Excellence in Research for Australia

ERA 2010 and ERA 2012
ANZAM Workshop
29 June 2011
Objectives of ERA

- Establish an *evaluation framework*;
- Provide a *national stock take* of discipline-level research;
- Identify *excellence* across the full spectrum of research performance;
- Identify *emerging research areas* and *opportunities for further development*;
- Allow for *comparison* of Australia’s research *nationally* and *internationally* for all discipline areas.
ERA Development 2008-2010

• Several major rounds of consultation
• Indicator Development Group (specialist sub-groups)
• Ranked journals and conferences consultation
• Discipline specific indicators
• Full trial in 2009 of PCE and HCA
  – test of systems, processes
  – feedback from sector, RECs, peer reviewers
• Esteem indicators
• First full ERA evaluation in 2010
The ERA Unit of Evaluation

- The **baseline** - the Discipline in an institution = Four-digit Field of Research Code (ANZSRC) eg., **2101** Archaeology
- The **higher perspective** – the division in an institution = Two-digit Field of Research Code (ANZSRC) eg., **21** History and Archaeology
- The ERA Unit is **not** about the department nor the individual researcher
Why a matrix approach to indicators?

• Not all indicators are suitable for all disciplines
• Pick and choose what is right for each discipline
• The indicator suite must ensure comparable quality across a range of indicator types
• Expert review and specialist disciplinary knowledge are essential – not a mechanical process
Stages of evaluation

• Every UoE evaluated by at least three REC members (plus peer reviewers)
• Independent evaluation in the first instance followed by exchange of views
• All evaluations were advice to the full Committee
• All UoEs discussed at the final evaluation meeting
• All final ratings decisions of the Committee as a whole
ERA Process Overview

- Volume and Activity
- Journal Quality
- Citation analysis or peer review
- Research Income
- Applied Measures
- Esteem

Please note – no weightings

Research Evaluation Committee

ERA 2010 National Report
Scale of ERA 2010

- All 41 eligible institutions submitted data
- Over 330,000 unique research outputs and 55,000 researchers represented
- 2,435 units of evaluation assessed at the two- and four-digit level
- 149 Research Evaluation Committee (REC) members and 500+ Peer Reviewers contributed evaluations
- All aggregated data presented in the *ERA 2010 National Report*. 
ERA 2010 myths

❌ Averages and Rankings
❌ Sciences v. Social Sciences & Humanities

✔️ ERA does *not* evaluate individuals
✔️ ERA does *not* evaluate individual outputs
✔️ Ranked Journals do *not* drive ERA ratings
✔️ ERA evaluations utilised metrics and peer review moderated by expert judgement
Consultations for ERA 2012

• ERA Public Consultation (11 March to 7 April 2011) – open consultation on issues including reporting, indicators, eligibility, discipline matrix
• Outreach sessions with institutions and peak bodies
• Detailed feedback from ERA 2010 REC members and peer reviewers
• Feedback from institutions on submission processes
Changes to journals and conferences

- Refined journal and conference indicator for ERA 2012
- Ranks will not be used, instead outputs profiled by most frequent journals and conferences in the UoE, with drilldowns available as in 2010
- ARC will still produce journal and conference lists – will not include rankings but will include FoR codes for citation analysis purposes
- Strong feedback that ranked lists were having negative consequences in the sector
- ARC analysis suggested a refined indicator would produce improved results while removing negative consequences
Interdisciplinary research

- Journal articles with ≥66% content in a discipline can be apportioned to that discipline
- Approach was successfully trialled in 2010 for Mathematics
- Allows stronger recognition of interdisciplinary and applied research
- Aligns journals with all other types of outputs which already used this approach in 2010
Raising the threshold

- Low volume threshold for peer review disciplines raised to 50 apportioned weighted outputs (maintaining the 5:1 weighting for books)
- Threshold remains the same for citation analysis disciplines
- Aligns all disciplines at 50 outputs
- Recognises strong feedback from sector and from 2010 evaluators
- ERA units need sufficient volume
Eligibility of fractional staff

- Fractional staff: minimum 40% appointment at ERA census date
- Those below 40% can still submit with by-line or similar requirement (similar to existing approach for casuals)
- Addresses concern about ERA-driven “poaching”
- Recognises that in many cases those below 40% are legitimately employed – their outputs can still be submitted
Capturing applied research

- Patents, plant breeder’s rights and registered designs assigned to individuals now eligible for submission
- Strong feedback that some applied work was not being captured
- Not all institutions register these measures to the institution
ERA 2012 – still to do

• Recruitment of Research Evaluation Committees
• Expansion of peer reviewer pool (including internationals)
• Further enhancement of the peer review indicator (nomination of outputs, reporting by reviewers)
• Selection of citation data provider
• Draft Submission Guidelines to be issued to the sector in July for comment
Further information

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