eResearch in Australia: 
a present-state reflection

eResearch Forum
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All, or most governments define success largely as prosperity.

Prosperity results from a dynamic economy.

A dynamic economy is supported by, and supports innovation.

Innovation flows from healthy levels of research.

Research needs infrastructure.

21st century research is inconceivable without e-infrastructure.
“eResearch infrastructure comprises the information and communication technology (ICT) assets, facilities and services which support research within institutions and across national innovation systems and which contribute to the capacity of researchers to undertake excellent research and deliver innovation outcomes.”

[2011 Strategic Roadmap (DIISR)]
Levels of the “Cyberinfrastructure”

- Institutional
- Regional
- National (Peak)
- International and Landmark
The Australian Story

- **Chronology of (national) Government Investment**
  - Embedded collaborative infrastructure grants (RIBG, LIEF, MNRF) 90s +
  - APAC 2000+
  - The Systemic Infrastructure Initiative 2002+
  - NCRIS 2005 – 11
  - Super Science 2009+
The Lead Agent Technique

- Consider priority area
- Informal negotiation with possible leads
- Low key, seeking understanding of approach
- Assurances about collaboration
- Contract development
- Announcement
- Funding and leveraging
- Responsibility and accountability
Some Advantages of the Approach

- No new large overlay, bureaucracy
- Purpose specificity
- Obliges peer negotiation
- Negotiation buys leveraging
- No significant agenda divergence (competing motivations minimised)
Some Disadvantages of the Approach

- Overheads for each agreement
- Lead agent delivery capability uneven
- More particularly may depend on key individuals
- Construing a contract as a “win” (is contracting as a lead agent like winning a “Cat 1” round?)
- Auditing and QA of Governance unclear
Institutional Health Check

- Is eResearch referenced in University plans?
- Is there a Director of eResearch?
- Is there an eResearch support unit?
- Are research management, post-graduate training, technology and library units involved?
- Are regional, national and transnational collaborations identified and underway?
A reasonable interim conclusion

- National Capability
- National Coherence
- National Sustainability

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