

#115

**COMPLETE**

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## Page 1: Personal Details

**Q1**

Your name

Gail Spina

**Q2**

Your organisation (leave blank if not applicable)

Ecological Society of Australia (ESA)

**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

executiveofficer@ecolsoc.org.au

**Q5**

What best describes your interest in making a submission?

Other, Please describe.:

The ESA is the peak body of ecological scientists, many involved in research.

**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:

**A moderate amount**

Within the existing framework, the output is not easily intelligible to government, industry, business and the wider community. The large number of units of evaluation and disciplinary framework means that outcomes are not easily approachable by stakeholders focussed on capabilities to address specific or sectoral outcomes.

**Q11**

Respondent skipped this question

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?

As evidence to demonstrate the quality of ecological science undertaken by Australian ecologists.

**Q14**

Neither agree nor disagree

ERA outcomes are valuable to you or your organisation.

**Q15**

Respondent skipped this question

How else could ERA outcomes be used?

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Page 6: ERA Methodology /1**Q16**

Respondent skipped this question

The current methodology meets the objectives of ERA.

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**Q17**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q18**

Respondent skipped this question

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?

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**Q19**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q20**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q21**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q22**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q23**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q24**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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Page 7: ERA Methodology /2

**Q25**

Respondent skipped this question

The volume and activity indicators are still relevant to ERA.

**Q26**

Respondent skipped this question

The publishing profile indicator is still relevant to ERA.

**Q27**

The research income indicators are still relevant to ERA.

**Disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

Research income is an 'input' measure and is a dubious and unreliable surrogate for the quality or impact of the resultant research, and should not be confused with a genuine measure of outcomes. Research income reflects the cost of doing particular kinds of research. For example within ecology, a theoretical ecologist may require access to advanced computing capabilities supported by their institution or available through national research infrastructure. In contrast, an ecologist studying Antarctic ecosystems may require substantial funding for field equipment and access to marine research vessels. The cost of the research (reflected in the research income they attract) provides no information about the quality or impact of either of these research activities. It's the equivalent of judging the quality of a painting based on the volume of paint used in its creation.

**Q28**

The applied measures are still relevant to ERA.

Patents

Comment:

**No response**

None of these applied measures are valid for ecology, where applied outcomes are commonly public good such as the adequate protection or conservation of a threatened species or ecosystem.

Page 8: ERA Methodology /3

**Q29**

Respondent skipped this question

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

**Q30**

Respondent skipped this question

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?

**Q31**

Respondent skipped this question

The ERA low volume threshold is appropriate.

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**Q32**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q33**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q34**

Respondent skipped this question

What are the limitations of a census date approach?

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**Q35**

Respondent skipped this question

Would a by-line approach address these limitations?

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**Q36**

Respondent skipped this question

What are the limitations of a by-line approach?

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**Q37**

Respondent skipped this question

ERA adequately captures and evaluates interdisciplinary research.

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**Q38**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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Page 9: ERA Methodology /4

**Q39**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q40**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q41**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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Page 10: ERA Process /1

**Q42**

Respondent skipped this question

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**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**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.

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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

**Q48**

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

provide clarity to the Government and the Australian public about how their investments in university research translate into tangible benefits beyond academia?

Comment:

**A moderate amount**

The EI provides an opportunity not available in the ERA to showcase the impact of research beyond academia.

promote greater support for the translation of research impact within institutions for the benefit of Australia beyond academia?

Comment:

**A small amount**

We measure what we value, and we value what we measure. The EI provides an opportunity to measure research impact, and in this way it enhances the value of this kind of work and incentivises institutions to support research engagement.

Page 12: EI Policy /2

**Q49**

**Respondent skipped this question**

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

**Q50**

**Respondent skipped this question**

What impact has EI had on:

**Q51**

**Respondent skipped this question**

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

**Q52**

**Neither agree nor disagree**

The EI outcomes are valuable to you or your organisation.

**Q53**

**Respondent skipped this question**

How else could EI outcomes be used?

Page 13: EI Policy /3

**Q54**

**Agree**

The current Engagement definition is appropriate.

**Q55**

**Agree**

The current Impact definition is appropriate.

