



Australian Government
Australian Research Council

ARC

Corporate Plan 2023-24



Contents

Chief Executive Officer's introduction	3
Our purpose and strategy	6
Governance	8
Our programs and activities	9
Strategic priorities	11
World-class advice and engagement	11
Research system excellence	12
Empowered people	12
Operating context	14
Environment	14
Implementing the Government response to the ARC Review	15
Cooperation	16
Capabilities	18
Risk oversight and management	21
Subsidiaries	22
Performance	24
Performance measures and targets	24
Acronyms	28
Glossary	28
ARC contact details	29

The Australian Research Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connections to lands, waters and community. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and to Elders past, present and emerging.

Chief Executive Officer's introduction

To help shape the Australian research system for the benefit of the nation by enabling world-leading research, fostering research quality, impact and translation, and safeguarding research integrity.

I am pleased to present the Australian Research Council (ARC) 2023–24 Corporate Plan.

The ARC has a proud history in supporting amazing research in Australia by our extraordinary researchers. We are critical to the national research system achieving excellent research and play a leading role in supporting Australia's highest quality fundamental and applied research, research training and research infrastructure.

Over the last year, the ARC has been engaging in a comprehensive reform agenda to ensure the agency can meet the needs and expectations of Government, the research sector and the Australian community.

Our aim to support world-class research and innovation for the advancement of Australian society remains at the forefront of our strategic thinking, and the activities set out in this Plan underscore our commitment to the vision and ambition of our *ARC Strategy 2022–2025* (ARC Strategy) to develop world-class advice and engagement, support Australia's research system excellence, and empower our people. These three pillars continue to drive our prioritisation and decision making.

The independent Review of the ARC Act 2001 was finalised in April 2023 after extensive consultation and analysis by the Review Panel. The final report, *'Trusting Australia's Ability: Review of the ARC Act 2001'* is a strong endorsement of the role and positive impact the ARC has had on Australia's research capability over the last 20 years and affirms the broader reform schedule we are already undertaking to restore stakeholder trust and drive excellent research for the advancement of all Australians. On 22 August 2023, the Minister for Education, the Hon Jason Clare MP announced the Government's response to the final report, and we will work with the Minister and the Department of Education on implementing the actions. These are extensive and include: legislative change that will clarify the purpose of the ARC and the breadth of its role in underpinning and shaping the national research landscape; establish fresh governance arrangements through a new ARC Board; and continue

to deliver a range of programs and services that improve the experience of researchers, partners and assessors and take into account the evolving environment in which we and the research sector operate.

We will also work with the Australian Universities Accord Panel to support its considerations broadly as well as the ARC Review recommendation on evaluating excellence, impact and research capability in university research. Minister Clare has asked the Accord Panel to provide recommendations on a new model for research evaluation alongside its final report that is due in December 2023. We will continue to build on the deliberations of the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) Transition Plan Working Group that reported to the Minister in December 2022 including options for codesigning new research evaluation frameworks with the university sector. This included a Pilot of Indigenous Studies evaluation which will help inform a new data driven research evaluation framework.

In 2023–24 the ARC will continue our commitment to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and research in all ARC activities. This commitment is supported through the ARC Strategy and the Legislative Review, both of which include measures to strengthen our capacity to support and recognise the significant impact and contributions Indigenous researchers, research and knowledge make to Australian society. In 2023–24 the ARC will work with Indigenous leaders to establish an ARC Indigenous Advisory group,



Ms Judi Zielke PSM, Chief Executive Officer

comprising eminent Indigenous researchers and sector leaders to provide advice to the ARC on Indigenous priorities, engagement and opportunities. These changes will take place alongside the Australian Government's commitment to implement the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

The process of building greater trust and engagement with our partners in the research sector and our other stakeholders will remain a key driver in 2023–24. We will continue to engage extensively with our partners across the research sector and across government and based on this collaborative and consultative approach have achieved significant improvements in streamlining schemes and reducing the burden on researchers, universities and their partners, as well as improving our research advice and policies. Significant consultation undertaken in early 2023, including our College of Experts, will inform options for improving the Discovery Program in 2023–24 by streamlining guidelines and application forms to reduce unnecessary requirements on researchers, universities and their partners, while continuing to invest in research excellence.

In a similar vein, while focussing on streamlining activities for our partners, in a challenging economic environment, the ARC will continue to review our own administrative processes. We aim to achieve the maximum efficiency and cost-effectiveness for the funding we receive from the Australian Government, maintaining a clear focus on our vital role in Australia's innovation and research system.

Our commitment to transparency and accountability will be undiminished in 2023–24. We have been pleased to provide greater certainty to research applicants and partners through the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP) grants calendar, which now provides certainty of timing of grant rounds for applicants out to the end of 2024, and we will continue to strive to meet the forecast timing for each grant round.

The first impact assessment of the NCGP since it commenced in 2001 showed a return on investment of \$3.32 for every dollar the ARC invests in research. This will support further work with the Department of Education on a policy review of the NCGP in 2023–24, taking a fresh look at the significant policy drivers for supporting university research and the associated impact on Australia – culturally, environmentally, and economically.

Overall, 2023–24 and the coming years will be both significant and exciting for the ARC as we continue to support our Minister, our partners and stakeholders to advance Australian society through world-class research and innovation.

Statement of preparation

I, as the accountable authority of the Australian Research Council, present the *Australian Research Council 2023–24 Corporate Plan*, which covers the period 2023–24 to 2026–27, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act), and subsection 16E(2) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014* (PGPA Rule).

Judi Zielke PSM

Chief Executive Officer

Australian Research Council

ARC Snapshot

Vision: World-class research and innovation for the advancement of Australian society



\$1 generated

\$3.32 in additional economic output (GDP) for funding awarded through the NCGP from 2002–21

13,136 assessors taking part in peer review processes, providing **19,291** assessments, with the number of assessors increasing by over 2,000 since last year.



Administer over

5,900

new and ongoing grants under the NCGP

Over

1,100

research projects funded in 2022–23



In 2022–23

2,396 partner organisations (companies, not-for-profits and government agencies) participated in research projects

Provide grant opportunities through

14 schemes, including industry fellowships programs



Investing over

\$895m in research in 2023–24, an additional \$40 million from 2022–23



We have added over 50 members to our College of Experts and now have **269** members

147 ARC Staff



Over

5,800

applications submitted each year

29 ARC Centres of Excellence currently being funded, including 11 new centres that were awarded funding in 2022–23



Over

79% of the ARC's 2022–23 research projects involved international collaboration

Our purpose and strategy

The ARC is a non-corporate Commonwealth entity established under the *Australian Research Council Act 2001* (ARC Act), located within the Australian Government's Education portfolio, and reporting to the Minister for Education. The ARC's role within our operating environment is broader than funding research, and continues to evolve as we deliver high-quality grants administration, research policy advice, and foster research quality, translation, impact, and integrity.

