



# media release

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## **Science Academy welcomes decision to drop ERA journal rankings**

The Australian Academy of Science welcomed today's decision by the Government and the Australian Research Council to end the system of ranking academic journals as A\*, A, B and C.

The ranking system was a highly controversial component of the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) assessment of university disciplines.

Science Minister Kim Carr today announced that the rankings system will end, giving more authority to the panels that examine and assess research activities undertaken around Australian universities on a discipline-by-discipline basis.

Australian Academy of Science Secretary for Science Policy Professor Bob Williamson said the new approach is much more appropriate than bibliometric assessments of disciplines.

"In our recent submission to the Australian Research Council, the Australian Academy of Science argued strongly that key areas such as interdisciplinary research and new research were seriously disadvantaged by journal ranking," Professor Williamson said.

"This affected not only areas of science and technology, but also interactions between the sciences and the humanities."

"It has been very distressing to see some universities using publications in highly ranked journals as the basis for funding, promotions, and even staff appointments.

"The ranking of a journal as A\* does not mean every paper in it is first rate, and some very good papers may appear in smaller journals.

"People whose work is very relevant to Australian issues rather than internationally, and those in new fields or collaborating between several universities, have been particularly disadvantaged."

The Academy's submission to the Australian Research Council (ARC) ERA consultation process earlier this year urged a move towards the type of peer-review system announced today.

"We welcomed most features of the ERA, and today's announcement has removed the single biggest problem," Professor Williamson said.

"The integrity of science relies upon this type of peer review. The Academy commends Minister Carr for recognising that this process also should be integral to assessing the quality of Australian research."

The Academy's submission is available at [www.science.org.au/reports/documents/era-submission%20.pdf](http://www.science.org.au/reports/documents/era-submission%20.pdf)

Professor Williamson is available for comment until 7:15pm today on 0409 706 255.