**Q56****Agree**

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****Yes,**

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

If you answered 'yes', please explain your answer.:  
Uptake and outcome

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Page 14: EI Methodology /1

**Q59****Yes,**

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

Please explain your answer.:  
The codes are broad enough to capture multiple fields, which is important given that within certain fields, not all research can lead to 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****Neither agree nor disagree**

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

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Page 15: EI Methodology /2



**Q65**

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

**Disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

The engagement indicators are inadequate for ecology as there are limited commercial outcomes for ecological research, and few end-users able to invest directly in research. A number of the engagement indicators are also related to input measures (cost of research) that have no bearing on the resultant quality or impact of the research.

**Q66**

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

**Disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

See response to Q4.16

**Q67**

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

**Disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

See response to Q4.16

**Q68**

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

**Yes,**

If you answered 'Yes', please outline the metrics. If you answered 'No', please explain your answer.:

Policy developments, on-ground action changes, increased awareness at public and end-user levels, and tool/framework developments.

**Q69**

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

**Respondent skipped this question**

**Q70**

Should any of the current engagement metrics be redesigned?

**Respondent skipped this question**

**Q71**

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

**Agree,**

Please explain your answer.:

Co-supervision of HDR students is an example of engagement and collaboration beyond the limited viewpoint of financial metrics.

**Q72**

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

**Respondent skipped this question**

**Q73**

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

**Strongly agree,**

Please explain your answer.:

The narrative approach is vital to enable the assessment of research engagement beyond a simple focus on financial metrics and outcomes. Research engagement is often a non-standard and non-linear process that varies on a case by case basis. In this context, a narrative approach is appropriate to capture and assess the activity.

**Q74**

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.

**Respondent skipped this question**

**Q75**

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

**Disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

A single submission may not be able to capture the breadth of impact resulting from a broad discipline area. It would be appropriate for institutions to have the option of submitting more than one submission per broad discipline if they choose to do so.

**Q76**

The engagement narrative needs to be longer.

**Respondent skipped this question**

**Q77**

Additional evidence is needed within the narrative.

**Respondent skipped this question**

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Page 17: EI Methodology /4

**Q78**

The narrative approach is suitable for describing and assessing Impact.

**Agree,**

Please explain your answer.:

The narrative approach is appropriate to assess impact, given that pathways to impact are often non-standard and non-linear processes that vary on a case by case basis.

**Q79**

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.

**Respondent skipped this question**

**Q80**

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

**Disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

A single submission may not be able to capture the breadth of impact resulting from a broad discipline area. It would be appropriate for institutions to have the option of submitting more than one submission per broad discipline if they choose to do so.

**Q81**

The impact narrative needs to be longer.

**Neither agree nor disagree**

**Q82**

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

**Respondent skipped this question**

**Q83**

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

**Yes**

**Q84**

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

Indicator 1

**Research findings/tools adopted by on-ground managers (multiple fields)**

Indicator 2

**Links formed across researchers, managers, policy makers, etc (multiple fields)**

Indicator 3

**Tailored reports or popular articles for accessibility and understanding (multiple fields)**

Page 18: EI Methodology /5

**Q85**

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

**Neither agree nor disagree**

**Q86**

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.

**Respondent skipped this question**

**Q87**

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

**Disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

A single submission may not be able to capture the breadth of impact resulting from a broad discipline area. It would be appropriate for institutions to have the option of submitting more than one submission per broad discipline if they choose to do so.

**Q88**

The approach to impact narrative needs to be longer.

**Neither agree nor disagree****Q89**

There is a need for additional evidence to be provided.

**Neither agree nor disagree****Q90**

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

**Respondent skipped this question**

Page 19: EI Methodology /6

**Q91**

The engagement rating scale is suitable for assessing research engagement.

**Respondent skipped this question****Q92**

The descriptors for the engagement rating scale are suitable.

**Respondent skipped this question****Q93**

The impact rating scale is suitable for assessing impact.

**Respondent skipped this question****Q94**

The descriptors for the impact rating scale are suitable.

**Respondent skipped this question****Q95**

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

**Respondent skipped this question****Q96**

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

**Respondent skipped this question**

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**

Respondent skipped this question

How often should ERA occur?

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**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?

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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**

Respondent skipped this question

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

**Q107**

Respondent skipped this question

In your view, what data sources could ERA utilise?

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**Q108**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q109**

Respondent skipped this question

Are there efficiencies that could be introduced?

---

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?

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**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.

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**Q113**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q114**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q115**

Respondent skipped this question

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

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**Q116**

Respondent skipped this question

DOIs should be mandatory for ERA.

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**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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