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Note: Research Services strongly encourages applicants to make the most of this opportunity to impact positively on the assessment of your proposal.

The ARC panel members will be quite keen to evaluate how you respond to the assessors, particularly if they have referred to an issue the members themselves would have raised.

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Information and instructions on writing rejoinders can be found at:

<http://www.arc.gov.au/rejoinders>

HINTS FOR WRITING A REJOINER

Please note that your rejoinder will be read by the relevant ARC College of Experts in conjunction with your assessors' reports (it will not be read by the authors of your assessment reports). Negative reports by assessors do not necessarily reflect the relative ranking of an application, nor does a particularly "rigorous" review mean doom. It is therefore in your best interests to respond as convincingly as possible, because your application can be ranked higher in the funding list as a result of your rejoinder. We **strongly encourage** you to provide a rejoinder, but please heed the following advice:

- It is very important to note that the ARC does not allow updated information (e.g. preliminary results, information left out of proposals, publications accepted or published since submission, etc.) to be included in rejoinders
- Remember that the assessors are only human and subject to human frailties, including the potential to overlook or misinterpret key points in your application purely by accident. ARC panel members, who use the rejoinders to re-rank applications, rely on applicants to point out these oversights in a convincing and impassioned manner.
- Respond in a reasonable and coherent manner. It is perfectly normal to feel indignant if you have received negative or apparently unjustified comments in your Assessors' Reports. However, write your rejoinder once you have carefully and calmly considered the critiques provided, and resist the temptation to vilify the assessor/s as it will not be helpful to your application. Be firm, but not derogatory or insulting, in tactfully addressing 'harsh' or stinging comments.
- Your rejoinder is an important part of the assessment of your application, so we recommend that you do not submit the first draft; provide it to colleagues for review before doing your final draft.
- The rejoinder should be as non-technical as possible, *i.e.*: written in a way that the College of Experts can understand (they will not necessarily be specialists in your particular field).
- Make your rejoinder inviting and easy to read (panel members will be going through 100+ rejoinders and 400+ assessors' reports). Write in clear English and use block paragraphs or dot points, as appropriate.
- Rejoinders **can and do make a difference**, if they address **key criticisms**. Prioritise the rejoinder by focusing on those critical points you perceive to have adversely affected the

assessor's opinions. A thematic response can be especially helpful, particularly if there are common or allied criticisms from more than one assessor.

- You can refer to specific assessors (by using the Assessor Report ID letter, e.g. **“Assessor A states...”**), but avoid repeating or “quoting” what the assessors have said as this eats in to your character limit.
- Do not waste time and space basking in the glow of favourable comments, *i.e.* DON'T BOTHER thanking Assessor D for their “glowing endorsement of our fabulous proposal”; respond only to those points that critique your proposal.
- If you are aware of two “conflicting schools of thought” in your particular area of research, point this out in the rejoinder, and position yourself accordingly.
- You can point out factual errors and handle criticisms by showing how the problems will be overcome
- If a valid criticism is made, agree and indicate how it can be tackled – show how the research design will take it into account if funded
- Stick to the prescribed word/character limits (including spaces and carriage returns) for the rejoinder – your rejoinder must be concise and to the point.

Please note that grants have been awarded, despite negative assessor reports, so it is worth the effort to compose a succinct, pertinent and positive rejoinder.

For queries about the rejoinder process or RMS access, please contact seapgrants@adelaide.edu.au