

Excellence in Research for Australia

Innovative Research Universities

Senior Staff Forum

Thursday 7 July 2011

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Introduction

- The IRU historical position on the research excellence agenda (RQF and ERA)
- ERA 2010 outcomes
- The IRU ERA commentary

IRUA Senior Staff Forum – February 2005



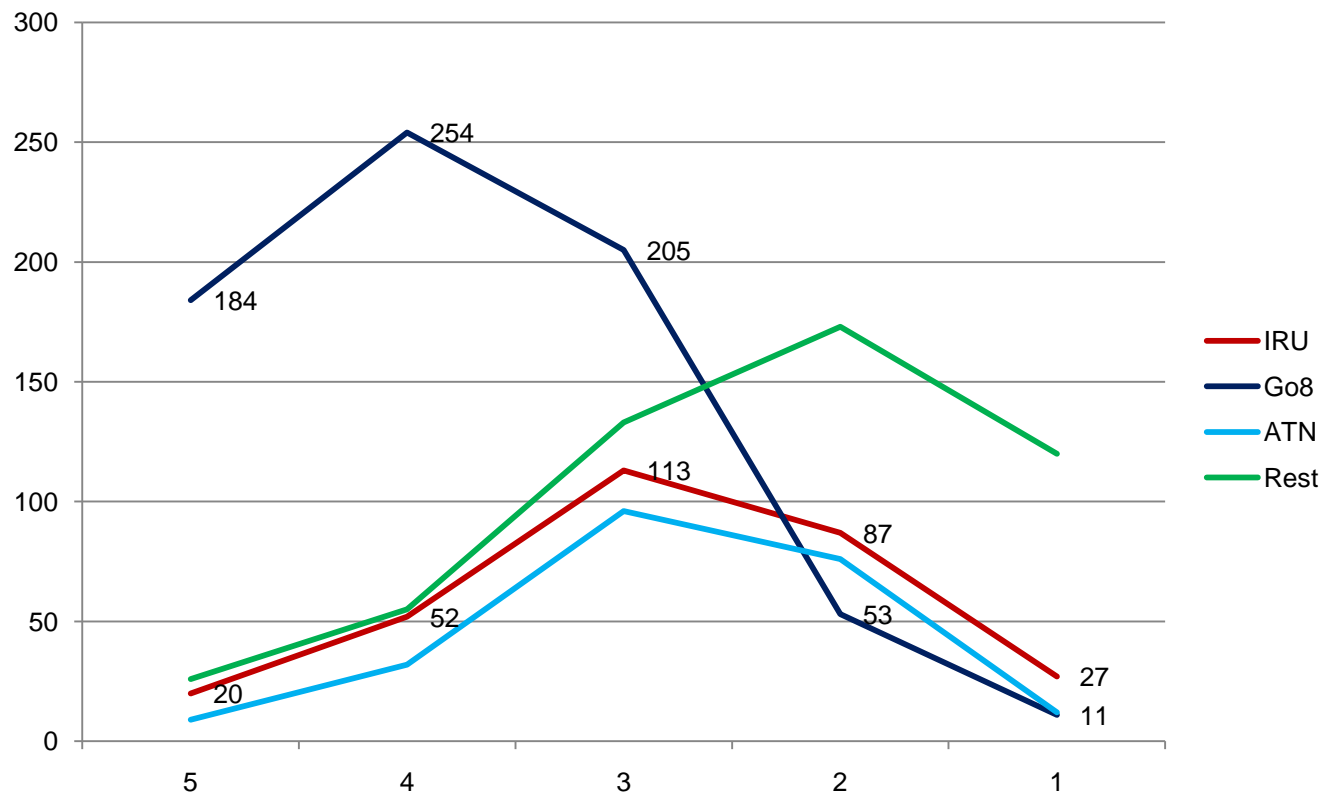
IRU position on research excellence agenda

- Supported RQF and ERA to demonstrate that no university grouping has a monopoly on research excellence;
- Seen as a means of gaining better appreciation of our research strengths – enhancing our reputation;
- Means of ensuring research funding did not become even more concentrated (avoidance of ‘cliff edge’ funding);
- Argued strongly in support of a distinctively “Australian” research assessment exercise that recognises research quality and impact globally, nationally or locally;
- A system that provides assurance that public funds are supporting the highest quality research.

