



SUBMISSION TO THE NATIONAL INNOVATION REVIEW

From The Australasian Research Management Society (ARMS)

Author:	Submitted by Mark Hochman, President Tony Hill, Immediate Past President On behalf of the National Executive
Organisation	Australasian Research Management Society
Type of organisation	not for profit
Address	PO Box 152, Civic Square ACT 2608
State or Territory	Australasia
Email	arms@apcaust.com.au
Phone	Tel: (02) 9431 8680; Fax: (02) 9431 8677
Declaration of Interest	Members of ARMS work for many public and private sector research provider organisations throughout Australasia and for organisations and businesses that support research.

Background

The Australasian Research Management Society (ARMS) is the peak body representing Australasian research managers and administrators. The Society was formed in 1999 and is dedicated to:

- The professional development of research managers and administrators
- The promotion of the profession of research management
- The enhancement of the research enterprise

ARMS aims to fulfil its mission through:

- The exchange of information among research managers at all levels
- The development and promotion of professional standards for research management in Australasia
- The improvement of the interface between research, its management and successful commercialisation

The Society offers both corporate and individual membership and was originally focussed on the higher education sector but has diversified its corporate membership to include a number of medical research institutes, CSIRO and some Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs). Current membership totals almost 700 research management staff.

ARMS operates on a three year operational plan; for the period 2004-2007 a major operational priority was to move the society from one wholly dependent on a volunteer base to one supported by a part time paid secretariat thus allowing members of the eight person executive to apply themselves more fully to issues affecting research administration in Australasia. In order to fulfil its

role of promoting professional research management and managers, it has been recognised in the current operational plan 2007-2010, that ARMS will need to move to a fully supported professional society. This will not be possible under current funding arrangements which depend largely on annual memberships and conference proceeds – even despite aggressive expansion plans within the current set of priorities.

The Role of Research Management in Delivering Outcomes in the National Innovation System

The role of research management in delivering outcomes within the National Innovation System is well recognized at the organizational level. This includes support in delivering:

- Increased funding for research
 - research managers play a critical role in translating government policy initiatives into the research environment, by ensuring a priori compliance of research funding proposals
 - research managers are central to orienting researchers to appropriate and new sources of funding
 - research managers can play a critical role in linking industry investment to public sector research providers
- Improved community outcomes
 - research managers help to design the outcomes aspect of research projects
 - research managers are responsible for managing the delivery of outcomes from research
- Better international integration
 - international research projects are becoming increasingly complex
 - if Australasia wants to gain advantage from the knowledge generated in countries outside Australasia (estimated at greater than 95% of the world's knowledge) then we need effective research management to allow participation in international collaborations

Building Research Management as a Profession

There has been a rapid growth in research management personnel within the Australasian region driven by increasing research effort and increasing complexity in the legislative frameworks and codes accompanying the research enterprise. ARMS is committed to building research management as a profession and also to the development of professional research managers.

One of the current inhibitors of research and innovation is the unproductive time spent by researchers and innovators in administrative and compliance issues. Professional, well trained research management personnel will contribute to the National Innovation System by removing encumbrances from our creative research workers, maximizing their productive time.

Current professional development activities focus around an annual conference rotated around different Australian States and Territories and New Zealand. Workshops held around this annual conference are of growing importance and frequently cover matters of topical relevance including contractual issues, requirement of ethical and compliance frameworks and knowledge of funding

sources. In recent years ARMS has begun to standardise some courses to enable delivery by its Chapters outside of the annual conference. For example, a workshop on Fundamentals of Research Management was oversubscribed at the last ARMS conference and is now being offered in modules within some Chapters around the States. The demand for this course reflects the previously mentioned growing number of persons new to research management and also foreshadows the demand for an articulated suite of research management modules covering all aspects of research management. Such a suite is currently under consideration by ARMS Professional Development Committee who are also working through potential for formal accreditation of research managers.

In this context it is of interest that some international research management sister societies have developed a Body of Professional Knowledge and system of accreditation for members, eg Society of Research Administrators International (United States).

Challenges to more Professional Research Management

Current challenges to ARMS in developing research management as a profession include:

- A piecemeal recognition of the role of research management
 - research management seen as a competitor for 'scarce' research funding – particularly when competitive granting scheme success rates are as low as 20% or 10%
 - fully costed projects make allowance for research management, but perhaps only as 'in-kind' contributions
 - marginally costed research projects have to rely on support for research management from other mechanisms
 - the efficiency and effectiveness of competitive granting schemes relies on effective research management but does not provide a funding allowance for it including refinement, conception and drafting of proposals, project management, compliance and reporting and outcome delivery
 - lack of recognition of the role of research managers and limited supply of professional development opportunities are leading to frustration among younger recruits that is producing an “older generation” of research managers
- As a profession, ARMS members are severely constrained in their capacity to make voluntary contributions to the development of the profession:
 - the working day of many research management professionals is tightly constrained by office priorities and the need to respond to their customers
 - this working life is similar to the working life of other professions, eg law, medicine, teaching, academia, where there is limited flexibility to decide on daily priorities
 - as an emerging profession, research management has not had the time or resources to establish a paid support base for professional development
 - research management has had significant female representation, particularly in its research administration component
 - the issue confronting ARMS as a peak body for the profession is how to provide systematic and consistent professional training whilst relying essentially on a volunteer workforce.

Recommendations

When the above is combined with increasingly complex collaborative research projects and demands from research funders (including government) for greater accountability from the recipients of research funding, then it is clear that there exists no capacity for ARMS to develop the professional standards, training programs and accreditation required to support a growing research base and innovation culture. Consequently, ARMS makes the following recommendations to the National Innovation Review:

- That funding programs are re-oriented to explicitly recognise the contribution of research management in the conduct of research programs, as a result of the Review of the National Innovation System
- That the role of professional research managers in contributing to the delivery of research and innovation be recognised through this Review by a recommendation to support ARMS over a period of three to five years in developing a training curriculum and delivery mechanism to achieve accreditation for the full range of research managers and administrators.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you further as the Review progresses.

30 April 2008