ARC Grants in FoR 15: Trends, Issues And Challenges

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ARC Grants in FoR 15: Trends, Issues And Challenges

• How important are ARC (type) grants
• What drives research reputation internationally?
• What are the funding models we compete against internationally?
• A possible solution
HOW IMPORTANT ARE ARC (TYPE) GRANTS REALLY?

- Some UTS Business school evidence 2012-2014 on ARC and similar (NHMRC via CHERE):

New ARC / NHMRC Funds 2012-2014

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARC DP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,688,000</td>
<td>1,631,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARC DECRA</td>
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<td>375,000</td>
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<td>ARC LP</td>
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<td>NHMRC</td>
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<td>154,060</td>
<td>703,048</td>
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- UTS Business School top line budget is approximately $65m
HOW IMPORTANT ARE ARC TYPE GRANTS REALLY?

• Why do we (Australian universities) place so much weight on inputs (research grants)?
  ➢ Obsession with performance measurement (government as “sole shareholder”) – grants are easy to measure!
  ➢ Prestige
  ➢ Financial need (many university activities are “grant dependent”)
  ➢ Researchers like financial flexibility

• Every Australian university wants:
  ➢ More research income (from a shrinking pot re government funding)
  ➢ More/better publications (from existing staff track records?)
  ➢ More HDRs (from less scholarship funds?)
WHAT DRIVES RESEARCH REPUTATIONS?

• Is there a link between government “control” of universities and focus on inputs? My guess is yes.

• What determines the ability of an individual faculty member to attract an offer from a prestigious international university?

• How many top US Business Schools do any of the following:
  ➢ Publish information about external research grants won?
  ➢ Have a grant success component to tenure decisions?
  ➢ Fund PhD places by external scholarship schemes?
  ➢ My guess is NONE
WHAT ARE THE FUNDING MODELS INTERNATIONALLY?

• All researchers need some sort of infrastructure. For example, I need databases which are my “laboratory”.

• Much of the infrastructure is not project-specific so it gets paid for from recurrent funding – grants shouldn’t have to keep basics “going”.

• In leading international business schools, basic infrastructure is a given, not a wish.

• Research “funding” revolves around incremental resources (RAs etc) and dissemination (travel etc). Core research requirements including technical support are a given.

• Very few leading business schools expect faculty to be writing lengthy grant proposals, and in fact would discourage this practice among less experienced faculty (i.e., focus on outputs).
A POSSIBLE SOLUTION

- How much money (in total) do Australian business schools get from ARC each year?
- Would this be “better” spent on “science” and “humanities” where there is no underlying viable business model to pay for research?
- Could business schools retain an equivalent extra amount of teaching revenue if they agreed not to chase money from ARC etc but self-funded?
- This would create a massive time saving on grant applications which could be directed towards additional outputs?