

APA Forum: Enhancing Access to Australian Research

Communiqué

Preamble

1. The APA 2014 Forum was held in Canberra on Tuesday 25 November 2014.
2. The participants of the Forum were chief representatives of peak bodies in the research arena in Australia, spanning the roles of government funders, universities and research institutes, the academies and academic communities, libraries and repositories, and publishers.
3. The aim of the Forum was to understand the perspectives of these key stakeholders in relation to the opportunities and challenges of Open Access:
 - a) publishing articles
 - b) publishing data
4. All participants acknowledged that the APA Forum was the first time in Australia that all key stakeholders had come together to discuss Open Access.

Research arena

5. Through the course of discussions, participants jointly acknowledged the following challenges impacting the integrity and quality of research output:
 - a) resourcing and institutional support for the peer review process
 - b) how to ensure ethical research conduct
6. These issues impact upon the quality of evidence-based public policy and practice.

Infrastructure

7. Issues identified by participants included considerations around the following:
 - a) workflows for researchers/authors, in order to ensure that OA 'works'
 - b) strategies to facilitate compliance
 - c) enhancing data across the research system
 - d) retrospective digitization of research outputs, including books

Policy

8. All participants acknowledged that Open Access is a policy driver for government.
9. Policy challenges are:
 - a) Maximizing access in a sustainable way that recognizes the investments made by all parties, and protecting copyright
 - b) Peer-review is recognized as not being perfect at all times, whilst it is probably the best quality control measure available and yet there are institutional pressures on the peer-review system
 - c) Maintaining balance in assessing research value and taking into account an increasing array of measures of 'impact'

Access

10. The advantages of Open Access are recognized by all the stakeholders.
11. How to achieve sustainable Open Access is a key challenge.

Economics of Research

12. There is a need to identify the right economic models and recognizing that there may be numerous models in order to meet varied requirements of stakeholders
13. On-going challenges to support Open Access are:
 - a) The task and cost of managing repositories;
 - b) The role of editors and reviewers underpins the system but the academic community considers this requires more acknowledgement in practice, in order to relieve the pressures within the system

Outcomes and Ongoing Role

14. Forum participants acknowledged that they each have a stake in:
 - a) Research integrity
 - b) Robust infrastructure
 - c) Appropriately aligned incentive structure
15. Forum participants agreed:
 - a) To reconvene in November 2015 to see what changes and progress have occurred for each stakeholder in the global and local arena
 - b) To collaboratively identify further opportunities and challenges