



European Research Council  
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### **Highlight:**

## **ERC global campaign heads Down Under**

30 September 2013

**The European Research Council (ERC) is starting a visit to Australia and New Zealand aiming to strengthen relations and to inform top researchers about its substantial funding for talent from anywhere in the world. The tour, which is part of the 'ERC goes Global' campaign, will take the ERC delegation to a string of top universities and institutes. Starting in Wellington and Auckland in New Zealand on 1 and 2 October, the tour then moves on to Australia until 11 October, where the ERC will visit Canberra, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide, Melbourne, and Perth, as well as Hobart in Tasmania.**

ERC Secretary General Prof. Donald Dingwell, who leads the delegation, commented: "*The European Research Council is very pleased to visit Australia and New Zealand. We are keen to meet our counterparts here and to let top talent know about the attractive funding that the ERC offers. It is our hope that researchers here will respond to what is a great opportunity for us all.*"

Prof. Donald Dingwell will be accompanied by one Australian ERC grantee Dr Gemma Solomon. She was awarded an ERC Starting Grant in 2010 in the field of Physical engineering and carries out her research in the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Previously, her academic career has taken her to the University of Western Australia and the University of Sydney. Read more about Gemma Solomon and her research [here](#).

Since 2007, 21 Australian researchers and six New Zealand researchers have been awarded ERC grants. The ERC hopes to increase this number through the awareness-raising campaign. ERC grants are both substantial and highly flexible, and allow grant holders to spend half of their research time outside the EU and its FP7 associated countries<sup>1</sup>. This provides the possibility for grant holders to maintain an affiliation with their country of origin, if they so wish.

### **Background**

Set up in 2007 by the European Union, the **European Research Council (ERC)** aims to stimulate scientific excellence in Europe<sup>2</sup> by encouraging competition for funding between the very best, creative researchers of any nationality and age from anywhere in the world.

The ERC, part of the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme (FP7), has a total budget of €7.5 billion from 2007 to 2013. Its budget will increase by around 70% under the new framework programme 'Horizon 2020' (2014-2020).

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<sup>1</sup> The EU's FP7 associated countries are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey.

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The ERC has adopted an 'investigator-driven', 'bottom-up' approach, which allows researchers to identify new opportunities in any field of research. Since its launch, the ERC has funded over 3,800 research projects throughout Europe, and has become a "benchmark" of the competitiveness of national research systems as it complements existing funding schemes at national and European levels. The ERC has three core grant schemes: 'ERC Starting Grants', targeted at early-career emerging research leaders; 'ERC Consolidator Grants', aimed at already independent excellent researchers; and 'ERC Advanced Grants', supporting top senior researchers.

The ERC is composed of an Executive Agency and a Scientific Council. The latter sets the ERC scientific strategy and consists of 22 top scientists and scholars. The ERC is led by President Prof. Helga Nowotny and the Scientific Council is represented in Brussels by Secretary General Prof. Donald Dingwell. The current visit is the last of the 'ERC goes Global' awareness-raising campaign that Prof. Dingwell heads before his mandate as Secretary General ends at the close of this year.

## **Links**

[ERC website](#)

Prof. Donald Dingwell [biography](#)

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