ERA 2010 outcomes

University grouping	Fields Assessed	Fields at world standard or better	% Fields at world standard or better
Group of Eight	707	643	90.9%
Innovative Research Universities	299	185	61.8%
Australian Technology Network	225	137	60.8%
The Rest	507	214	42.2%
Bottom 15	240	50	20.8%
Australian university sector	1738	1179	67.8%
IRU as % of sector	17.2%	15.7%	-
Go8 as % of sector	40.7%	54.5%	-

ERA 2010 outcomes – by 4 digit field of research



Performance by Grouping

Australian Technology Network

- Performance profile almost identical to IRU;
- Performance across Group tightly bunched;
- All members scored at least one '5' with a healthy number of fields at world standard or above;
- All members had a double-digit number of '2s', in particular Curtin with 64% of fields assessed less than world standard.

Group of Eight

- We now realise that no Australian university can claim to be comprehensive across the 157 fields assessed – an important finding from ERA 2010;
- Reinforcement of emergence of two groupings within Go8;
- UWA (20 fields below world standard) and Adelaide (15 fields below world standard) are a cause for concern.

Performance by Grouping

The Rest (20 institutions)

- Macquarie the clear 'leader' – 12 ratings of '5' and only one '1'.
- Macquarie, Tasmania, Wollongong, Deakin and Western Sydney head and shoulders above the other 15.
- Ten universities had fewer than 25% of fields at world standard (four with fewer than 10% at world standard);
- 173 scores of '2' and 120 scores of '1'.

Innovative Research Universities

- Performance across Group more spread out than Go8 or ATN - proportion of fields at rated world standard or better from Charles Darwin at 38% to Griffith at 78%.
- Members achieve 'top 10' status on several indicators and all played to their strengths;
- Two types of university evident within IRU – 'aspiring comprehensive' and 'focussed'.

IRU university performance matches rhetoric

Charles Darwin University

Environmental sciences; agricultural and veterinary sciences; zoology; clinical sciences.

Flinders University

Pharmacology and pharmaceutical sciences; cardiovascular medicine; oncology and carcinogenesis; ophthalmology and optometry; criminology; performing arts and creative writing.

James Cook University

Environmental sciences; fisheries; geochemistry; geology; biological sciences; ecology; plant biology; tourism; zoology.

Griffith University

Quantum physics; dentistry; condensed matter physics; earth sciences; oceanography; physical geography and environmental geosciences; soil sciences, microbiology; agricultural and veterinary sciences; fisheries; nursing; urban and regional planning; education systems; commercial services; tourism; political science; law and legal studies.

IRU university performance matches rhetoric

La Trobe University

Condensed matter physics; biochemistry and cell biology; human movement and sport; soil sciences; microbiology; plant biology; tourism; performing arts and creative writing; cultural studies; archaeology; languages and linguistics; historical studies, philosophy.