Our Vision	World-class research and innovation for the advancement of Australian society				
Our Purpose	To help shape the Australian research system for the benefit of the nation by enabling world-leading research, fostering research quality, impact and translation, and safeguarding research integrity				
Our Programs [as per the ARC Portfolio Budget Statements]	NCGP – Discovery Program Building Australia's research capacity by supporting excellent, internationally competitive research projects, fellowships and awards.		NCGP – Linkage Program Building Australia's research and innovation capacity by supporting excellent, internationally competitive research projects, infrastructure, fellowships, and centres of excellence that involve collaboration among researchers within and beyond the research sector.		Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA)¹ Improving Australia's research capacity by evaluating research at eligible Australian higher education institutions against international benchmarks and identifying excellence across the full spectrum of research activities.
Our Key Activities	Fund high quality, impactful research We fund research through the NCGP based on rigorous peer review assessment of grant applications.	Assess research quality, engagement, and impact We assess the quality, engagement and impact of Australia's university research through our ERA and Engagement and Impact (EI) assessments. ¹	Safeguard research integrity We safeguard the ethics, integrity, and credibility of Australian research, including through a framework of policies, processes and reviews.	Provide grant services to government entities We provide advice and support on program design and deliver research grants administration to other government entities through our Research Grants Services (RGS).	Provide research policy advice We use our datasets, stakeholder relationships, and rigorous processes to position us to advise government and other stakeholders on the Australian research system.
Our Strategic Priorities	World-class advice and engagement Our expertise and knowledge of the research system is shared, recognised, and sought out nationally and internationally, enabled by trusted, mutually beneficial relationships with a wide and influential network.		Research system excellence Our streamlined grants programs and processes, world-class data assets and national assessments enable the research system to continuously improve, and ensure Australia remains a leader in research quality, excellence and impact.		Empowered people Our expert workforce has the skills and capabilities essential for the future and operates within a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement with a strong focus on excellent service delivery.

¹ The 2023 ERA round was discontinued and the ARC has developed a transition plan for the development of a modern data-driven approach to research evaluation, informed by expert review. Depending on the outcome of this work and the Review of the ARC Act 2001, the program is subject to amendment. If required, the Corporate Plan will be updated to reflect this amendment.



Case Study: Delivering research systems excellence – Industry Fellowships Program

The Industry Fellowships Program (IFP), announced in August 2022, is a \$215 million package made up of 3 schemes – Early Career Industry Fellowships, Mid-Career Industry Fellowships, and Industry Laureate Fellowships. The 3 schemes were co-designed with stakeholders to support researchers moving between industry and academic research settings. Announced under the University Research Commercialisation Plan, the Fellowships also aim to drive translation and commercialisation outcomes, which too often are lost overseas.

In developing the IFP, the ARC undertook targeted consultation with key stakeholders, including early and mid-career researchers, universities, members of the ARC College of Experts, business people, peak bodies and government groups, to inform the design of the Schemes. Consultations included 2 roundtables with more than 150 participants each as well as individual discussions, small group sessions and discussions with ARC's Advisory Committee. The discussions focussed on how best to achieve the scheme's policy outcomes, as well as addressing opportunities for streamlining the application process and improvements to systems.

A key focus in developing this Program was to make these schemes accessible to researchers with an industry background, to break down the barriers that exist between research conducted in an industry setting and research based in universities. The aim is to help researchers from both sides build networks across the university/industry divide.

“When a Scheme like this was announced, it really just seemed like a perfect fit to really take what we do as scientists and make some change both for industry and for the community,” said Dr Tracey Sletten from the Turner Institute for Brain and Mental Health, Monash University, a successful first round recipient of a Mid-Career Industry Fellowship.

The first round of IFP attracted considerable interest with 789 applications received across the 3 schemes. The successful applicants to the first round of the IFP were announced in

April and May 2023. Across the 3 Schemes, \$73.8 million was awarded to 50 Early Career Fellows, 25 Mid-Career Fellows and 8 Laureate Fellows.

In addition to grant funding, the applicants attracted additional investment from industry, drawing a total investment of \$47.9 million from industry partners. This includes companies, government entities and not-for-profit organisations from Australia and overseas.

The new streamlined approach to applications was undertaken for the first time in round one of the IFP, optimising the overall delivery efficiency, allowing for a reduced turnaround time from application close to announcement (from around 8 months down to 5 months). The details of the program were refined to remove unnecessary burden to researchers and simplify requirements. Another significant change was to pilot the release of assessor scores, text, and rankings to unsuccessful, eligible applicants. This change was the result of listening to feedback from researchers and increasing engagement with them. This process has been so successful that providing unsuccessful applicants with extra details about their results has now been adopted across all NCGP schemes.

A review of initial feedback from the first rounds of IFP was undertaken in May 2023 which found that the 3 schemes were well designed and that guidelines for the program did not require change and should remain as is to provide certainty to future applicants. Some minor administrative changes have been made based on learnings from implementation of the first rounds.

Round 2 of the IFP opened on 5 July 2023 with a call for applications for the Mid-Career Industry Fellowships.

Governance

The ARC has a robust governance framework in place to support the CEO in delivering the ARC's purpose. This framework enables effective performance, risk oversight, and compliance with our responsibilities under the ARC Act, PGPA Act, and other legislation.

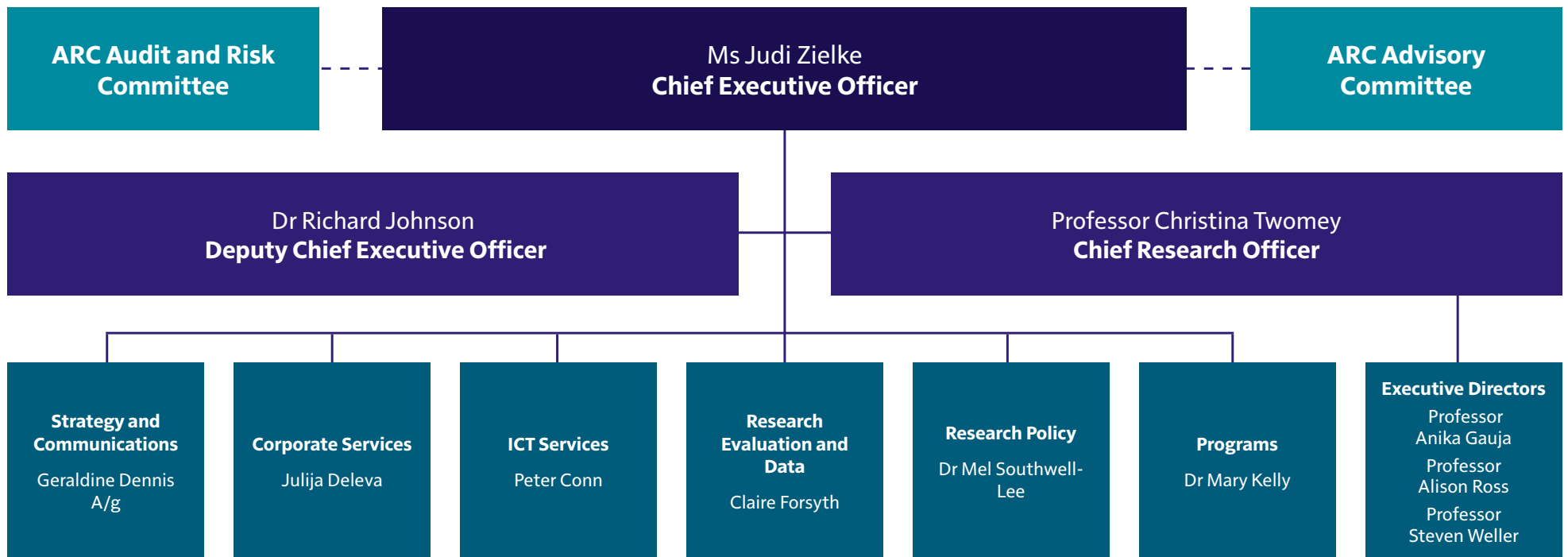
Our independent ARC Advisory Committee comprises leaders from across universities, industry, and government and provides us with high quality advice and insight on our strategic agenda and functions, under the guidance of the Chair, Professor Chris Moran.

