



Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee
the council of Australia's university presidents

Research Developments in Australia

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*Australia-Japan Presidents Meeting
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**THE NEW HIGHER
EDUCATION RESEARCH
FUNDING
FRAMEWORK
FROM 2001**



Research and innovation reforms
"Backing Australia's Ability"

- **Public investment**
 - > AUD\$8 billion over 10 years (2001-2011)
- **Aims**
 - to generate new ideas (through research and development)
 - to encourage the commercial application of research
 - to develop and retain skills in science and technology



Research & Innovation reforms
"Backing Australia's Ability" (ii)

- The Government has:
 - encouraged establishment of world-class research centres in areas of national economic significance
 - identified and allocated funding towards national research priorities
 - enhanced linkages with industry
 - improved funding of health & medical research



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Major research funding mechanisms

- Research block funding
 - Research Training Scheme
 - Institutional Grants Scheme
 - Research Infrastructure Block Grant
- Competitive research grants
 - Australian Research Council
 - National Health and Medical Research Council
 - Other Publicly Funded Research Agencies
- Support from business/industry and community



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Maximising research collaboration

- Strategic planning & coordination of research objectives to enhance benefits of collaboration
- Research partners with shared goals, complementary capabilities, skills and resources
- AVCC supports positive steps being taken to extend collaboration between universities, Publicly Funded Research Agencies (PFRAs), the private sector, & other organisations – nationally and internationally
 - each partner brings different strengths to a collaborative relationship based on its own mission



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CRCs: AN AUSTRALIAN SUCCESS STORY

- **Since establishment in 1990, increasingly successful program**
 - *serves national economic policy*
 - *strengthens collaborative research links between industry, Publicly Funded Research Agencies, government agencies and universities*
- **Unique globally, with strong impact**
 - *lots of lessons learnt; but current challenges*
- **AVCC argues would prosper even more with National Innovation Strategy**
 - *to provide a framework and targets*



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ACHIEVING UNIVERSITIES' ACADEMIC MISSIONS



AVCC's 2020 Vision: A national innovation strategy (i)

- **A target for Australian public and private investment in research & innovation**
 - *By 2020: world class research to be underpinned by investment of 3% of GDP (currently 1.6%)*
- **Reinvestment in universities' core research & research training capacity**



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**AVCC's 2020 Vision:
A national innovation strategy (ii)**

- New incentives for private sector investment in research & innovation with priority to such investment in university research
- Ongoing, three year rolling investment in major research infrastructure
- And an effective national innovation framework for further developing Australia's research capacity



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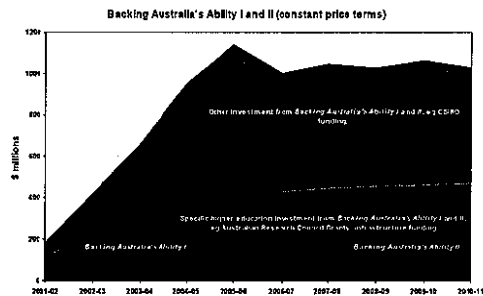
Community Outreach as a core academic function

- Nexus between the three core inter-related functions in the academic mission
 - > *mutually reinforcing each other*
 - > *outreach including commercialisation, and links with industry*



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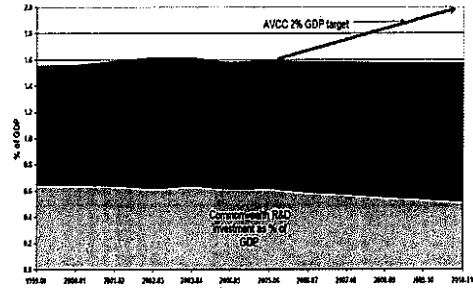
Investment in research & innovation - still well short of AVCC's 2020 vision



Source: Data from BAA II announcement + BAA I data converted to 2004-05 values

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Estimated investment in Australian R&D: the gap to 2%



Source: see <http://www.avcc.edu.au/Documents/publications/statistics/investment/Investment-Source&AgainstGDP.pdf>

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AVCC: NATIONAL COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

- Focus primarily on capacity building
 - target selected problems, opportunities, or critical gaps
- Support no. of projects over range of fields
 - not just a few large-scale facilities
 - could be large initial investment
- In first year, funds to be allocated between:
 - existing facilities, first stage, and possibly critical gaps identified by Strategic Roadmap



