

#161

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Page 1: Personal Details

Q1

Your name

Clara Tuite

Q2

Your organisation (leave blank if not applicable)

School of Culture and Communication, University of Melbourne

Q3

Are you making this submission on behalf of your organisation?

Yes, I am making this submission on behalf of my organisation**Q4**

Email address

clarat@unimelb.edu.au

Q5

What best describes your interest in making a submission?

I am a researcher at an Australian university**Q6**

Submissions may be made public unless you request otherwise.

Respondent skipped this question**Q7**

What form of submission do you wish to make?

Provide my responses through the online survey

Page 2: Upload Response

Q8**Respondent skipped this question**

Please upload your submission.

Page 3: ERA and/or EI choice

Q9**I want to answer questions on both ERA and EI**

Please indicate whether you wish to answer questions on ERA and/or EI.

Page 4: ERA Policy /1

Q10

To what extent is ERA meeting its objectives to:

Continue to develop and maintain an evaluation framework that gives government, industry, business and the wider community assurance of the excellence of research conducted in Australian higher education institutions.

Comment:

Provide a national stocktake of discipline level areas of research strength and areas where there is opportunity for development in Australian higher education institutions.

Comment:

Identify excellence across the full spectrum of research performance.

Comment:

Identify emerging research areas and opportunities for further development.

Comment:

Allow for comparisons of research in Australia, nationally and internationally, for all discipline areas.

Comment:

A moderate amount

The assessment of excellence and providing benchmarking for quality is to some extent in conflict with the function of providing a national stocktake.

A moderate amount

The function of providing a national stocktake is to some extent in conflict with the assessment of excellence. A survey of activity that needs to be representative and inclusive of a range of activities has a different focus that is not necessarily going to be compatible with measuring excellence. It is nevertheless worthwhile to try and balance this as much as possible.

A moderate amount

See above answers.

A moderate amount

The difficulty of harvesting and evaluating NTROs and work from NT disciplines makes this difficult.

A moderate amount

The rating system that proceeds by 'world standard' enables this reasonably well by ensuring that world standard is the benchmark.

Q11**Neither agree nor disagree**

The ERA objectives are appropriate for meeting the future needs of its stakeholders.

Page 5: ERA Policy /2

Q12**Respondent skipped this question**

What impact has ERA had on:

Q13

How do you, or your organisation use ERA outcomes?

We use ERA outcomes as part of our argument for research environment in funding applications. We also use it for publicity and also in business planning.

Q14

ERA outcomes are valuable to you or your organisation.

Strongly agree,

Do you have any suggestions for enhancing ERA's value to you/your organisation?:

The ERA has great importance for promoting the research of Australian universities to the broader public and business and industry nationally and internationally. Given this, ERA's value could be increased by being supported by more government support for institutional infrastructure for ERA (esp. in relation to harvesting outputs and creating the repository). Another way in which ERA could be made more valuable is if its aims and relevance could be more broadly promoted at universities so that it felt more broadly owned by more university researchers. ERA could be more helpful for staff, for example, if the new Engagement and Impact narratives were somehow able to align with performance review and promotion.

Q15**Respondent skipped this question**

How else could ERA outcomes be used?

Page 6: ERA Methodology /1

Q16

The current methodology meets the objectives of ERA.

Agree,

Please explain your answer.:

The discipline-based peer review methodology of reading outputs is appropriate as a methodology. But as a practical exercise it involves an enormous amount of work for the one or two people who prepare outputs for each discipline and then the assessors of the outputs.

Q17

What are the strengths and/or weaknesses of the overall ERA methodology?

Strengths

See answer above.

Weaknesses

See answer above.

Q18

Does the discipline-specific approach for evaluating research quality (citation analysis or peer review for specific disciplines) continue to enable robust and comparable evaluation across all disciplines?

Yes

Q19

The citation analysis methodology for evaluating the quality of research is appropriate.

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

The citation method disadvantages researchers in HASS.

Q20

What are the strengths and/or weaknesses of the citation analysis methodology?

Weaknesses

The citation method disadvantages researchers in HASS.

Q21

Can the citation analysis methodology be modified to improve the evaluation process while still adhering to the ERA Indicator Principles?

No

Q22

The peer review methodology for evaluating the quality of research is appropriate.

Strongly agree,

Please explain your answer.:

Peer review is the best way of ensuring detailed knowledge of the discipline.

Q23

What are the strengths and/or weaknesses of the peer review methodology?

Strengths

Peer review is the best way of ensuring detailed knowledge of the discipline.