The ARC Audit and Risk Committee, chaired by Allan Gaukroger, reviews and provides advice to the CEO on the appropriateness of the ARC's financial and performance reporting, and systems of risk oversight and management and internal control.

The CEO is supported by the ARC's senior leadership structure which includes the Deputy CEO, Chief Research Officer (CRO), 6 branches and a cohort of Executive Directors who have an important role in the ARC through their liaison with the academic research sector and the expertise they contribute to our programs, policies, and peer review processes. Figure 1 outlines the organisational structure of the ARC.

The CRO position was introduced in January 2023 to provide strategic advice to the CEO regarding the evolution of the university research sector, and continuous improvement in the ARC's operations. The office of the CRO includes a range of Executive Directors, also from the academic research sector, with experience that spans the discipline range. Together they drive our engagement with the broader sector on all aspects of the ARC's programs and services.

Figure 1: ARC Organisational Structure as at July 2023



Our programs and activities

Research funding

Through the NCGP, the ARC supports excellent fundamental and applied research and research training and encourages national competition across all disciplines outside of clinical and other medical research. The Discovery Program (about \$550 million per year) recognises the importance of fundamental research, dedicated to the creation of knowledge, within a wider framework that encourages links with users of the research. It delivers benefit to Australia by building research capacity through promoting competitive research projects by individuals and teams, research training and career opportunities, international collaboration, and supports the national innovation system to build new knowledge and a knowledge-based economy.

The Linkage Program (about \$345 million per year) aims to build Australia's research and innovation capacity by supporting excellent, internationally competitive research projects, infrastructure, and centres of excellence that involve collaboration among researchers within and beyond the research sector. It supports excellent collaborative research; provides training and career opportunities for current and emerging researchers; fosters industry and other end-user engagement; supports international collaboration; and encourages research that will strengthen Australia's capacity in areas of national priority. Through these partnerships, the Linkage Program encourages the transfer of skills, knowledge and ideas as a basis for securing commercial and other benefits of research.

Research codes of practice and integrity

The ARC works to safeguard research integrity through a range of policies and activities, including:

- Maintaining and applying the *ARC Research Integrity Policy* in relation to all research funded by the ARC
- Fulfilling our responsibilities under the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018* (Code) and associated guidance, for which the ARC is a co-author
- Supporting the Australian Research Integrity Committee (ARIC), which reviews, upon request, institutional processes in investigating potential breaches of the Code. ARIC is supported in partnership with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

Advice on Australia's research

The ARC has intelligence on research and research training, research partnerships and the quality, engagement and impact of research. Our data and analysis is utilised across Government to inform decisions on research and innovation.

Research evaluation

While no assessments are currently scheduled, the ARC administers the ERA and EI programs. By rating the research performance of all eligible Australian universities, these programs have assisted Government to understand and make decisions about Australia's university research performance, while improving the quality of research produced. ERA is a national research assessment framework evaluating the quality of research against international benchmarks. EI examines the translation of university research into outcomes beyond academia to determine the economic, environmental, and sociocultural benefits arising from Australian research.

Following the Minister for Education's Statement of Expectations in August 2022, the ARC paused work on ERA and EI to develop a new, modern data-driven approach, informed by expert review. This includes developing a framework that takes advantage of developments in data and technology, while addressing sector concerns.

Research Grant Services

The ARC supports other Australian Government entities funding the research sector through RGS. RGS provides advice and support on research grants program design and administration and enables use of standardised processes through ARC's Research Management System (RMS).

RGS makes it easier to fund the best research and the best researchers in line with policy objectives, provide evidence about the value of research, improve whole-of-Australian Government research grants program data consistency and apply for, assess, and manage research grants in Australia.



Research Highlight: Revolutionising Lobster Aquaculture

Primary Researchers: Professor Greg Smith.

Institutions: University of Tasmania (UTAS), University of the Sunshine Coast in collaboration with The University of Auckland, New Zealand.

The ARC Research Hub for Sustainable Onshore Lobster Aquaculture is delivering transformational change to the Australian aquaculture industry. The research will establish a sustainable lobster aquaculture sector that is expected to grow to a \$150 million industry by 2036.

Led by the University of Tasmania, the Research Hub is delivering significant outcomes through its focus on developing commercial, sustainable, and socially acceptable lobster production from hatchery to market.

In Australia, capturing wild seedstock to grow lobsters is not viable due to low and unreliable supply, the presence of established fisheries with strict regulations and environmental degradation concerns. The Research Hub's challenge has been to develop commercial hatchery infrastructure, grow-out technology and commercial feeds that will support the development of an Australian aquaculture industry for lobsters.

Research Hub Director, Professor Greg Smith, said the Hub's research had led to breakthrough technology for hatching, raising, and growing out of tropical rock lobsters.

'The ability to rear commercial quantities of lobsters through a hatchery phase and subsequently to market size has long been an elusive goal for many research institutes around the world,' Professor Smith said.

'With the support of successive ARC funding through the Industrial Transformation Research Hubs, we have been able to successfully bring together cutting-edge research and commercial expertise to make significant advances towards this goal.'

One significant feature of the project has been the opportunity to collaborate with a diverse range of commercial industries including aquaculture companies, industrial plastic fabricators and specialist feed manufacturers.

'Through this ARC Research Hub, we're building the knowledge to establish the world's first sustainable onshore lobster aquaculture industry, with our research outcomes targeted at positioning Australia at the forefront of onshore lobster aquaculture,' Professor Smith said.

The Research Hub was established through a \$5 million ARC grant awarded in 2019. The Hub builds on an earlier ARC funded project, and already, they can reflect on significant outcomes. Their hatchery technology has been licenced by a new firm, Ornatas Pty Ltd, specifically established to commercialise and use the technology to develop and operate a commercial lobster aquaculture facility. Ornatas' commitment to the new technology is reflected in not just a \$5 million contribution to the ARC Research Hub, but also its own employment of 25 scientists – out of 30 staff – and, to date, a \$30 million investment into commercialisation of the technology.

Ornatas CEO, Scott Parkinson, said the technology pioneered through the Research Hub was revolutionary for the industry.

'The UTAS technology is truly the "Holy Grail" of aquaculture and does what so many have tried and failed at before – commercial production of Tropical Rock Lobster from egg that will underpin production of premium lobsters to a marketable size on land using sustainable practices,' Mr Parkinson said.

Ornatas is investing a further \$20 million over the next 3 years in commercialising the new technology. Looking forward, up to 1,000 new jobs are expected to be created in the industry within a decade.'

Strategic priorities

Our strategic priorities enable our vision and provide us with a refreshed approach to helping shape the Australian research system that delivers better outcomes for the research community and government. For each priority, we have identified several key actions that we will implement and build upon over the course of this plan.

World-class advice and engagement

Our ability to engage with and inform the Australian research agenda depends on our reputation in core areas of responsibility. By using expertise and know-how to build our reputation and networks, we will strengthen our position as a trusted source of intelligence, advice and connection.

