



MEDIA RELEASE

SENATOR KIM CARR

Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research

Tuesday, 26 February 2008

New *ERA* for research quality

Announcement of Excellence in Research for Australia initiative

The Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator Kim Carr, today announced his plans for a new research quality and evaluation system.

The Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative, to be developed by the Australian Research Council (ARC) in conjunction with the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, will assess research quality using a combination of metrics and expert review by committees comprising experienced, internationally-recognised experts.

"Australia is about to embark on a transparent, workable system to assess the quality of home-grown research. Australia is well known internationally for its research strengths.

"For the first time we will be able to measure our achievements against our peers around the world, and plan the future of research investment," Senator Carr said.

"The Commonwealth invests billions each year in research. The ERA model will provide hard evidence that taxpayers are getting the best bang for their buck in this critical area.

"ERA will use leading researchers to evaluate research activity progressively in each of the ARC discipline clusters and several clusters covering health and medical research that will be informed by experts from the National Health and Medical Research Council [NHMRC].

"Each cluster report will detail by *institution* and by *discipline* those areas that are internationally competitive, together with emerging areas where there are opportunities for development and further investment."

Senator Carr said that ERA would start with those disciplines where the metrics were most widely accepted, for example, in the physical and biological sciences.

"In parallel, we will continue consultation with other disciplines about metrics appropriate to their disciplines, noting that some measures will be appropriate to all disciplines and that for all disciplines expert review of the metrics is essential."

The ERA will build on work done to date in defining areas of strength, and will aid the development of our 'hubs and spokes' model for research infrastructure that is based on all universities having centres of excellence in specified fields.

It will also assist with the Government's plans to introduce funding compacts for universities.

Senator Carr said that until the ERA was fully developed, the current arrangements for the block grants funding will be maintained and would remain the responsibility of the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR). Future arrangements will be determined in consultation with the sector.

The ERA will replace the now defunct Research Quality Framework with a streamlined, internationally recognised and transparent research quality assurance system.

Media contacts:	Minister Carr's Office	Catriona Jackson	0417 142 238
	ARC	Fiona Skivington	0412 623 057