ Operating funds small (\$12M) and separately appropriated from administered grant funds





National Competitive Grants Program

(2004 \$)

Discovery

excellent research by individuals and teams

(\$240M)

Linkage

collaborative research and infrastructure use - national & international

(\$125M)

Centres

national centres of research excellence

(\$75M)



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Discovery-Projects

Objectives	Excellent research and research training
Timing	1 round per year, closes in March
2004 allocation	\$220M
% of total ARC funds	50%
Number of active projects	~3000
Project duration	1 – 5 years, average 3 years
Project size	\$20k to \$500k pa, average \$85k pa
Number of CIs per project	~1.5
Number of applications per year	~3500
Typical success rate	20-30%



Linkage-Projects

Objectives	Collaborative research
Timing	2 rounds per year, close May and Nov
2004 allocation	\$90M
% of total ARC funds	20%
Number of active projects	~1500
Project duration	1 – 5 years, average 3 years
Project size	\$20k to \$500k pa, average \$60k pa
Number of CIs per project	2.2
Number of applications per year	~1000
Typical success rate	50%



Selection processes

varies by scheme, but broadly ...

- ▶ Proposals prepared by researchers and submitted via their host institution.
- ▶ Allocation to broad discipline areas, and then to more specific assessors based on information in the applications (keywords, structured classifications, etc)
- ▶ Peer review
- ▶ Response to assessment reports by applicants
- ▶ Consideration of proposals, assessment reports, and applicant responses by expert committees
- ▶ Recommendations to the ARC Board and the Minister



A year at the ARC ...

Approvals for funding rules, form development, testing ...

About 5000 research proposals

Over 30,000 emails to assessors ...

About ten weeks to obtain over 12,000 assessment reports

The August meeting, recommendations, approvals ...

Announcements, feedback tours, ...

But most of all ... the willing, generous, committed, voluntary efforts of literally thousands within the research community, who make it all work ...!



More Information ...

**Australian Research
Council**

www.arc.gov.au

**National Health and Medical
Research Council**

www.nhmrc.gov.au

**Statistics on Australian
Science and Technology**

www.dest.gov.au/science/analysis



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Centres

Objectives	Scale and focus in excellent research, networking and collaboration
Timing	Variable, round currently open, 2 years since last round
2004 allocation	\$75M
% of total ARC funds	17%
Number of active centres	~40
Project duration	5 - 9 years
Project size	~\$300k to ~\$10M pa, average \$1M pa
Number of CIs per project	many
Number of applications per round	very rough, 50 - 100
Typical success rate	15% (CoEs starting in 2003)



Linkage-Infrastructure

Objectives	Collaborative support for research infrastructure
Timing	1 round per year, closes May
2004 allocation	~\$30M
% of total ARC funds	~7%
Number of grants per year	~70
Project duration	N/A
Grant size	Average about \$400k
Number of Orgs per grant	Average ~4
Number of applications per year	~140
Typical success rate	50%



Federation Fellows

Objectives	Attract and retain outstanding researchers
Timing	Usually 1 round per year, round for 2005 currently open
2004 allocation	\$21M
% of total ARC funds	5%
Number of active fellowships	73
Duration	5 years
Number of applications per year	~100 to 200
Typical success rate	~15% to 20%



Linkage-International

Objectives	International research collaborations
Timing	Awards – continuous Fellowships – 1 round per year
2004 allocation	\$4M
% of total ARC funds	1%
Number of active projects	~100
Project duration	1 – 3 years, typically 1 year
Project size	\$10k to \$30k pa
Number of CIs per project	1.5
Number of applications per year	100
Typical success rate	varies



The ARC ACT 2001

3 Objects of Act

The objects of this Act are:

- (a) to establish a body:
 - (i) that will provide the Minister with high quality advice about matters related to research; and
 - (ii) that will make high quality recommendations to the Minister in relation to which research programs should receive financial assistance under Division 1 of Part 7; and
 - (iii) that will administer the regimes of financial assistance provided for in Divisions 1 and 2 of Part 7; and
- (b) to provide for the funding of research programs.

