

#26

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## Page 1: Personal Details

## Q1

Your name

Antony Burnham

## Q2

Your organisation (leave blank if not applicable)

ANU

## Q3

Are you making this submission on behalf of your organisation?

This submission reflects my personal views and not those of my organisation

## Q4

Email address

Respondent skipped this question

## 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

Please upload your submission.

Respondent skipped this question

## Page 3: ERA and/or EI choice

**Q9****I only want to answer questions on ERA**

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:

**A moderate amount**

It is quite a crude process that can be gamed. It lacks the nuanced approach that is required to quantify research excellence at the top end of the spectrum.

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:

**A large amount**

It is probably quite good at identifying weak departments that consistently output poorly-cited research.

Identify excellence across the full spectrum of research performance.  
Comment:

**Not at all**

ERA only measures citations in a narrow time period and not any other indicia of research quality. One metric is not a spectrum.

Identify emerging research areas and opportunities for further development.  
Comment:

**Not at all**

It measures citations, which is a backward-looking, not forward-looking approach. Thus, by definition ERA cannot identify future trends.

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

**A small amount**

Other nations use different processes to assess research excellence and hence ERA results can't be compared to something like the UK's REF.

**Q11****Agree**

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

## Page 5: ERA Policy /2

**Q12**

What impact has ERA had on:

individual universities

Departments have to be more cautious about offering emeritus or honorary appointments in case these affect their ERA score. This can lead to some difficult conversations with formerly esteemed researchers who are no longer producing highly cited research.

researchers

Creates a disincentive to publish research that might not be highly cited. This can create a conflict between helping students achieve a publication from their work and maintaining good metrics for the department.

**Q13**

Respondent skipped this question

How do you, or your organisation use ERA outcomes?

**Q14**

Disagree

ERA outcomes are valuable to you or your organisation.

**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.

**Strongly disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

As outlined below I do not think the citation method is appropriate.

**Q17**

Respondent skipped this question

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

**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?

I believe it is meaningless to speak of whether chemistry research is better quality than physics.

**Q19**

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

**Disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

Number of citations is only one metric of research quality. There are some papers that are highly cited but that contain quite pedestrian science, and some innovative work that is in emerging fields that don't yet generate lots of citations. Worst of all it creates a disincentive to publish negative results and discourages risk-taking. PhD students need publications to get their next job, but ERA's citations approach makes academics have to predict whether each paper will raise or lower their ERA score, creating a mercenary approach that is potentially at odds with the educational role of academic institutions.

**Q20**

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

Strengths

**It is simple to calculate.**

Weaknesses

**It does not recognise work that is ahead of its time, does not distinguish between work that is widely cited for being wrong versus breakthrough results, it can create tension where papers don't get published because of a fear they will drag down a department's average (in contrast to staff only putting forwards their 'best' work), thus discouraging innovation**

**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.

**Agree,**

Please explain your answer.:

Peer review is used by the UK's REF process to ensure that only researchers' best work is evaluated, and that the assessment is based on a detailed examination of the contents of their papers and books. This allows a degree of risk-taking and also allows publication of method-development papers that, in themselves, might not be highly cited but are fundamental to later work.

**Q23**

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

Strengths

**Quality of work is assessed by detailed examination of research by experts in the field.**

Weaknesses

**Time-consuming; may be difficult to eliminate bias of name-recognition and thus perpetuate the status quo.**

**Q24**

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

**Yes,**

If you answer 'Yes', please describe how the peer review methodology could be improved.:

No specific reason to choose 30% of research outputs. I imagine anything in the range 25 - 50% would be appropriate.

Page 7: ERA Methodology /2

**Q25**

The volume and activity indicators are still relevant to ERA.

**Neither agree nor disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

Probably useful for identifying weakness but not a good discriminant between the top departments.

**Q26**

The publishing profile indicator is still relevant to ERA.

**Neither agree nor disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

The consultation document does not explain in enough detail for me to form an opinion.

**Q27**

The research income indicators are still relevant to ERA.

**Neither agree nor disagree**

**Q28**

The applied measures are still relevant to ERA.

**Respondent skipped this question**

Page 8: ERA Methodology /3

**Q29**

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

**Agree,**

Please explain your answer.:

An appropriate balance between simplicity and granularity.

**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?

**No**

**Q31**

The ERA low volume threshold is appropriate.

**Agree,**

Please explain your answer.:

Unwise to try to draw conclusions about very small departments.

**Q32**

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

**Respondent skipped this question**

**Q33**

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

**Census date,**

Please explain your answer.:

By-lines would reward departments for tenuous connections with visitors, whereas a census date requires a more formal connection.

**Q34**

What are the limitations of a census date approach?

Respondent skipped this question

**Q35**

Would a by-line approach address these limitations?

Respondent skipped this question

**Q36**

What are the limitations of a by-line approach?

