



Australian Library and  
Information Association

## **Submission in response to the Review of Research Policy and Funding Arrangements for Higher Education**

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### **ALIA contact:**

Sue McKerracher, CEO, Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA),  
9-11 Napier Close, Deakin ACT 2600

**t** 02 6215 8215 **m** 0404 456 749 **f** 02 6282 2249

**w** [www.alia.org.au](http://www.alia.org.au) **e** [sue.mckerracher@alia.org.au](mailto:sue.mckerracher@alia.org.au)

### **1. About us**

The Australian Library and Information Association is the professional organisation for the Australian library and information services sector. On behalf of our 5,000 personal and institutional members, we provide the national voice of the profession in the development, promotion and delivery of quality library and information services to the nation, through leadership, advocacy and mutual support.

This submission has been produced by our ALIA Research Advisory Committee, in consultation with leaders in the academic library sector.

### **2. Introduction**

This paper is submitted as feedback to the issues paper generated by the Review of Research Policy and Funding Arrangements for Higher Education, August 2015.

We note in the overview of the issues paper (page 2) the drive to improve all facets of research and would like to draw the attention of the expert working group to the role of library and information professionals and the academic library infrastructure in:

- Promoting the sharing of intellectual property and data generated by publicly funded research
- Ensuring our research training system builds skills in collaboration and innovation, as well as fundamental research skills
- Establishing a sustainable, strategic approach to research infrastructure.

A stated aim in the overview is “to improve the poor performance of Australia on measures of collaboration between researchers in higher education and industry and other end users”. The national network of university librarians and their interactions with colleagues in research, government, law, health and corporate libraries provides an opportunity to support data access, information sharing and collaboration across all sectors.

This degree of connection between library and information professionals enhances their already valued contribution to the research agenda in universities.

Information permeates all research activities and the expertise of information professionals is critical in:

- Providing access to information
- Management of research data and creation of institutional repositories for research content
- Ensuring long-term access to research output
- Training of researchers in information creation, access and use
- Advocating for open access to research content.

Library and information professionals' expertise in studying information use and research practices is also vitally important.

### **3. Detailed response**

#### **1.4.2 What are the barriers to improving research industry collaboration?**

A survey of business and industry organisations undertaken with an ALIA research grant (Missingham, 2014) revealed that the communication of the results of research from universities – data and publications – needs to be communicated more systematically and effectively. The survey found that most research outputs are invisible to the organisations and the industries and businesses they support. The barriers to improving research industry collaboration include the inability to see completed research.

From the survey report (Missingham, 2014), “Concerns about the visibility of research noted that there are significant rewards in the system for peer reviewed outputs in scholarly journals (ERA, HERDOC), however there is not equivalent recognition for research that is written for and communicated to the business community, other than for patents or products that could result in commercial income.”

#### **1.4.3 What are the best strategies to address these problems? What confidence should we have that they will make a difference?**

These barriers could be overcome with a government mandated open access policy for research outputs, long term funding for research data infrastructure (such as recommended in *The Australian Research Data Infrastructure Strategy report* [http://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/the\\_australian\\_research\\_data\\_infrastructure\\_strategy.pdf](http://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/the_australian_research_data_infrastructure_strategy.pdf)) and a national funded strategy to improve access to open research outputs through a national discovery service.

Greater sharing of research data, adoption of open access publication models, long-term archiving and discovery services are needed and their effectiveness can be assessed by looking at the results of similar initiatives elsewhere in the world. From the survey:

- The UK initiative of the Research Councils to develop a “gateway to research” takes the issue of increasing research accessibility for knowledge transfer to a new level. It is an innovation that may prove a valuable model for greater success in knowledge transfer.
- International thinking about innovations for greater access to research outputs can be seen in the recommendation to investigate the possibility of constructing the world’s first all-scholarship repository in the recent report *Mapping the future of scholarly publishing* (Open Science Institute, 2015).
- Association of Research Libraries (ARL), the Association of American Universities (AAU), and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) have partnered to develop a new initiative, SHARE to ensure the preservation of, access to, and reuse of research outputs (Association of Research Libraries, 2015). It may provide a model that will go beyond that proposed by the Asian Studies Association of Australia and traditional repositories to provide a broadcast rather than search based solution.

However, the survey conclusion also stated that “waiting for overseas developments is not enough to ensure that there is a full return on the investment in the Australian university sector. The major library sector associations should consider what can be done to develop better practice around a ‘joined up’ ecosystem of research and academics and foster further discussion with research funders.”

### **3.1.3 and 3.1.4 Current ARC and NHMRC competitive grant processes allow for some recognition of industry experience alongside research excellence. Increased recognition could improve support for collaboration between researchers and industry and increase career mobility for researchers wanting to move between different sectors.**

The issues raised in this section are particularly relevant in applied fields, where there is the need for career mobility and recognition of different types of expertise. However, professional expertise has very little weight in academic appointments and career advancement, while industry often doesn’t see academic and research experience as relevant.

#### **3.3.1 What changes would support increased recognition of industry experience alongside research excellence in competitive grant processes?**

As an Applied Research Institute, ALIA plays an important role in promoting and funding library and information science research. We strongly encourage researcher-practitioner partnerships through our grant application process. Based on our insight as an ARI, we make the following suggestions:

- Australia would benefit from greater support for applied studies so that industry sees value in research that will contribute to its advancement. Pure research should be supported, but connections with industry also need to be formulated. Evaluation criteria addressing impact on practice would benefit this approach.
- We would encourage more APA Industry (APAI) type scholarships such as this one <http://myfuture.edu.au/tools-and-resources/study-or-training-options/scholarshipdetails?ScholarshipID=15668>. Offering incentives to industry, for example through tax breaks, to partner in schemes such as this is one way to reduce the "ivory tower" view in the eyes of industry and it strengthens university/business collaboration.
- We would make grants more accessible and develop a range of incentives for research collaboration. The low success rate of Linkage grants must be a deterrent for many businesses.

We also see benefit in developing collaborative, interdisciplinary research with new roles and recognition systems, which would formally recognise different experience and contributions.

**4.2.8 Collaboration between the research sector and business is crucial for the production of research that meets the need of the community, and for innovation to drive growth. Internationally, innovation has flourished in locations where researchers and industry have come together to collaborate such as Silicon Valley and the Cambridge Science Park.**

We see the benefits of this collaborative approach every day in academic libraries, where students, researchers and academics come together to share knowledge and achieve exponentially greater results.

Where co-location is proposed, there should also be planned participation of information professionals (researchers and academics), as they have important roles on teams, from cross-disciplinary "translators" to ethnographers who study research processes to inform future developments.

**4.3.5 How could measurement of knowledge transfer of research outcomes to industry and other end users be improved?**

**4.3.6 How could research impact be measured?**

Measurement and impact studies are typical roles for information professionals. The further engagement of library and information professionals in this discussion will result in innovative, achievable responses to these questions.

**5. Research training and employment**

**- ensuring the quality and excellence of Australian university research and research training**

Part of a library and information professional's role in an academic library is to share their research expertise with library users, however, this is not always formally recognised. Formal recognition would enhance library staff's ability to pass on their skills

## **5. Intellectual property**

ALIA and other library associations are lobbying for changes to current copyright law, based on the Australian Law Reform Commission's proposals contained in its report on Copyright and the Digital Economy, 2014. We support the concept of "fair use" to improve the availability of information for study purposes.

Digital usage rights require a significant overhaul nationally and internationally.

## **6. In conclusion**

We welcome the opportunity to comment on this issues paper and we would be pleased to provide further comment about any of the points made in our response.