

In September 2025, I had the opportunity to attend the Australasian Research Management Society (ARMS) 2025 Conference, held in Melbourne, Australia, at the Pullman Melbourne Albert Park. The event brought together research management professionals from across Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and beyond under the central theme, “Navigating the Playing Field: Innovation in a Complex Landscape.”

I was especially honoured to attend the conference as a scholarship recipient. Receiving this scholarship not only enabled my participation but also served as meaningful recognition of my professional commitment and potential. I am sincerely grateful to ARMS for providing this opportunity and for supporting professional development within the research management community. The scholarship reduced financial barriers and allowed me to fully engage in the learning and networking experience.

The program spanned three days and included keynote addresses, plenary sessions, concurrent streams, specialised workshops, and a conference dinner. Presentations and discussions highlighted emerging trends in research management. They also introduced practical tools to address complexity in research ecosystems. In addition, speakers shared strategic approaches to support innovation within institutions. These sessions provided valuable insights into navigating regulatory challenges. They also focused on enhancing research impact and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration.

Among all the sessions, I particularly enjoyed the keynote titled “A Front Row Seat: Lessons Learned at the Intersection of Science, Policy, and Politics” delivered by Prof Dame Juliet A. Gerrard. This keynote explored the challenges governments face when making decisions during crises and highlighted the critical role played by research management professionals in supporting evidence-informed policy.

I also attended a pre-conference workshop on project management. The workshop focused on practical tools and structured approaches to managing research projects effectively across the full project lifecycle. It covered key areas such as planning, risk assessment, stakeholder communication, timelines, and monitoring deliverables. The session provided clear frameworks that can be applied within research administration to improve coordination and efficiency. Through interactive discussions and case examples, I gained a better understanding of how structured project management principles can strengthen research outcomes and support researchers more effectively. The workshop was highly practical and helped me organise my work more efficiently.

One of the most impactful aspects of attending ARMS 2025 was the opportunity to network with peers from diverse contexts. Conversations with fellow professionals allowed me to share experiences, learn innovative practices, and explore collaborative possibilities. Engaging with subject matter experts during Q&A sessions and informal meetups deepened my understanding of how strategic research management can influence research outcomes and institutional success.

For me, attending the conference was about knowledge exchange, exposure to new ideas and technologies, networking, and finding ways to approach work differently. It also provided a welcome break from routine responsibilities. The conference dinner was very well organised, offered excellent food, and provided an additional opportunity to network in a relaxed setting.

Overall, attending the ARMS 2025 Conference was highly beneficial. The event not only expanded my professional network but also strengthened my capability in strategic research management. The insights and skills I gained will enhance my contributions to my organisation and support the effective implementation of research initiatives. I highly recommend the ARMS annual conference as a priority in professional development planning for anyone involved in research management.