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RESEARCH QUALITY FRAMEWORK



Research Quality Framework – the top research issue for 2006

- Major opportunity to boost research in Australia, by demonstrating the existing high standard of research
- Critical to re-invest in universities as the core of Australia's research capacity
- RQF should provide the basis to increase investment in universities core research capacity

A Research Quality Framework

- *Backing Australia's Ability II initiative announced by the Prime Minister, May 2004*
 - *RQF to form the basis for an improved assessment of the quality and impact of publicly funded research and an effective process to achieve this*
- AVCC has worked in close collaboration with the ministerially appointed RQF Expert Advisory Group (EAG) in the development of the RQF

RQF Principles*

1. Transparency – of evidence-based process and results
2. Acceptability – of approach and measures
3. Effectiveness - of model
 - *valid and accurate assessment within appropriate resource base*
4. Encourages Positive Behaviours
 - *improving research quality & impact*
 - *further developing & supporting vibrant and collaborative Australian research culture*

* EAG's final advice on preferred RQF model (December 2005) 18

AVCC's discussions with the new Minister on RQF

▪ Focus

- *any significant delay could seriously hamper planned implementation of EAG report*
- *matters of relevance to the whole RQF to ensure coherence and where possible, simplicity*
- *a high priority is the need for additional funding for the cost of the RQF assessment process and for research block grant programs themselves*



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AVCC response to EAG's final advice

(December 2005; released by Minister 28 March 2006) (i)

▪ The AVCC welcomes

- *the Minister's acknowledgment that further consideration of RQF model needs to occur if the Government is to adopt it*
- *acknowledgement that universities should not bear cost of implementing the RQF*
- *the EAG recommendation of additional resources to support RQF implementation*



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AVCC response to EAG's final advice

(December 2005; released by Minister 28 March 2006) (ii)

- The AVCC has concerns about the tight timeline for RQF Development Advisory Group's work
- The AVCC looks forward to working with the RQFDAG keeping in mind the current experience in the UK



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RQF Development Advisory Group

(announced by the Minister 28 March 2006)

- Chair – Dr Jim Peacock AC, Chief Scientist
- 11 Members including AVCC representative, Professor Ian Davey
- To provide advice to the Minister on the next phase of the RQF process
 - *particularly how the model, if adopted by the Government, could be most effectively implemented*



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Some unresolved RQF-related issues

- How best to argue for additional funding?
- The cost to the sector – and who bears that cost?
- Recognition of and support for “Early Career Researchers”?
- How best to measure impact?
- Incentives for Knowledge Transfer (so-called ‘third stream’ activity)?



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OTHER MAJOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION ISSUES



Productivity Commission Review of public support for science and innovation

- 13 March 2006 - announced by Treasurer and the new Minister
- To complement the ongoing and planned reviews of BAA programmes
- The Commission is to produce a draft report and a final report within 12 months of the receipt of this reference
- The report is to be published



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The Minister's positive view on peer review

- The Minister has publicly confirmed that she holds the ARC and the research it funds in "very high regard".
 - *"My view is that if the peer review process has the independence and integrity to ensure that it's robust, then I would see no need for me to second-guess that process."*
- The Minister has also confirmed that she does not intend to appoint any more lay people to the quality and scrutiny committee
- Source: The Australian HES, 22/3/2006

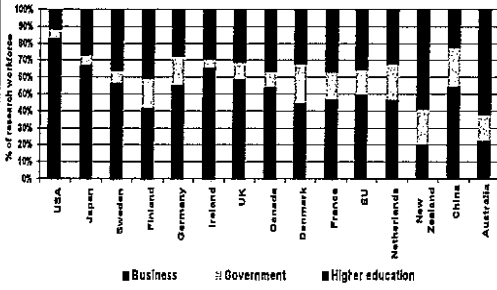


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SOME INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS RELATING TO RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT



Research Personnel by Sector of Employment (selected countries)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: <http://abs.gov.au>
 OECD: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/68/29/34922681.xls> (2002)



The latest OECD data (selected countries)

GERD as %GDP	2002-03	2000-01
Finland	3.46	3.40
Japan	3.12	2.99
Iceland	3.09	2.76
United States of America	2.67	2.72
Korea	2.91	2.65
Germany	2.62	2.49
France	2.20	2.18
Canada	1.91	1.92
Austria	1.93	1.86
United Kingdom	1.88	1.84
Australia	1.62	1.55
Spain	1.03	0.94
Poland	0.59	0.66
Denmark	2.52	na
Norway	1.67	na

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: <http://abs.gov.au>



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