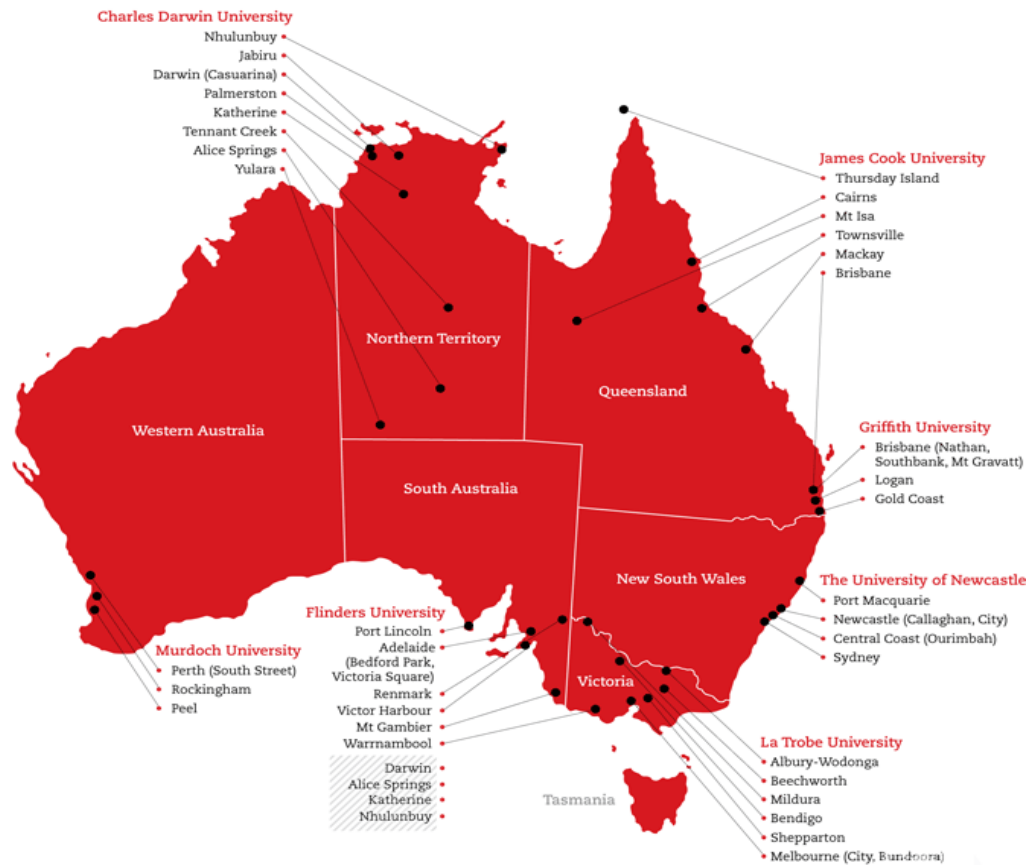
Murdoch University

Physical chemistry; crop and pasture production; resources engineering and extractive metallurgy; immunology; medical microbiology; zoology; animal production; fisheries; clinical sciences; communication and media studies.