Q24

Can the peer review methodology be modified to improve the evaluation process while still adhering to the ERA Indicator Principles?

Respondent skipped this question

Page 7: ERA Methodology /2

Q25

The volume and activity indicators are still relevant to ERA.

Respondent skipped this question

Q26

The publishing profile indicator is still relevant to ERA.

Respondent skipped this question

Q27**Respondent skipped this question**

The research income indicators are still relevant to ERA.

Q28**Respondent skipped this question**

The applied measures are still relevant to ERA.

Page 8: ERA Methodology /3

Q29**Strongly agree,**

The five-band ERA rating scale is suitable for assessing research excellence.

Please explain your answer.:

The five-band ERA scale is suitable because it gives an appropriately wide range.

Q30

Noting that 90% of units of evaluation assessed in ERA 2018 are now at or above world standard, does the rating scale need to be modified to identify research excellence?

Yes,

If you answered 'Yes', please explain how the rating scale can be modified to identify research excellence.:

Yes, there should be more specific measures of excellence rather than the comparative measure as the gold standard of rating.

Q31**Respondent skipped this question**

The ERA low volume threshold is appropriate.

Q32**Respondent skipped this question**

Are there ways in which the low volume threshold could be modified to improve the evaluation process?

Q33**Respondent skipped this question**

What is the more appropriate method for universities to claim research outputs—staff census date or by-line?

Q34**Respondent skipped this question**

What are the limitations of a census date approach?

Q35**Respondent skipped this question**

Would a by-line approach address these limitations?

Q36**Respondent skipped this question**

What are the limitations of a by-line approach?

Q37

ERA adequately captures and evaluates interdisciplinary research.

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

The ERA does not always adequately capture ID research because it is strongly focused on discipline specificity in ways that discourage recognition of ID research.

Q38

If you disagreed with the previous statement, how could interdisciplinary research best be accommodated?

Respondent skipped this question

Page 9: ERA Methodology /4

Q39

My institution would meet ERA low volume threshold in Indigenous studies at:

Respondent skipped this question**Q40**

In ERA, the best approach for evaluating Indigenous Studies is (choose one):

Respondent skipped this question**Q41**

What would be the advantages and/or disadvantages of your preferred approach for evaluating Indigenous studies in ERA?

Respondent skipped this question

Page 10: ERA Process /1

Q42

ERA should move to an annual collection of data from universities.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

Annual collection would place too great a burden upon universities and researchers and discipline leaders and assessors.

Q43

What would be the advantages and/or disadvantages of an annual data collection.

Disadvantages

Annual collection would place too great a burden upon universities and researchers and discipline leaders and assessors

Q44

In future ERA rounds, should the volume of outputs submitted for each unit of evaluation be published?

Respondent skipped this question

Q45

Respondent skipped this question

In future ERA rounds, research outputs should be published with their assignment to specific disciplines following completion of the round.

Q46

Respondent skipped this question

What would be the advantages and/or disadvantages of publishing research outputs with their assignment to specific disciplines?

Q47

Respondent skipped this question

What other data do you think the ARC should publish following an ERA round? (Note - in ERA 2018 metadata included: Research output title, Research output type, reference year, outlet, publisher, ISBN, ERA round, and Institution)

Q48

Considering that EI is a new assessment, to what extent is EI meeting its objectives to:

encourage greater collaboration between universities and research end-users, such as industry, by assessing engagement and impact?

Comment:

A small amount

This is a big shift and it should be recognized that these two elements are potentially in conflict and contradiction. Outputs that score high on EI are often not the best examples of research quality and excellence. • Humanities / Social Science researchers are heavily disadvantaged within this indicator framework, particularly if funding opportunities continue to decrease. There are further disadvantages specific to ECRs. For the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Creative Arts it is imperative to include Engagement activities that emphasize non-direct financial contribution and/or benefit. Similarly, Impact measures need to capture the degree to which university research in these disciplines is less quantifiable (in terms of formal numerical/economic indicators) than other disciplines and thereby require more detailed narrative evidence. In the current Consultation Paper there is a lack of clarity in terms of the value that should be placed on public audience engagement and the importance of helping to build an educated and informed public that has access to research translated for different audiences and community groups (e.g. policy reports; arts festivals; public talks; translation of research for public and commercial media venues; exhibition curation; delivery of research to and/or collaboration with community groups; informal partnerships with industry/Not-for-Profit organizations and Charities/NGO's/government bodies/cultural institutions). Given the increasing importance placed on "trusted" forms of knowledge and news, we believe it is vital that universities work hard to engage public audiences across different community settings. As such we strongly advocate that audience engagement (without a clear economic value) or quantifiable impact measure be recognized as vital to building a civil and informed society. We recognize the challenges posed by EI narratives but strongly support their continuation with increased flexibility in measuring EI as well as the dynamic relationship between Engagement and Impact. Related to this issue is the contraction of news media and the significant changes underway in the audio-visual industries (accelerated by the pandemic), notably the centralisation of distribution in streaming services, and the increasing dependence of production industries - notably in music, TV drama and film - on the same industries. This poses increased challenges but also important opportunities for our disciplines in terms of engaging with this sector, but there needs to be recognition of the varied and often informal ways in which our disciplines engage and impact this sector. • The designation of book sales as a marker of Engagement contradicts the obligation that ARC researchers make their outputs freely available on Open Access. The Consultation Paper notes that EI have been primarily