Key Actions	Years			
	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27
Work with the Department of Education on legislative changes to the ARC's governance arrangements, including the establishment of a new ARC Board.	✓	✓		
Strengthen our strategic engagement with key government agencies.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Leverage strategic engagement with like-minded agencies internationally to share experiences, trends and best practice approaches.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strengthen communication and strategic engagement with the research community, including universities, researchers, industry and other research users.	✓	✓		
Establish the ARC Indigenous Forum.	✓			
Utilise the data strategy and data service unit to identify, analyse and share the value from ARC and other data sets across government, the research community and industry.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Continue to work with universities and other stakeholders to safeguard the integrity and credibility of Australian research.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Work with the Department of Education to implement the Government's response to the University Accord Review Panel.	✓	✓	✓	

Research system excellence

We have a responsibility to foster excellence within the research system. Our leading metrics and research grants administration expertise are the foundation through which to strengthen Australia's research sector. We will support the ongoing quality and impact of Australian research and innovation, using insights to empower the research system to continuously improve.

Key Actions	Years			
	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27
Undertake, with the Department of Education, a Policy Review of ARC's grants programs (NCGP).	✓	✓		
Review of Peer Review processes.	✓	✓		
Work with the research sector to co-design ARC grant application processes to support a more diverse research sector, especially for First Nations, women, early-career and mid-career researchers.	✓	✓		
Finalise NCGP Process Review.	✓			
Co-design and pilot a more modern, data driven approach to research evaluation and research quality assessment informed by expert review, including a pilot of indigenous studies evaluation.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Work with the Department of Education on metrics and indicators to identify the impact of university research in Australia.	✓	✓		

Empowered people

To achieve our outcome, it is important for us to have a highly skilled, engaged and service-centric workforce which understands and drives our purpose. This requires a united and strong leadership focus to steer the agency towards a high performing culture. We empower our entire workforce to demonstrate leadership qualities and prepare us for the future.

Key Actions	Years			
	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27
Finalise and implement an ARC workforce strategy to ensure the right people, with the right capabilities are in the right roles.	✓			
Finalise and implement an ARC Capability Framework to improve performance.	✓	✓		
Embed a service-centric capability through refreshing the ARC Service Charter and implementing annual stakeholder satisfaction surveys.	✓			



Case Study: Investing in our future – Centres of Excellence

The ARC Centres of Excellence are among our most prestigious research projects. They are the focal points of expertise through which the highest calibre researchers collaborate to deliver research that benefits Australia, strengthens our international standing, and addresses some of the major challenges of our time.

ARC Centres of Excellence allow the complementary research resources of universities, publicly funded research organisations, other research bodies, governments, and businesses to be concentrated for exciting outcomes that would not otherwise be achieved. These large-scale Commonwealth investments are funded for a period of up to 7 years, for up to \$5 million per year, and they attract significant co-investment from industry and other partners.

ARC Centres uniquely offer the ability to address larger scale research problems, developing future research leaders that will be at the frontier of bringing research outcomes to society and communities and translate research outcomes to partners and end users. Importantly they build translation pathways for outcomes well beyond scientific knowledge – outcomes which will impact not only business and government but also community and society.

One of the flagship examples of the ARC Centres of Excellence is our sustained investment in quantum computer technology. That investment has been recognised as crucial to positioning Australia as a global leader in the quantum technology sector, with world-class expertise and research capabilities. Many other Centres of Excellence have also achieved significant outcomes.

ARC Centres of Excellence selection rounds are conducted every 3 years. The ARC Centres of Excellence commencing 2023 (CE23) were announced in November 2022. Eleven projects were funded to a value of \$385 million over 7 years. These Centres of Excellence represent world class research and some of the peak projects in the Australian research sector, tackling issues from indigenous studies, and violence against women, to biotechnology and astrophysics.

Partnerships with collaborating organisations from across the spheres of research, business and government form a key part of the ARC Centres of Excellence and they attract significant co-investment. At the point of application for CE23, partner organisations had committed to over \$304 million in cash and in-kind funding to the funded projects, with a further \$375 million in contributions from both administering and partnering universities involved in the Centres. That's a total investment in the CE23 centres of over \$1 billion.

A full list of successful CE23 grants is below:

- ARC Centre of Excellence for Carbon Science and Innovation
- ARC Centre of Excellence for Gravitational Wave Discovery
- ARC Centre of Excellence for Green Electrochemical Transformation of Carbon Dioxide
- ARC Centre of Excellence for Indigenous and Environmental Histories and Futures
- ARC Centre of Excellence for Indigenous Futures
- ARC Centre of Excellence for The Elimination of Violence Against Women
- ARC Centre of Excellence for The Mathematical Analysis of Cellular Systems
- ARC Centre of Excellence for The Weather of the 21st Century
- ARC Centre of Excellence in Optical Microcombs for Breakthrough Science
- ARC Centre of Excellence in Plants for Space
- ARC Centre of Excellence in Quantum Biotechnology.

Operating context

Environment

As Australia navigates a range of new and ongoing global, economic and environmental challenges, the importance of funding research that can translate into long term national benefits and solutions, such as job creation, boosting industry and the economy, and improving the wellbeing of all Australians remains paramount. The Government's investment in research through the ARC plays a significant role in achieving this by funding both fundamental and applied research across the full spectrum of research (excluding pre-clinical, clinical medical or health research).

2023–24 will bring significant change to the ARC and its enabling legislation following the Government's response to the final report of the Legislative Review of the ARC, *'Trusting Australia's Ability' Review of the ARC Act 2007*, and there is a strong likelihood of further significant change in the higher education and research landscape over the next year. Factors include changes to the sector related to the Universities Accord final report due towards the end of 2023, as well as the anticipated release of updated national science and research priorities and the Office of the Chief Scientist's work in relation to open access. Broader trends such as the increasing presence of generative Artificial Intelligence within and beyond universities will also shape the work of the sector and government going forward.

At the whole-of-government level, the ARC will also be shaped by broader initiatives such as Australian Public Service (APS) Reform, a greater focus on integrity, the establishment of the National Anti-Corruption Commission and improving partnerships with First Nations people. The ARC has already enacted activities that align with the APS Reform outcomes and initiatives and our people understand and embrace their role as stewards of the public service. The ARC is also cognisant of broader work across government on First Nations matters, including the 2023 referendum to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

As we enter the second year of the ARC Strategy, we continue to build upon our relationships to facilitate better outcomes. Stakeholder engagement is at the forefront of our activities as we work to meet the needs of the research community through strategic engagement and collaboration. As a part of our Peer Review Improvement Plan, we will complete a review of assessor practices including recruitment, training and retention processes to improve the quality of peer review at the ARC. We will continue to work with our partners and stakeholders to support innovative and impactful research for the advancement of all Australians.

A key pillar of the ARC Strategy, our people, will be a focus for the coming year. We will be implementing our new *ARC Workforce Strategy* as well as establishing an organisational capability framework. These will be underpinned by a culture supporting principles of diversity and inclusion, resilience, and a service-centric mindset, all of which build upon the APS Values. The workforce strategy will capture our current and emerging capability requirements to ensure we are ready to meet future capability needs, while shaping and actively embedding a collaborative and service-oriented culture to be flexible and responsive to the needs of our stakeholders. In addition, the workforce strategy will connect with the broader APS Reform agenda and evolving expectations of APS service delivery and integrity.