The University of Newcastle

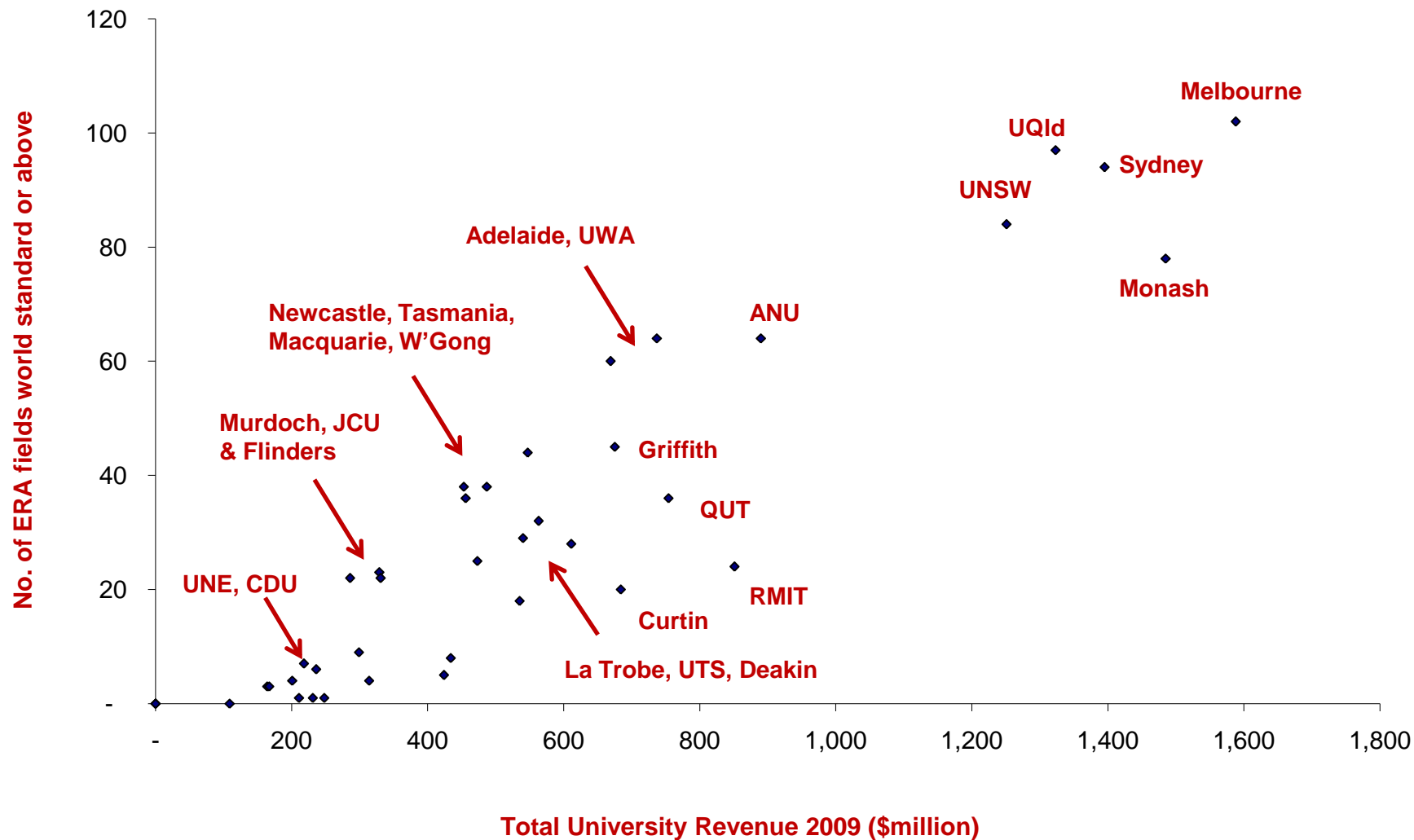
Applied mathematics; plant biology; civil engineering; electrical and electronic engineering; cardiovascular medicine; immunology; oncology and carcinogenesis; physical chemistry; physical geography and environmental geosciences; biochemistry and cell biology; pharmacology and pharmaceutical sciences; cognitive sciences; social work; religion and religious studies.