reputational, not financial, drivers of university behaviour. Does this mean Universities need to start seeing traditional public engagement as a marketing/recruitment activity? There is also limited recognition in the Consultation Paper of the need for longer timeframes for Impact to be measured. While some disciplines can more readily measure impact in the short term and within the ERA cycle, for the social sciences and humanities, impact may take much longer to be fully recognized. We remain concerned that this may skew new research funding toward short term gains rather than substantial longer-term outcomes which take time to be fully measured. Within Indigenous Studies there are particular complexities around engagement, that are not recognised now and it does not seem will be recognised under any new framework. From our perspective what counts as excellence in engagement - by which we mean relationships that support research end-users as well as having a significant impact in public realms, on students, and the university community - require a long time and a great deal of work to develop. It is well-known that Indigenous communities have had complex and difficult relationships with researchers over many years, and these histories must be overcome by each researcher every time they work with a new community, in order to create trust. All engagement activities with Indigenous communities are based in principles of relationality and personal connections, not simply by negotiating contracts and creating short-term projects. These relationships cannot be rushed, and nor can they be superficial, with the expectation being that the researcher will provide support to a community in many forms and be available when required. This "groundwork" is necessary to support the critical connections in which a trusting and supportive research relationship must be based. • In an ideal world, we would be able to maintain/increase our success with research funding and fulfill the engagement indicators related to funding. However, this is not a viable strategy on its own, particularly with so many sectors of industry struggling with their own financial stability. A more strategic approach will be to focus on framing Engagement and Impact Narratives.

Page 12: EI Policy /2

Q49

The EI objectives are appropriate for the future needs of its stakeholders.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

Please see comments above.

Q50

What impact has EI had on:

Respondent skipped this question

Q51**Respondent skipped this question**

How do you, or your organisation, use EI outcomes?

Q52

The EI outcomes are valuable to you or your organisation.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

As they stand in their current formulation, the EI outcomes will not be valuable to our institution unless they have the capacity to recognize greater diversity.

Q53**Respondent skipped this question**

How else could EI outcomes be used?

Page 13: EI Policy /3

Q54

The current Engagement definition is appropriate.

Strongly disagree,

If you don't agree, what are your suggested amendments to the Engagement definition?:

Humanities / Social Science researchers are heavily disadvantaged within this indicator framework, particularly if funding opportunities continue to decrease. There are further disadvantages specific to ECRs. The current ARC definition of "engagement" also omits a lot of what HASS researchers typically frame as engagement activities, such as industry panels, articles in The Conversation, guest radio segments, etc. HASS researchers tend toward public engagement. Most of these events do not have funding from an external source, so might not count under the new rules. For the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Creative Arts it is imperative to include Engagement activities that emphasize non-direct financial contribution and/or benefit. In the current Consultation Paper there is a lack of clarity in terms of the value that should be placed on public audience engagement and the importance of helping to build an educated and informed public that has access to research translated for different audiences and community groups (e.g. policy reports; arts festivals; public talks; translation of research for public and commercial media venues; exhibition curation; delivery of research to and/or collaboration with community groups; informal partnerships with industry/Not-for-Profit organizations and Charities/NGO's/government bodies/cultural institutions). Within Indigenous Studies there are particular complexities around engagement, that are not recognised now and it does not seem will be recognised under any new framework. From our perspective what counts as excellence in engagement - by which we mean relationships that support research end-users as well as having a significant impact in public realms, on students, and the university community - require a long time and a great deal of work to develop.

Q55

The current Impact definition is appropriate.

