

Universities Australia Submission to the Productivity Commission's Draft Report on Data Availability and Use

December 2016

Universities Australia (UA) thanks the Productivity Commission for the opportunity to provide feedback to the Draft Report on Data Availability and Use. As UA noted in our submission to the issues paper, universities play an essential role in driving Australia's open data agenda through their research programs, as producers and users of vast amounts of data in their own right, and as educators of Australia's data analysts and data scientists.

We recognise the potential for the nation, and understand the imperatives behind the range of reforms proposed. Universities Australia is supportive of the report's consideration of the legislative framework required to create a regulatory environment that allows greater access and use of data, particularly for research and decision-making purposes.

We note the report's discussion on ethics processes (Draft Recommendation 5.4) and look forward to working with the Commission and other appropriate groups on concerns raised.

Universities are already investing in developing and enhancing their data handling capacity and expertise in order to make progress on the data availability agenda. Given this current investment and their understanding of the issues within their institutions, it is important that the sector is involved in discussions regarding incentives, including the prioritisation of funding (Draft Recommendation 9.9).

The sector recognises that implementing the vision of the report will require considerable expertise, resources and cross-sector co-operation, and Universities Australia looks forward to working with Government and others to realise that vision.

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