

AUSTRALIAN E-RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL (AeRIC)

AeRIC MEETING – 10 OCTOBER 2007

AGENDA ITEM 4: Overview of ARCS and Progress to date – Professor Anthony Williams (ARCS)

Purpose

To provide AeRIC with an overview of the Australian Research Collaboration Service and progress to date.

Issues

Professor Anthony Williams, ARCS Interim Executive Director, will update AeRIC on progress made since the NCRIS ICI agreement came into effect in June.

Action

That AeRIC note the information provided and reserve questions for discussion at item 7.

AeRIC Secretariat

October 2007

The Australian Research Collaboration Service (ARCS)

Overview

The Interoperation and Collaboration Infrastructure (ICI) component of Platforms for Collaboration is being implemented through a Funding Agreement between DEST and the Victorian Partnership for Advanced Computing (VPAC). The agreement was signed on 22 June 2007 for \$20 million.

The ICI is an enhancement of core activities and services funded by the Australian Government through the Australian Partnership for Advanced Computing (APAC). Direct investment in the ICI is through the previous APAC partner consortia, with VPAC as the lead organisation.

VPAC is required to distribute funds to a partnership of service providers across Australia to create a seamless network of compute and data support systems and nationally consistent eResearch services. VPAC is also required to provide an acceptable Joint Venture Agreement between the project participants to define the operating principles and governance arrangements for the collaboration.

The participants have agreed to provide services in addition to those funded by NCRIS through this agreement, the public face of which will be known as the Australian Research Collaboration Service (ARCS).

Progress to date

A staged implementation process has been developed, in recognition of the need to transition staff and structures from the previous APAC model and expand the existing services.

An "Establishment Plan" was delivered to DEST in June, outlining the activities to be undertaken through to (notionally) 1 October 2007. During this "establishment period", the operation of existing operational grid services has been continued, with accompanying user support and some developmental activities carried out.

During the establishment period a small number of proto-NEAT projects have been undertaken. These were designed to ensure that existing projects that were developing important ICI capabilities were continued, and that staff with expertise and experience in eResearch technologies and applications were not lost before the NEAT projects began. It is proposed that a second round of proto-NEAT projects will be developed to cover the period through to June 2008, when the agreed NEAT projects are expected to commence.

At the end of September ARCS submitted an ICI Implementation Plan to DEST which details the business plan through to June 2008. A number of research communities and NCRIS capabilities were consulted in the development of the plan.

Work has also progressed on the development of an ARCS Collaboration Agreement which encompasses ICI services as a component. This is nearing final agreement and should be provided to DEST by 30 October 2007.

AUSTRALIAN E-RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL (AeRIC)

AeRIC MEETING – 10 OCTOBER 2007

AGENDA ITEM 5: ICI Implementation Plan (Paul Coddington, ARCS Associate Director)

Purpose

To provide AeRIC with an overview of the Interoperation and Collaboration Infrastructure (ICI) Implementation Plan, for the period to June 2008.

Issues

Dr Paul Coddington, ARCS Associate Director, will discuss the development of the Implementation Plan and forecast outcomes for the ICI Project during the Implementation Period.

Action

That AeRIC note the information provided and reserve questions for discussion at item 7.

AeRIC Secretariat

October 2007

Interoperation and Collaboration Infrastructure (ICI) Implementation Plan

ARCS submitted an Implementation Plan to DEST on 30 September which details the business plan for the ICI component of the ARCS Collaboration through to June 2008.

The ICI Implementation Plan is the successor to the ICI Establishment Plan, which notionally covered the period to 30 September 2007 however this period will continue until the Implementation Plan is agreed to by DEST.

The Implementation Plan outlines key milestones and a budget for the period to June 2008 including co-contributions expected to be received from participating organisations. The document details a formal governance structure, including the establishment of an Executive Committee made up representatives from key participating organisations and a management structure which includes project managers and operational managers that will report to the Executive Committee. A full time Executive Director is expected to be appointed later in the year.

The Implementation Plan also outlines arrangements for the continuation and enhancement of operational support for grid services (such as for system administration and data collaboration services) and a program of specific user support services targeted to meet the needs of affiliates and other research communities (including NCRIS capabilities).

A set of developmental activities are also described which will continue existing Proto-NeAT projects while the NeAT projects are being finalised. These projects aim to expand the user base, the services and the facilities supported by ICI/ARCS.

AUSTRALIAN E-RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL (AeRIC)

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**AGENDA ITEM 6: ARCS Collaboration Agreement and Communication Strategy
- Professor Anthony Williams (ARCS)**

Purpose

To provide AeRIC with an overview of the Australian Research Collaboration Service Collaboration Agreement and anticipated communications activities.

Issues

Professor Anthony Williams, ARCS Interim Executive Director, will update AeRIC on the content and the status of the ARCS Collaboration Agreement and will outline some of the challenges encountered during the development process.

Action

That AeRIC note the information provided and reserve questions for discussion at item 7.

AeRIC Secretariat

October 2007

Australian Research Collaboration Service (ARCS) Collaboration Agreement and Communication Strategy

ARCS Collaboration Agreement

A condition of the NCRIS ICI Funding Agreement is that the Victorian Partnership for Advanced Computing (VPAC) must put in place an acceptable joint venture arrangement to allow other project participants to carry out work on the project.

The ARCS Collaboration Agreement has been in development for several months and is due to be provided to DEST by 30 October 2007. A current draft of the document has been provided to AeRIC members.

ARCS will be an unincorporated collaborative venture which seeks to provide long-term, coordinated, national eResearch support to the Australian research community. Activities will include, but not be limited to, the provision of services as specified in the ICI Agreement.

The Collaboration Agreement sets out the operating principles and governance arrangements for the collaboration.

Communications Strategy

While the ARCS Executive Director will broadly promote ARCS and its services to the research community, each ARCS partner will promote ARCS within their home organisation and region. Promotional activities will also include use of a dedicated website and presentations to major research groups and conferences, both domestic and international.

There has been, and will continue to be, an active engagement between ARCS and other NCRIS and research communities. During the development of the ICI Implementation Plan, consultations were held with NCRIS and other research community representatives to determine their requirements from ARCS services. As a result, the implementation period activities will focus mainly on the selected research communities which already use, or have a recognised need for, ICI services.

An ongoing process of user engagement and outreach will continue during the implementation plan and throughout the life of the project.

AUSTRALIAN E-RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL (AeRIC)

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AGENDA ITEM 7: Discussion with ARCS Team

Purpose

To provide AeRIC with an opportunity to raise any questions or comments as a result of the material presented by Professor Anthony Williams or Dr Paul Coddington during their presentations.

Action

That AeRIC provide its views on the direction of the ARCS Implementation Plan, Collaboration Agreement and promotional and engagement activities.

AeRIC Secretariat

October 2007