Technological advancements are changing the expectations of what is achievable in relation to customer and stakeholder engagement and grant administration processes, but also provides threats to the security of information and the operations of the agency. We are keeping up with technological advancements to achieve our deliverables by investing in systems that improve the experiences of our stakeholders, and the efficiency of the agency. Additionally, we are continuing to strengthen our capabilities and management of artificial intelligence, cyber security, and emerging technologies to deliver smart and secure digital solutions.

Implementing the Government response to the ARC Review

A key priority for the ARC in 2023–24 is working with the Department of Education on implementing the Government’s response to the final report of the Legislative Review of the ARC, *‘Trusting Australia’s Ability’ Review of the ARC Act 2001*, the first comprehensive review of the ARC since its commencement in 2001. The Review, which commenced in late 2022, considered how the ARC’s legislation can be updated to provide clarity on objectives and processes to drive renewed focus within the organisation, and whether the legislation’s scope is sufficient to support an effective and efficient university research system. The final report was released on 20 April 2023, and the Government announced its response to the Review on 22 August 2023. These actions include a substantial refresh of the ARC’s enabling legislation to clarify its purpose to underpin and shape the national research landscape as well as defining its role in funding basic, strategic basic and applied research. It will also strengthen the ARC’s governance arrangements through the establishment of a Board as the Accountable Authority for the ARC, to commence in 2024–25.

While implementation of a majority of the Review’s recommendations rely on legislative change, there is significant work underway to address the remaining recommendations as part of our broader reform schedule to strengthen stakeholder trust and drive excellent research for the advancement of all Australians. Consistent with the ARC Strategy, these activities include strengthening support for fellowships and academic careers; advancing the support for Indigenous Australian academics, including through the establishment of an Indigenous advisory forum; improving communication and consultation with stakeholders, especially in relation to changes to grant guidelines; and simplifying and streamlining best practice for the NCGP.

These activities are being undertaken in close consultation with our partners and stakeholders to ensure implementation of the changes meet the needs of the Government and the sector, while delivering value and benefit to the Australian community.

Cooperation

In addition to serving the Minister for Education, we cooperate and collaborate with a broad range of national and international stakeholders. The organisations and stakeholders that play a significant role towards helping us achieve our purpose include:

Stakeholder	Contribution towards achieving our purpose
Australian universities	Universities are our key stakeholders, as NCGP funding is predominantly awarded to Australian universities, and we evaluate the quality and impact of research for this same group. We work closely with university leaders, such as Deputy Vice Chancellors, and with university research offices to ensure we are informed by sector knowledge, and that there is awareness and understanding of our policies, grants processes and compliance with the funding requirements and participation in our national research assessments.
Department of Education	We sit within the Education portfolio and regularly engage with the Department of Education to ensure our policy and priority outcomes are aligned with Government activities.
Industry, not-for-profit organisations, and other research end-users	Industry, not-for-profit organisations, and other research end-users help to maximise the research benefit of ARC funded research by collaborating and participating in ARC funded research. These partnerships can include cash and/or in-kind contributions and can lead to better outcomes for research and research translation across sectors.
International collaborators	We are committed to creating and boosting international research collaboration opportunities. Encouraging global research linkages through our schemes is key to ensuring Australian researchers are able to connect and partner with outstanding international researchers to produce world leading research outcomes.
Other government departments and agencies	We work across government to ensure our activities align with strategic Government priorities and that we comply with cross-government legislative requirements. We collaborate closely with the NHMRC to align grant administration practices where possible, and for oversight of the ARIC. Similarly, we collaborate with the Department of Industry, Science and Resources and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) to enable research commercialisation and translation opportunities. We also provide grants administration services to other government entities that fund research grant programs such as the Department of Education, Office of National Intelligence, and the Department of Defence.
Researchers	Researchers play an important role across the NCGP and our national research assessments, by delivering excellent research and research outcomes, peer reviewing applications for the NCGP, and participating in our national research assessments. Australian researchers of international repute form the ARC College of Experts and play a central role in identifying and recommending research excellence for funding.
Research peak bodies	We collaborate and consult closely with research peak bodies to ensure our policies and programs are fit for purpose and meet the needs of the Australian research sector given the broad range of research we fund and evaluate.



Research Highlight: Climate warnings from Antarctica

Primary Researchers: Professor Matt King and Professor Nerilie Abram.

Institutions: University of Tasmania, The Australian National University (ANU), The University of New South Wales, Curtin University, University of Canberra, The University of Melbourne, The University of Western Australia and University of South Australia.



As governments around the world grapple with the challenge of global warming, researchers at the Australian Centre for Excellence in Antarctic Science (ACEAS) are discovering new evidence that underlines the importance of reducing carbon emissions to limit temperature rises.

A study published in August 2022 by an international team of climate scientists, including experts from ACEAS, found that allowing global temperatures to rise above 2 degrees Celsius could lead to further melting of the East Antarctic Ice Sheet — the ‘sleeping giant’ — with a dire impact on sea levels.

‘Earth’s largest ice sheet, the East Antarctic Ice Sheet, contains the equivalent of 52 metres of sea level,’ said co-author Professor Nerilie Abram, Deputy Director of ACEAS at ANU.

Professor Abram said the ice sheet could remain mostly stable over coming centuries, adding less than half a metre to sea-level rise by the year 2500, if urgent action is taken now to limit global warming.

‘But, if temperatures rise above 2 degrees Celsius, sustained by high greenhouse gas emissions in the coming decades, we lose our chance to keep that ice sheet dormant,’ Professor Abram said.

‘The melting of the East Antarctic Ice Sheet could contribute around 1 to 3 metres to sea levels by 2300 and around 2 to 5 metres by 2500,’ she said.

ACEAS is an ARC Special Research Initiative. Founded in 2020, with \$20 million of ARC funding, ACEAS brings together 8 Australian universities along with other partner organisations from around the world. The centre focuses on research that uncovers the effects of climate change on East Antarctica and the Southern Ocean.

During 2022–23 ACEAS played a key role in many significant research findings.

A study led by ACEAS researchers, published in March 2023, found that the deep ocean circulation around Antarctica could be headed for collapse. A further study published in May confirmed the modelling through a new method of ocean observations — the circulation has already slowed by 30% since the 1990s.

In April 2023, ACEAS researchers teamed with the Australian Antarctic Program Partnership to release a briefing paper for policy makers, *On Thin Ice*. The paper notes that while the volume of Antarctic sea ice is highly variable — a ‘heartbeat’ of expansion and contraction — there is less sea ice than usual for almost all of the past 7 years.

‘If you noticed a change in your heartbeat, you’d likely see a doctor,’ the report notes.

‘Just as doctors run tests and gather information, climate scientists undertake fieldwork, gather observations, and run simulations to better understand the health of our planet,’ says ACEAS Director, Professor Matt King.

‘Antarctica’s health heavily depends on humanity’s actions from now.’

Image: Supplied – Fieldwork in Queen Mary Land collecting geophysical and geological data.

Credit: Tobias Stål.

Capabilities

The achievement of our purpose, strategic priorities, and key activities is dependent on having a strong and effective organisational capability. To support this, we have developed the ARC Capability Framework, which outlines the capability goals of the agency over the next 2 years and provides an integrated structure that will enable us to continue investing in our people, processes, infrastructure and data capabilities.