Universities have less need to retain staff if they will get credit for researchers who have moved on to other departments. This would disadvantage early career researchers; a census approach incentivises departments to hire/retain staff by requiring an ongoing connection.

**Q37**

ERA adequately captures and evaluates interdisciplinary research.

**Neither agree nor disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

Not a topic I know much about.

**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****Neither agree nor disagree**

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

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**Q43****Respondent skipped this question**

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

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**Q44****Yes,**

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

Please explain your answer.:  
Provides context.

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**Q45****Agree,**

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

Please explain your answer.:  
Would allow inconsistencies between departments to be identified and might reveal more of the tricks used to game the system.

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**Q46****Respondent skipped this question**

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

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**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)

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Page 11: EI Policy /1

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**Q48****Respondent skipped this question**

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

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Page 12: EI Policy /2

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**Q49****Respondent skipped this question**

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

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**Q50****Respondent skipped this question**

What impact has EI had on:

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**Q51**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q52**

Respondent skipped this question

The EI outcomes are valuable to you or your organisation.

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**Q53**

Respondent skipped this question

How else could EI outcomes be used?

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Page 13: EI Policy /3

**Q54**

Respondent skipped this question

The current Engagement definition is appropriate.

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**Q55**

Respondent skipped this question

The current Impact definition is appropriate.

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**Q56**

Respondent skipped this question

The current end-user definition is appropriate.

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**Q57**

Respondent skipped this question

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.

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**Q58**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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Page 14: EI Methodology /1

**Q59**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q60**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q61**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q62**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q63**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q64**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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Page 15: EI Methodology /2

**Q65**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q66**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q67**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q68**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q69**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q70**

Respondent skipped this question

Should any of the current engagement metrics be redesigned?

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**Q71**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q72**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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Page 16: EI Methodology /3

**Q73**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**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.

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**Q75**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q76**

Respondent skipped this question

The engagement narrative needs to be longer.

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**Q77**

Respondent skipped this question

Additional evidence is needed within the narrative.

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Page 17: EI Methodology /4

**Q78**

Respondent skipped this question

The narrative approach is suitable for describing and assessing Impact.

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**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.

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**Q80**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q81**

Respondent skipped this question

The impact narrative needs to be longer.

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**Q82**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**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?

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**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.

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Page 18: EI Methodology /5

**Q85**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**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.

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**Q87**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q88**

Respondent skipped this question

The approach to impact narrative needs to be longer.

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**Q89**

Respondent skipped this question

There is a need for additional evidence to be provided.

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**Q90**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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Page 19: EI Methodology /6

**Q91**

Respondent skipped this question

The engagement rating scale is suitable for assessing research engagement.

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**Q92**

Respondent skipped this question

The descriptors for the engagement rating scale are suitable.

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**Q93**

Respondent skipped this question

The impact rating scale is suitable for assessing impact.

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**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.

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**Q96**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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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?

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**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?

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**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?

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Page 21: Overarching Issues Common to ERA and EI

**Q100**

Every five years

How often should ERA occur?

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**Q101**

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?

Allows longer-term impacts of research to be assessed, reduces administrative burden on institutions.

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Page 22: Overarching Issues Common to ERA and EI

**Q102**

Respondent skipped this question

How often should the EI assessment occur?

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**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?

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Page 23: Overarching Issues Common to both ERA and EI

**Q104**

Neither agree or disagree

ERA and EI should be combined into the one assessment.

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**Q105**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**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?

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Page 24: Overarching Issues Common to Both ERA and EI

<b>Q107</b>	<b>Respondent skipped this question</b>
In your view, what data sources could ERA utilise?	
<b>Q108</b>	<b>Respondent skipped this question</b>
In your view, what are the most time consuming elements of the ERA submission?	
<b>Q109</b>	<b>Respondent skipped this question</b>
Are there efficiencies that could be introduced?	
<hr/>	
Page 25: Overarching Issues Common to Both ERA and EI	
<b>Q110</b>	<b>Respondent skipped this question</b>
In your view, what are the most time consuming elements of the EI submission?	
<b>Q111</b>	<b>Respondent skipped this question</b>
Are there efficiencies that could be introduced?	
<hr/>	
Page 26: Overarching Issues Common to Both ERA and EI	
<b>Q112</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>
ORCID iDs should be mandatory for ERA.	
<b>Q113</b>	<b>Respondent skipped this question</b>
What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of mandatory ORCID iDs?	
<b>Q114</b>	<b>Respondent skipped this question</b>
The automatic harvesting of output data using ORCID iDs would streamline a university's submission process.	
<b>Q115</b>	<b>Respondent skipped this question</b>
What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of automatic harvesting of output data using ORCID iDs?	
<b>Q116</b>	<b>Respondent skipped this question</b>
DOIs should be mandatory for ERA.	

**Q117**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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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?

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**Q119**

Respondent skipped this question

What are the advantages and/or disadvantages?

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Page 28: Additional Comments

**Q120**

Respondent skipped this question

Please provide any additional comments:

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