

19 October 2009

Professor Margaret Sheil
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Research Council
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Dear Professor Sheil

ARC Peer Review Processes

Innovative Research Universities (IRU) welcomes the ARC's review of its peer review and assessment processes in the context of the current research environment. The IRU is a strong supporter of the role of expert and peer review in promoting excellence and fostering innovation in Australian research and supports the ARC's goal of ensuring that peer review processes are best practice.

While IRU will not be providing a detailed response to the ARC Peer Review Processes consultation paper, we thought it important to convey to you our broad support for the directions flagged in the consultation paper.

In particular, we wish to highlight our strong support for the following proposals:

- **The role of assessors**

IRU strongly supports the proposal to facilitate the assignment of proposals to assessors with the most relevant expertise and to improve the quality of outcomes with initial assessments only being undertaken by specialist assessors.

The integrity and effectiveness of the peer review process can only be strengthened by ensuring that assessors have research expertise specifically related to the field of research of the proposal. The proposal to allocate proposals to Level 1 Peer Reviewers through the matching of FOR codes at the 6-digit level in conjunction with key words is consequently supported.

- **Selection criteria – assessment of track record**

IRU supports the proposal to replace the concept of 'Track Record' with 'Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE)'. We need to ensure that the ACG peer review processes facilitate access to the full Australian research talent pool by removing any inappropriate barriers to success in winning grants. The introduction of the ROPE selection criteria will also promote better assessment of proposals from researchers who have experienced career interruptions.

- **Selection criteria – weighting of individual criterion**

IRU supports a review of the appropriateness of the current weighting of selection criteria. We would support a more balanced weighting between selection criteria relating to Investigators and project content.

Please don't hesitate to contact me or the IRU Director, Ms Lenore Cooper (l.cooper@griffith.edu.au), if you wish to discuss any of the points raised above.

Yours sincerely



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cc Lenore Cooper, Director, IRU