Service-centric design – stakeholder engagement, communication and collaboration

Our ability to build relationships and communicate effectively with all our stakeholders is critical to achieving our purpose. Our engagement is driven through timely, effective and meaningful communication to inform, collaborate, consult, and promote the value of research to Australia and the wider research community. Building a culture of collaboration, partnership, and customer-centric service with the ARC's stakeholders is key to strengthening our reputation as a trusted source of advice on research matters. We utilise a range of communication channels to engage with stakeholders, including through the ARC website, network messaging, research highlights, outreach activities, media activities, and our social media presence. Our priorities for 2023–24 and the forward years include:

- Develop target-specific stakeholder engagement and communication plans in line with ARC Strategy to guide better outcomes-focused activities.

Strategic policy advice

Providing high-quality research policy advice is integral to building our reputation to be a trusted source of intelligence, advice and connection across the research system. We are working to strengthen our data analysis and strategic policy capabilities, build a stronger evidence base, grow our understanding of emerging trends and engage domestically and internationally on key policy issues. Our priorities for 2023–24 and the forward years include:

- Develop high quality, evidence-based advice
- Contribute to cross-government policy work that affects the university research sector
- Engage in broader systemic issues affecting research grants and funding.

People and culture – diversity and inclusion

To achieve our outcome, it is important for us to have a highly skilled, engaged, diverse and service-centric workforce which understands and drives our purpose. This requires a united and strong leadership focus to steer the agency towards a high performing culture. We empower our workforce to demonstrate leadership qualities and prepare us for the future. Our priorities for 2023–24 and the forward years include:

- Implement an ARC workforce strategy to ensure the right people, with the right capabilities are in the right roles
- Implement an ARC capability framework to improve performance across the agency.

Grants management expertise

We are recognised as experts in the delivery of research grant programs and supporting excellent fundamental and applied research and research training, consistent with the whole-of-Australian Government grants administration initiatives. Our ARC College of Experts, made up of experts from the Australian research community, and research end-users across the private, public and not-for-profit sectors, play a key role in identifying research excellence. In addition, the RMS provides a standardised research grants process and offers a flexible, robust, stable and innovative platform for administering research grants. We also provide specialist research-based grants administration services to other Australian Government agencies that is standardised, streamlined and supports Australian Government standards and requirements. Our priorities for 2023–24 and the forward years include:

- Improve NCGP assurance and compliance capability, including final reporting, post project impact reporting, streamlining processes, and pre-populating information.

Research, analysis and evaluation

Our work in research, analysis and evaluation helps shape the Australian research system to continuously improve Australia's research quality, translation and impact for the benefit of the nation. We engage with our stakeholders to ensure we are monitoring best practice research evaluation methods, while providing policy analysis and advice in relation to research evaluation and impact.¹ Our priorities for 2023–24 and the forward years include:

- Develop and test new technologies to better harness and leverage data for research evaluation purposes
- Explore emerging areas of research evaluation, including research environment, to inform a national assessment of research quality.

Data fluency

We collect comprehensive data sets as part of the NCGP grants process, the ERA and EI national research assessments and RGS arrangements and share this information in a responsive and contextualised manner with our stakeholders across government, the research sector, and the community. We seek to promote and leverage the benefits of this powerful data asset to inform research policy advice to the Government and to inform the community on trends in the research sector. Our priorities for 2023–24 and the forward years include:

- Cultivate and retain high-end data analytics capability within the organisation
- Uplift the usage of ARC data holdings to make them more accessible, interpretable, and reliable
- Enrich ARC data assets to provide better support for policy analysis and initiatives modelling.

Technology

Our technology strategy aligns with the broader Digital Government Strategy, providing services to our client base through digital platforms in a people/business centric manner. We have implemented a cost-effective contemporary operating platform to ensure alignment within the whole-of-Government architecture and promote re-use of digital investment by providing and consuming shared digital capabilities with other government agencies. Our priorities for 2023–24 and the forward years include:

- Implement a new Information management system to improve the management of the ARC's records and information holdings
- Implement a new service delivery management system.

Organisational governance and financial management

We maintain high-quality governance structures that include strategies and frameworks for decision-making, performance measurement and reporting, audit, evaluation, and risk management. These frameworks are supported by internal policies, plans, an online governance and risk management system and staff training. We share outcomes and findings from internal audit, evaluation, and external reviews across the agency to improve internal controls and drive continual business improvement.

We have an efficient and effective system of financial controls and procedures in place that meets the needs of our staff and stakeholders while maintaining our financial sustainability and complying with the Commonwealth Resource Management Framework. Our finance section is a source of financial expertise and provides high quality strategic financial advice across the agency. Our priorities for 2023–24 and the forward years include:

- Develop and implement an integrity framework for the ARC
- Implement improved Freedom of Information processes
- Evolve our financial controls and procedures to improve process efficiency and ensure the integrity of the controls meets our compliance requirements.

¹ The 2023 ERA round was discontinued and the ARC has developed a transition plan for the development of a modern data-driven approach to research evaluation, informed by expert review. Depending on the outcome of this work and the Review of the ARC Act 2001, the program is subject to amendment. If required, the Corporate Plan will be updated to reflect this amendment.



Research Highlight: Testing traditional knowledge for bushfire management

Primary Researcher: Associate Professor Michael-Shawn Fletcher.

Institution: The University of Melbourne.

Associate Professor Michael-Shawn Fletcher is a Wiradjuri man, and a multiple ARC grant recipient based at the University of Melbourne, whose research tracks the long-term interactions between humans, climate, disturbance and vegetation at local, regional and global scale.

Associate Professor Fletcher is currently leading his third Discovery Indigenous grant, which asks about bushfires in Southeast Australia – ‘Has it always burned so hot?’ One of the questions the research seeks to answer is whether Indigenous cultural burning is a way of alleviating the impact of climate-driven bushfires in Southeast Australian forests. Recent fires have proven that fuel-reduction burning is ineffective at mitigating against catastrophic bushfires. Australia needs better strategies for managing the fire hazard presented by the highly flammable forests of southeast Australia.

The removal of Indigenous management from these forests occurred more than a century before the application of fuel-reduction burning to protect life, property and other assets, allowing the accumulation of fuel loads across the landscape that cause catastrophic bushfires. It has been argued that returning an Indigenous style fire regime will keep landscape fuel loads low, thus reducing the frequency and intensity of bushfires and mitigating against large catastrophic bushfires.

While based on enormous reservoirs of traditional fire knowledge in Indigenous communities, these assertions lack empirical testing within these highly flammable forests. To resolve them, Associate Professor Fletcher and his research team are testing how fuel loads, fuel type, fire frequency and fire intensity have changed over the past 500 years in Southeast Australian forests, spanning the period of indigenous to British management.

This research will provide direct data on the potential for Indigenous cultural burning to maintain low fuel loads, less frequent and less intense fires within these forests. This project will provide data on the ability of cultural burning to lower fuel loads, alter fuel type and change the frequency and intensity of bushfires. This will allow the development of robust,



sustainable and effective fuel management strategy in the face of the clear increase in catastrophic bushfires in Southeast Australia.

Story: The University of Melbourne.

Image: Supplied – Associate Professor Fletcher and his research team are testing fuel loads, fuel type, fire frequency and fire intensity over the past 500 years in Southeast Australian forests.

Risk oversight and management

At the ARC we take a proactive and positive approach to risk management. We engage with risk so that we can deliver on our programs and strategic objectives through risk-based decision-making.

