

**AUSTRALIAN eRESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL (AeRIC)  
AeRIC Meeting - Thursday, 23 April 2009**

**AGENDA ITEM 6: ICI BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2009/2010**

**Paper: ICI/ARCS Annual Business Plan for 2009/2010**

**Purpose**

To provide AeRIC with a summary of the NCRIS Team's assessment of the ICI Annual Business Plan for 2009/2010.

**Background**

The Victorian Partnership for Advanced Computing (VPAC), as the lead agent for the Australian Research Collaboration Service (ARCS), submitted the 2009/10 Annual Business Plan for the Interoperation and Collaboration Infrastructure (ICI) Project on 31 March 2009.

In assessing the Annual Business Plan, the NCRIS team gives particular consideration to:

- the required content for the Plan, as specified in the funding agreement;
- the alignment with the capability investment plan as approved by NCRIS; and
- the degree to which any variations might represent a change requiring re-appraisal by NCRIS.

**Summary**

The ICI Business Plan for 2009/10 outlines progress in implementing the 2008/09 Business Plan and details planned future activities and associated milestones for 2009/10. Overall, its contents are in accordance with the requirements specified in the Funding Agreement and are aligned with the PfC Investment Plan.

**Issues**

- 1) ARCS is making clear progress in implementing ICI. The ARCS management team is at full complement and an Independent Chair has been appointed to the ARCS Executive Committee (Dr Trevor Powell was confirmed as the Independent Chair at the ARCS EC Meeting in February 2009).
- 2) There is evidence of positive engagement between ARCS and ANDS, and with other research communities, moving towards embedded NCRIS capability representatives within the members of ARCS. In the coming year, ARCS will seek further engagement with specific high profile research projects through representatives such as ARC Federation Fellows.
- 3) Considerable progress is expected this year on engagement with internal University IT service providers. The first MoU concerning the provision of ARCS Tier One support is being canvassed with Monash University. This arrangement will entail Monash providing financial support for ARCS

services, in return for the provision of hardware and advanced user support. The Queensland University of Technology and the University of Adelaide have also indicated interest in being a Tier One support agency. This approach may in time provide a model for possible broader engagement with CAUDIT.

- 4) The Business Plan also states that the original concept of ARCS affiliates and members has evolved, so that any Australian eResearch organisation working closely and collaborating with ARCS (such as Monash in its Tier 1 support role) will be invited to become an "Associate" of ARCS. Any supporting organisation, which endorses and encourages the uptake of ARCS infrastructure, services and tools, will be formally recognised as a "Supporter" of ARCS.

This arrangement varies from the original concept of ARCS members and ARCS "Affiliates". It was originally anticipated that there would be a role for "Affiliates", who would have an in-principle vote in ARCS. The categories have been altered by agreement of the ARCS Executive Committee to be more inclusive, and to also maintain a degree of regional exclusivity for the ARCS core members. Therefore there is a clearly identifiable Member of ARCS within each jurisdiction and Associates and Supporters of ARCS will be recognised as separate to, but supportive of, the members of ARCS. This approach will be supported with appropriately distinctive branding.

- 5) In 2009/10 ARCS Collaboration Services will focus on strengthening videocollaboration technologies, such as EVO and Access Grid services, including via a quality assurance program for nodes across the country. A goal for the coming year is to interface EVO with other collaboration technologies to enable greater interoperability between videocollaboration platforms.
- 6) The ARCS Compute Cloud will be progressed and developed in consultation with an Advisory Group (including an NCI representative). The ARCS Compute Cloud will underpin broader access and greater utilisation of compute resources by the research community. By the end of 2009 a proof of concept cloud will be produced that provides access to a range of applications and capacity through a userfriendly web portal.
- 7) The ARCS Data Fabric is in beta release and is enabling the transfer of data between sites. The Data Fabric is a system that allows researchers to seamlessly store, manage and share their data. As of December 2008, the ARCS Data Fabric was operational in its preliminary test form. By June 2010 ARCS will integrate the compute cloud and the data fabric.
- 8) A key goal for ARCS this year is to provide user support 24 hours a day, seven days a week for a range of services by the end of 2009. It has been suggested by ARCS that this service could be shared with ANDS or other PfC service providers at minimal cost.