Strongly disagree,

If you don't agree, what are your suggested amendments to the Impact definition?:

Impact measures need to capture the degree to which university research in these disciplines is less quantifiable (in terms of formal numerical/economic indicators) than other disciplines and thereby require more detailed narrative evidence. There is also limited recognition in the Consultation Paper of the need for longer timeframes for Impact to be measured. While some disciplines can more readily measure impact in the short term and within the ERA cycle, for the social sciences and humanities, impact may take much longer to be fully recognized. We remain concerned that this may skew new research funding toward short term gains rather than substantial longer-term outcomes which take time to be fully measured.

Q56

The current end-user definition is appropriate.

Respondent skipped this question

Q57

Are there any end-user categories excluded in the current definition of research end-user that you think should be included? Please explain your answer.

Respondent skipped this question

Q58

Are there other key terms that need to be formally defined?

Respondent skipped this question

Page 14: EI Methodology /1

Q59

Are the two-digit Field of Research codes the most appropriate method to define units of assessment for Engagement and Impact?

Respondent skipped this question

Q60

Are there other ways to classify units of assessment in EI, for example SEO codes?

Respondent skipped this question

Q61

Should there be more or fewer units of assessment per university?

Respondent skipped this question

Q62**Respondent skipped this question**

The EI low-volume threshold should continue to be based on the number of research outputs submitted for ERA.

Q63**Respondent skipped this question**

If you disagree, how should eligibility for assessment in EI be determined?

Q64**Respondent skipped this question**

The low-volume threshold is set at the appropriate level.

Page 15: EI Methodology /2

Q65**Respondent skipped this question**

Overall, the engagement indicator suite for the assessment of research engagement is suitable.

Q66

The cash support from research end-users using HERDC data is appropriate for the assessment of research engagement.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

- The designation of book sales as a marker of Engagement contradicts the obligation that ARC researchers make their outputs freely available on Open Access.
- Most research partners are exempt from monetary contributions and function on in-kind contributions.

Q67

The research commercialisation income is appropriate for the assessment of research engagement.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

- Humanities / Social Science researchers are heavily disadvantaged within this indicator framework, particularly if funding opportunities continue to decrease. There are further disadvantages specific to ECRs.

Q68**Respondent skipped this question**

Are there additional metrics that would be appropriate across many or all disciplines?

Q69**Respondent skipped this question**

Are there alternative metrics that would be appropriate across many or all disciplines?

Q70**Respondent skipped this question**

Should any of the current engagement metrics be redesigned?

Q71**Respondent skipped this question**

The co-supervision of HDR students should be made an engagement indicator in future rounds of EI.

Q72**Respondent skipped this question**

In your opinion, are any of the ERA applied measures appropriate indicators of research engagement in EI?

Page 16: EI Methodology /3

Q73

The narrative approach is suitable for describing and assessing research engagement with end-users.

Strongly agree,

Please explain your answer.:

The narrative approach seems the most appropriate way to be able to measure the diversity of HASS EI activities.

Q74**Respondent skipped this question**

If you disagree with the narrative approach, what alternative approach could be used to replace the narrative? If you are suggesting indicators, please be specific.

Q75

One engagement submission per broad discipline is sufficient for capturing the research engagement within that discipline.

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

I would tend to think that more than one submission would be a better way to capture a range of diverse activities. But it might depend on the outcomes of 2023. As the Engagement submission is a new part of the process, we might need to wait and see and then re-evaluate.

Q76**Respondent skipped this question**

The engagement narrative needs to be longer.

Q77**Respondent skipped this question**

Additional evidence is needed within the narrative.

Page 17: EI Methodology /4

Q78

The narrative approach is suitable for describing and assessing Impact.

Strongly agree,

Please explain your answer.:

See my previous answer on Engagement.

Q79**Respondent skipped this question**

If you disagree with the narrative approach, what alternative approach could be used to replace the narrative? Please explain your answer. If you are suggesting indicators, please be specific.

Q80**Neither agree nor disagree,**

One impact study per broad discipline is sufficient for capturing the research impact within that discipline.

Please explain your answer.:

See my previous answer on Engagement.

Q81**Respondent skipped this question**

The impact narrative needs to be longer.

Q82**Respondent skipped this question**

There is need for additional evidence to be provided within the impact narrative.

Q83**Respondent skipped this question**

In your opinion, are there quantitative indicators that could be used to the measure the impact of research outside of academia?

Q84**Respondent skipped this question**

If you answered 'yes' to the previous question, please name and describe the quantitative indicator/s, and the disciplines for which they are relevant.