Along with the CEO, the ARC Leadership Group (ALG) is responsible for the development and promotion of risk management strategies and practices within the ARC and for ensuring that these strategies are communicated to and practiced by all staff. The ALG is also responsible for setting the ARC's desired risk appetite and tolerances, assessing strategic and key operational and fraud risks, monitoring the management of shared risks, and reviewing the ARC's Risk Management Framework.

Business areas routinely monitor the ARC's risk environment and review their risks and controls through an online risk management system. Risk information from all business areas is regularly reported to the CEO and the ALG. The ARC Audit and Risk Committee reviews the appropriateness of the ARC's system of risk oversight and management and system of internal controls for the entity.

The recently revised ARC Risk Management Framework aligns with the *Commonwealth Risk Management Policy* and supports our staff in carrying out risk management effectively. The framework is designed to minimise the possibility of loss or damage to operations, staff, visitors, property, reputation, and assets while recognising innovation and opportunities to meet our objectives. It is underpinned by the *ARC Risk Management Policy* and *ARC Risk Management Plan and Toolkit* which articulate our risk culture, appetite, tolerance and approach to engaging with risk.

Risk appetite and tolerance

We manage many risks, including shared risks with our delivery partners. When considering the level of risk we are willing to accept or retain in order to achieve our purpose and enable our vision, we consider how these risks may impact on achieving our strategic priorities as outlined in the ARC Strategy.

We recognise that we cannot, and should not, eliminate all the risks inherent in our work. Accepting some degree of risk in our business practices promotes efficiency and innovation. The ARC is willing to accept higher levels of risk when the potential benefits outweigh the negative consequences. In doing so, we must be able to demonstrate we have made informed, evidence and risk-based decisions.

We have a higher risk appetite related to identifying, proposing and deploying innovative approaches or new ideas that support achievement of our purpose, where we have appropriately scoped issues, engaged with key internal and external stakeholders and adequately considered the associated risks and benefits.

However, we have a low appetite for risks that impact on the wellbeing of our staff, the security of the agency and its information, on the ARC's quality of service and ability to deliver its strategic priorities and, as a result, damage our reputation and stakeholder confidence.

Within this context we are committed to mitigating all risks to a target risk level of Medium or Low (where practical and cost effective).

Table 1 outlines our 3 key strategic risks, which the ALG manages closely:

Table 1: ARC Strategic Risks

Strategic Risk	Mitigation
<p>ARC funded research is not creating new knowledge or achieving impact</p>	<p>We have a range of policies and processes, including rigorous grants administration and peer review systems, to support the funding of research that will lead to new knowledge. Over the last 12 months, we have strengthened the controls for this risk through implementing our strategic priorities, improving grants administration processes, greater engagement with key stakeholders, and delivering new schemes that align with government priorities. Furthermore, we have added impact to the assessment criteria for the Industry Fellowship Schemes and introduced post project reporting and collection of data throughout the life of a project.</p>
<p>The ARC is not engaging effectively with its stakeholders</p>	<p>We take a proactive approach to our engagement and communications activities, including through our partnerships and strategic communications capability. Our CRO and Executive Directors have bolstered our outreach with the research community, and we continue to improve our tools of engagement, including our website. We have strengthened agency coordination to ensure a consistent 'ARC voice' across all vectors of engagement. We are working to build and maintain stronger relationships across the full diversity of our stakeholders, including through consultation and co-design.</p>
<p>The ARC fails to comply with its legislative requirements and key government policies</p>	<p>We have well-established governance and financial processes for ensuring compliance with legislative requirements. In addition, we undertake regular staff training, participate in cross-government groups, have a dedicated General Counsel and regularly review the agency's compliance with all applicable legislation.</p>

Subsidiaries

The ARC does not have any subsidiaries.



Research Highlights: Augmented reality project helps disaster survivors

Primary Researcher: Scientia Professor Jill Bennett.

Institution: University of New South Wales (UNSW).

An augmented reality project exploring the relationship between wellbeing and place will provide insight into why some people in adverse circumstances do not always access mental health services.

Hard place/Good place, led by UNSW Scientia Professor Jill Bennett, as part of her ARC Australian Laureate Fellowship, will develop an archive of experiential stories with people from regional, rural and remote areas, exploring what it means to be in a 'hard place' or a 'good place'.

The creative research project is coordinated by the Felt Experience & Empathy Lab at UNSW and is currently focused on communities in both Queensland and Victoria. It is co-designed with people whose lives are affected by adversity, including the effects of climate change, drought, bushfire and flood and combines a 3D immersive experience of a significant place with a personal narrative.

Hard place/Good place emerged from The Big Reach, a networking strategy to connect with communities. The initiative came out of The Big Anxiety – a festival of people + art + science. Professor Bennett launched the research-driven, mental health festival in 2017, as featured in the ARC's *Making a Difference 2019–20*. The 2022 Big Anxiety festival in Melbourne included an exhibition of *Hard place/Good place* stories made with young people in storm-affected areas in the Yarra Ranges.

Professor Bennett's team has also co-designed immersive projects with people with a lived experience of suicidality, with Ngangkari healers in the Central Desert working on trauma, and with survivors of institutional abuse. The focus is always 'enabling stories to surface in ways that are useful,' Professor Bennett said.

This kind of work represents a shift in mental health provision towards a whole-of-community proposition, prioritising lived experience.



Impact in this area means transforming possibilities for mental health strategies using a cultural approach to mental health. Such work expands the western model of mental health through its recognition of creative practice as a mechanism for therapeutic change.



Story: Kay Harrison, UNSW.

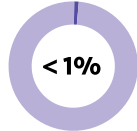

Image: UNSW.

Performance

Our performance measures are an integral component of the ARC performance cycle and are designed to demonstrate the effectiveness and efficiency of our work in achieving our purpose. We recognise the importance of reliable and relevant performance information to illustrate how we are achieving our purpose.

Performance measures and targets

Performance Measure	Description	Key Activity	Target	Year			
				23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27
1 The percentage of ARC schemes completed in time to meet ARC published timeframes.	<p>Outcome: NCGP application assessment processes are conducted in an efficient and timely manner.</p> <p>Methodology: The number of ARC schemes where outcomes were announced within the published timeframes on the ARC website against all ARC schemes where outcomes were announced, for the reporting period.</p> <p>Type: Quantitative</p>	i. Fund high quality and impactful research		✓	✓	✓	✓
2 The percentage of submitted progress, End of Year and final reports reviewed on time.	<p>Outcome: The ARC reviews completed final grant reports and submitted End of Year Reports, Progress / Annual Reports in a timely manner (within 90 days of submission) to ensure researchers are not impeded in applying for additional grants.</p> <p>Methodology: Percentage of reports processed within the reporting period i.e. finalised (approved/waived) or resubmitted back to the Research Office for action. 90 days calculated from the last date of submission.</p> <p>Type: Quantitative</p>	i. Fund high quality and impactful research		✓	✓	✓	✓

