

# University research support grant scheme





# University research support grant scheme at ARRB

## Background

ARRB Group (formerly the Australian Road Research Board) is a company whose members are the Australian state, territory and federal road agencies, the Australian Local Government Association and the New Zealand Transport Agency. ARRB was established in 1960, to manage and execute research on behalf of its members.

Accordingly, ARRB has had a long association with many universities. However in the 1990s, the environment for research funding meant that the sharing aspect of the relationship declined. At the same time the abilities and value of university researchers to road agencies has not diminished, but skills have been lost to the ravages of time and to competition from other fields of endeavour. In order to make the road infrastructure and operations research capability on thought leadership stocks of Australia and New Zealand more sustainable, ARRB is trying to stimulate engagement and collaboration between universities, itself and the road agencies.

As part of this process, ARRB has established a fund to support and encourage research at Australian and New Zealand universities into road infrastructure and operations. The scheme's purpose is to make more sustainable the capability pool of researchers and thought leaders by encouraging the current cohort of students and academics to focus their abilities on road transport.

## Purpose

Road agencies are stewards of the largest publicly-owned asset in Australasia – the road network, currently valued at in excess of \$200b<sup>1</sup>. They spend \$16b annually maintaining and extending this network<sup>2</sup>. Dependent on this network is a freight task worth \$60B which, together with other road-based tasks, is also responsible for 16% of Australia's Greenhouse Gas emissions<sup>3</sup> – around 80 Mt of CO<sub>2</sub>e per annum.

The research required to keep knowledge relevant in the face of technical, environmental and legislative changes and increasing population is considerable. So too is the need for trained researchers and thinkers in road transport operations and infrastructure.

These research support grants are intended to fund the training of aspiring researchers though support for university-initiated research projects.

## Funding and application process

1. ARRB will make available an amount for these research support grants. For 2014, the amount is A\$80,000. Grants can be for multiple years, with an annual limit of A\$30,000 and a total limit for each project of A\$50,000. Supporting or partly-supporting a Master's degree or PhD scholarship is an acceptable use of the funds.
2. Applications for funding using the attached template open on 1 January 2014 and close on 28 February 2014. Each application will be assess to determine whether it meets the research capability development objective and is likely to be relevant to Australian road agencies. This assessment will be carried out by ARRB's technical leaders, who may contact the nominated project leader for information over and above that contained in the application. ARRB will then offer to support the best of the applications by 31 March 2014.
3. All applications endorsed by ARRB's senior technical staff as meeting the capability development and road agency objectives, but not funded, will result in the applicant being informed of the endorsement but lack of available funds, and re-application in the new funding year invited. If the applicant wishes to, they can then ask ARRB, by return email, to circulate a summary of the project to, and invite financial support from state, territory, federal, NZ and local government bodies responsible for roads. ARRB will do this by 31 March and 30 September each year. ARRB will put interested road agencies directly in touch with the project leader as soon as the agency advises them of their interest.
4. Those applications not endorsed as meeting capability development objectives and road agency objectives are not eligible for re-submission. Applications must be submitted through the University's Research Office, in .pdf format, to [researchgrants@arrb.com.au](mailto:researchgrants@arrb.com.au).

<sup>1</sup> Austroads 2012, About Austroads, Austroads, Sydney, NSW, viewed 22 April 2012, <http://www.austroads.com.au/about-austroads/about-austroads>.

<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics 2012, Australian infrastructure statistics: yearbook 2012, BITRE, Canberra, ACT.

<sup>3</sup> Graham, P., Gargett, D., Evans, C., Cosgrove, D., Ritzinger, A. 2012, Greenhouse gas abatement potential of the Australian transport sector: Summary report from the Australian Low Carbon Transport Forum, CSIRO, Australia.



## Training aspiring researchers through support for university-initiated research projects

### Research themes

Much of the research conducted in road infrastructure and operations is at the 'applied' end of applied research. Proposals which are exploratory in nature e.g. looking for new ideas and technologies which may benefit road agencies – or new applications for existing ideas and technologies, are sought. Beyond that, ARRB has no desire to constrain thinking about what might be involved. It is, however, crucial that the research targets one of more of the overarching objectives of all road agencies, viz. to provide a road network that is:

- economically productive
- safe for direct and indirect users
- cost-effective
- accessible to all road users and potential road users
- environmentally responsible.

### Eligibility

Applications must:

- be submitted in accordance with the above requirements
- include a clear researcher development opportunity
- be for bona fide research and not for seed capital for a commercial or product development venture
- address one or more of the aspects listed under 'research themes'
- reflect a project that is well advanced in its planning and executable in the indicated timeframes
- be from a researcher employed at an Australian or New Zealand University.

### Assessment criteria

1. Alignment with road agency objectives/research themes (25%).
2. Quality/ relevance of the researcher development objective (25%).
3. Appreciation of relevant earlier work (15%).
4. Innovation of thought, method or approach to problem solving (15%).
5. Quality of project leader and team (10%).
6. Feasibility/risks/risk management of the proposed method (10%).

# Application template - Research support grant

Project title				
Duration	Start		End	

## Project leader's details

Name	
University	
Faculty/school	
Position	
Phone	
email	
Mobile	

## Other key members of research team

Name		Name	
University		University	
Faculty/school		Faculty/school	
Position		Position	
Phone		Phone	
email		email	

## Summary of the proposed research

In **500 words or less** provide a clear summary of the justification for undertaking the research, its aims, method and expected benefits to road agencies. This should include how it aligns with any of the road agency objectives of providing a (i) safe, (ii) economically productive, (iii) cost-effective, (iv) sustainable and (v) accessible road network.

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## Research capability development objectives

In **200 words or less**, describe the research capability development objectives which the funding will help achieve.

## Extent of financial support sought

2014	A\$	2015	A\$	2016	A\$
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Max A\$30,000 in any one year; A\$50,000 in total.

## Industry referee

It is most beneficial to an application if it is supported by a practitioner from outside academia, e.g. a road agency executive or local government engineer. If one or more such persons are involved, then please provide a letter (or letters) of support for the if it will strengthen your application. Note that an absence of an industry partner's supporting letter is not a barrier to endorsement of the application.

## Signatures of project leader and DVC (Research) or delegate

Project leader:			
Signature		Date	
DVC research or delegate signature			
Signature		Date	

This application, including attachments, must be submitted through the University Research Office via email to:  
[researchgrants@arrb.com.au](mailto:researchgrants@arrb.com.au)