Page 18: EI Methodology /5

Q85**Strongly agree**

The narrative approach is suitable for describing and assessing approach to impact.

Q86**Respondent skipped this question**

If you disagree with the narrative approach, what alternative approach could be used to replace the narrative? Please explain your answer. If you are suggesting indicators, please be specific.

Q87**Respondent skipped this question**

One approach to impact narrative per broad discipline is sufficient for capturing the activities within that discipline.

Q88 Respondent skipped this question

The approach to impact narrative needs to be longer.

Q89 Respondent skipped this question

There is a need for additional evidence to be provided.

Q90 Respondent skipped this question

Would there be benefit in combining engagement and approach to impact?

Page 19: EI Methodology /6

Q91 Respondent skipped this question

The engagement rating scale is suitable for assessing research engagement.

Q92 Respondent skipped this question

The descriptors for the engagement rating scale are suitable.

Q93 Respondent skipped this question

The impact rating scale is suitable for assessing impact.

Q94 Respondent skipped this question

The descriptors for the impact rating scale are suitable.

Q95 Respondent skipped this question

The approach to impact rating scale is suitable for assessing approach to impact.

Q96 Respondent skipped this question

The descriptions for the approach to impact rating scale are suitable.

Page 20: EI Methodology /7

Q97 Respondent skipped this question

Should EI continue to include an interdisciplinary impact study in addition to the two-digit Field of Research impact studies?

Q98

Respondent skipped this question

Should the EI low volume threshold be applied to the unit of assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research in EI 2024 with the option to opt in if threshold is not met?

Q99

Respondent skipped this question

Should the unit of assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research include engagement in the next round of EI?

Page 21: Overarching Issues Common to ERA and EI

Q100

Every five years

How often should ERA occur?

Q101

Respondent skipped this question

What impact would a longer assessment cycle (i.e. greater than three years) have on the value of ERA results, particularly in the intervening years?

Page 22: Overarching Issues Common to ERA and EI

Q102

How often should the EI assessment occur?

Other (please specify and explain your answer):
This would reduce the burden on institutions and discipline leaders and assessors.

Q103

Respondent skipped this question

What impact would a longer assessment cycle (i.e. greater than three years) have on the value of EI results, particularly in the intervening years?

Page 23: Overarching Issues Common to both ERA and EI

Q104

Respondent skipped this question

ERA and EI should be combined into the one assessment.

Q105

Respondent skipped this question

What would be the advantages and/or disadvantages of ERA and EI being combined into the one assessment.

Q106

Respondent skipped this question

Are there other ways to streamline the processes to reduce the cost to universities of participating in ERA and EI?

Page 24: Overarching Issues Common to Both ERA and EI

Q107

Respondent skipped this question

In your view, what data sources could ERA utilise?

Q108

In your view, what are the most time consuming elements of the ERA submission?

Collection of outputs and creation of the repository.

Q109

Are there efficiencies that could be introduced?

Yes,

Please describe.:

There is widespread recognition of the need to prioritize dedicated, coherent support at University level to assist collection and creation of the repository and archive. Technical issues need to be dealt with in order to expedite efficient collection and presentation of research outputs. A dedicated HASS team should be organized for the collection and copying of materials for the archive.

Page 25: Overarching Issues Common to Both ERA and EI

Q110

Respondent skipped this question

In your view, what are the most time consuming elements of the EI submission?

Q111

Respondent skipped this question

Are there efficiencies that could be introduced?

Page 26: Overarching Issues Common to Both ERA and EI

Q112

Respondent skipped this question

ORCID iDs should be mandatory for ERA.

Q113

Respondent skipped this question

What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of mandatory ORCID iDs?

Q114

Respondent skipped this question

The automatic harvesting of output data using ORCID iDs would streamline a university's submission process.

Q115

Respondent skipped this question

What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of automatic harvesting of output data using ORCID iDs?

Q116

Respondent skipped this question

DOIs should be mandatory for ERA.

Q117

Respondent skipped this question

What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of mandatory DOIs?

Page 27: Overarching Issues Common to Both ERA and EI

Q118

Respondent skipped this question

Are there other ways to collect data to reduce the cost and burden to universities of participating in ERA and EI whilst maintaining the robustness of the ERA and EI process?

Q119

Respondent skipped this question

What are the advantages and/or disadvantages?

Page 28: Additional Comments

Q120

Please provide any additional comments:

Many discipline leaders expressed the view that their discipline's rating has gone down steadily since this initiative began, but that they don't think it reflects their performance in relative terms.