Performance Measure	Description	Key Activity	Target	Year			
				23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27
3	<p>The percentage of appeals upheld against NCGP application assessment processes for all applications submitted.</p>	<p>Outcome: ARC manages NCGP application and assessment processes fairly and in accordance with Grant Guidelines.</p> <p>Methodology: Number of appeals upheld in the specified reporting period against all applications where the appeals decision was made in the reporting period.</p> <p>Type: Quantitative</p>	<p>i. Fund high quality and impactful research</p> 				
				✓	✓	✓	✓
4	<p>The percentage of ARC funded research projects involving international collaboration for all ARC funded research projects.</p>	<p>Outcome: The ARC funds a high proportion of projects involving international collaboration.</p> <p>Methodology: The number of research projects indicating actual international collaboration divided by the total number of research projects displayed as a percentage. Data based on collaboration with nominated country/ countries as per final reports approved within the reporting period.</p> <p>Type: Quantitative</p>	<p>i. Fund high quality and impactful research</p> 				
				✓	✓	✓	✓

Performance Measure	Description	Key Activity	Target	Year			
				23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27
5	<p>The total contribution from partner organisations for all research projects funded under the Linkage Projects scheme.</p> <p>Outcome: The ARC fosters an environment for collaboration between researchers and partner organisations. Total contribution from partner organisations for every ARC dollar is equal to or higher than the previous year.</p> <p>Methodology: Total partner organisation contribution (cash and in-kind funding) divided by total ARC funding for the same scheme round. Includes all funded Linkage Projects where outcomes were finalised within the reporting period.</p> <p>Type: Quantitative</p>	i. Fund high quality and impactful research	≥ average dollar contribution than the previous year	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	<p>Pilot a new research evaluation framework.²</p> <p>Outcome: The ARC commences a trial research evaluation framework which will inform the replacement ERA and EI assessment processes.</p> <p>Methodology: The measure will be met if a pilot program of a new research evaluation process has commenced.</p> <p>Type: Qualitative</p>	ii. Assess research quality, engagement and impact	Met	✓			

² The 2023 ERA round was discontinued, and the ARC has developed a transition plan for the development of a modern data-driven approach to research evaluation, informed by expert review. The previous ERA and EI measures have also been discontinued as the data collected from the previous ERA and EI rounds in 2018-19 have become less current over time. This interim measure will be in place pending the outcome of the transition plan, and new performance measure/s will be established to measure the effectiveness of the new evaluation framework once it is in place.

Performance Measure	Description	Key Activity	Target	Year			
				23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27
7 The average number of days to action research integrity investigation outcomes reported to the ARC.	<p>Outcome: ARC funded research is undertaken with integrity and complies with national codes on research ethics and the <i>ARC Research Integrity Policy</i>.</p> <p>Methodology: The total number of working days for the ARC to action research integrity investigation outcomes divided by the total number of research integrity investigation outcomes actioned in the reporting period. Total days and total number include only research integrity investigation outcomes actioned in the reported period e.g. 2022-23.</p> <p>Type: Quantitative</p>	iii. Safeguard research integrity	≤ 30 working days ³	✓	✓	✓	✓
8 The number of funded Chief Investigators who identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander researcher.	<p>Outcome: ARC grant activities support leadership of projects by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander researchers.</p> <p>Methodology: A rolling average number of Chief Investigators who identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander researcher on funded applications for 4 years will be used to calculate the target.</p> <p>The target will be met if the number is greater than or equal to the figure calculated for the previous reporting year.</p> <p>Type: Quantitative</p>	i. Fund high quality and impactful research	≥ the previous reporting period	✓	✓	✓	✓

³ The target for this measure has been revised from 2022-23 to measure the number of working days to complete a research integrity investigation.

Acronyms

ACEAS:	Australian Centre for Excellence in Antarctic Science
ALG:	ARC Leadership Group
ANU:	Australian National University
APS:	Australian Public Service
ARC:	Australian Research Council
ARC Act:	<i>Australian Research Council Act 2001</i>
ARIC:	Australian Research Integrity Committee
CE23:	ARC Centres of Excellence commencing 2023
CEO:	Chief Executive Officer
CRO:	Chief Research Officer
CSIRO:	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
EI:	Engagement and Impact
ERA:	Excellence in Research for Australia
GDP:	Gross domestic product
IFP:	Industry Fellowships Program
NCGP:	National Competitive Grants Program
NHMRC:	National Health and Medical Research Council
PGPA Act:	<i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i>
PGPA Rule:	<i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014</i>
RGS:	Research Grant Services
RMS:	Research Management System
UNSW:	University of New South Wales
UTAS:	University of Tasmania

Glossary

Applied research: Research that aims to address real-world problems by applying existing research theories or practices in a novel or innovative way.

Chief Investigator: A researcher who satisfies the eligibility criteria for a Chief Investigator under the Discovery Program or Linkage Program Grant Guidelines, and takes responsibility for the conduct of an ARC-funded project.

Fundamental research: Also known as basic research, is research that contributes to understanding the world through discoveries and the creation of new knowledge, theories and practices.

Partner Organisations: National or international organisations (other than Eligible Organisations) that satisfy the eligibility criteria for partner organisations under the NCGP including business, industry, not-for-profit, government and international higher education organisations.

Peer review: Evaluation of research applications by experts, usually in the same research discipline.

ARC contact details

Produced by: Australian Research Council

Location: 11 Lancaster Place, CANBERRA AIRPORT ACT 2609

Postal address: GPO Box 2702, CANBERRA ACT 2601

Telephone: +61 2 6287 6600

Email: info@arc.gov.au (general enquiries)

Home page: www.arc.gov.au

Corporate Plan: www.arc.gov.au > News > Publications > Corporate Plan

Twitter: [@arc_gov_au](https://twitter.com/arc_gov_au)

Designed by: Typeyard Design & Advertising

ISSN 2205-0264 (print)

ISSN 2206-1088 (digital)

© Commonwealth of Australia 2023

All material presented on this website is provided under a CC Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) licence with the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, the Australian Research Council (ARC) logo, images, signatures and where otherwise stated. The details of the relevant licence conditions are available on the Creative Commons website as is the full legal code for the CC Attribution BY-NC-ND 4.0 licence.

Requests and enquiries regarding this licence should be addressed to ARC Legal Services on +61 2 6287 6600.

Cover images

Credit: Eden Wilson, Centre of Excellence for Engineered Quantum Systems.

Description: The image shows a simple representation of how the double slit experiment demonstrated the wave nature of light.

Credit: Carl Knox, ARC Centre of Excellence for Gravitational Wave Discovery.

Description: The image shows an artist's impression of a black hole-neutron star merger.

Credit: Sovereign Acts: REFUSE (2018), Unbound Collective (Dr Ali Gumillya Baker, Dr Simone Ulalka Tur, Dr Faye Rosas Blanch, Dr Natalie Harkin), commissioned by Vitalstatisitx, featuring Bonny Brodie and Dr Lou Bennett, image by Tony Kearney.

Description: The image shows two people dancing on stage wearing skirts made from native Australian leaves.

Credit: iStock.

Description: The image shows a Tasmania Devil standing on fallen branches.

Credit: iStock.

Description: The image shows many aged and handwritten letters scattered on top of each other.

Credit: iStock.

Description: The image shows a birds-eye view of a SUV camper and trees in the Australian Outback.

Credit: Western Australian Museum.

Description: The image shows a salvaged portion of the Batavia shipwreck.

Credit: Professor Meghan Miller, Australian National University, Future Fellow and Chief Investigator at the ARC Centre of Excellence in Optical Microcombs for Breakthrough Science (COMBS) and Professor Louis Moresi, Australian National University.

Description: The image shows a birds-eye view of digital elevation around the Yarra Ranges and Alpine National Parks with colours representing how high the mountains are above sea level.

ARC.GOV.AU