Making a difference in both metropolitan and regional Australia

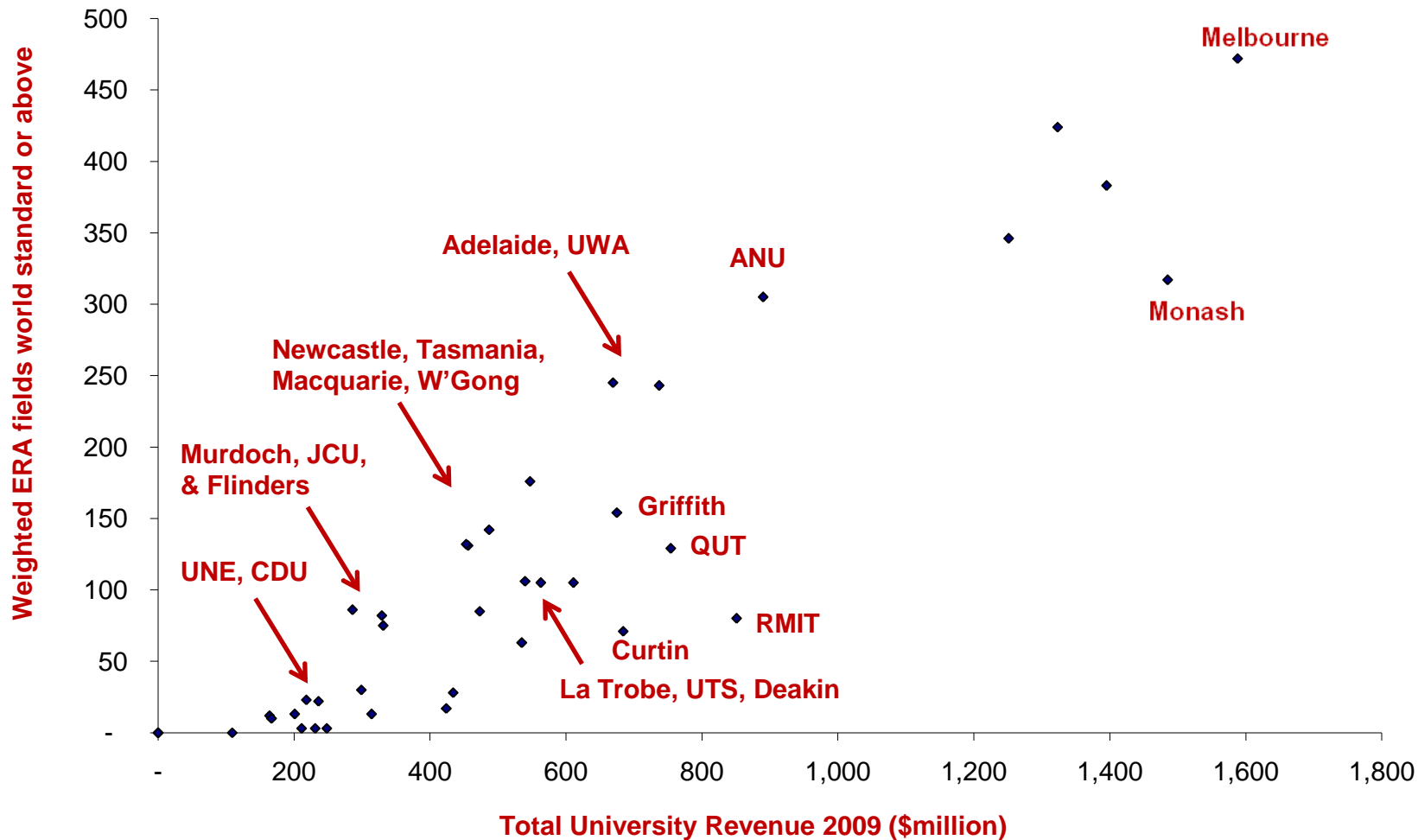


Flinders University also operates in the Northern Territory.

ERA 2010 outcomes against University income



ERA 2010 'weighted' outcomes against University income



Does scale affect research performance?

If ERA outcomes are influenced by scale then 'income per FoR at world standard or above' produces some interesting trends:

- Nineteen universities averaged less than \$20 million income per FoR at world standard or above (Go8, six IRU, two ATN, three other);
- Go8 range = Adelaide (\$11.2 million) to Monash (\$19.0 million);
- IRU range = Newcastle (\$12.8 million) to La Trobe (\$18.6 million) and then CDU (\$39.3 million);
- ATN range = UTS (\$17.6 million) to RMIT (\$35.5 million);
- The Rest range = Tasmania (\$11.9 million) to Ballarat (\$248 million).

What would we say to these people about our ERA performance in a five minute corridor conversation?



- IRU universities (plus Macquarie, Wollongong, and Deakin) are delivering excellent research outcomes on the basis of 40 years of investment with pockets of world leading performance.
- ERA outcomes suggests that IRU universities provide a comparable return on research investment to the Go8.
- IRU universities are making a special contribution to the regions and communities they serve.

The five minute corridor conversation?

- ERA proves, once again, that Australia has a strong and competitive university sector. A strong second tier provides the competition necessary to produce excellent research and prevent the system from becoming fossilised at a point in time.
- The gap between the tail of the Go8 and the head of the next grouping is closing.
- Australia has no immediate opportunity to build a “Harvard down under” – ERA demonstrates that no Australian university can claim to be comprehensive across the 157 fields assessed by ERA.