



21 December 2006

The Commissioner
Public Support for Science and Innovation
Productivity Commission
PO Box 80
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

Dear Commissioner

I am writing on behalf of the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) to comment on the Productivity Commission's draft report titled "Public Support for Science and Innovation". My comments are directed towards section 5.7 of the draft report titled 'Scientific Publishing, and Draft Finding 5.1 which recommends that several impediments to innovation be addressed including "published papers and data from ARC and NHMRC-funded projects should be freely and publicly available".

CAUL welcomes initiatives to develop policies for public access to Australian research and supports the specific initiative in draft finding 5.1. CAUL is confident it can support these developments in public policy through its contribution to the provision of a high quality, stable and reputable online information infrastructure for Australian higher education research.

A key part of CAUL's mission is to provide access to and training in the use of scholarly information, which is vital to the quality of research. CAUL members contribute to research outcomes in universities by maximising information resources available to members. CAUL's 2007-2009 strategic plan outlines its goals and actions in supporting research activities in universities. University libraries have a long tradition of supporting researchers through the provision of research collections, bibliometrics, research skills training and document delivery services.

In the last decade, university libraries have supported innovation in research support through the establishment of research repositories and alternative publishing channels. These developments have attracted significant project funding from the Department of Science, Education and Training under the broad umbrella of its Accessibility Framework. CAUL members have collaborated on several projects that can provide complementary or alternative options to traditional scientific publishing. These include:

- ARROW (Australian Research Repositories Online to the World)
- APSR (Australian Partnership for Sustainable Repositories)
- RUBRIC (Regional Universities Building Research Infrastructure Collaboratively)

The federal government's decision to implement the Research Quality Framework has further highlighted the role of institutional research repositories, with the Minister for Education, Science and Training announcing over \$25 m funding for an Australian Scheme for Higher Education Repositories programme.

President: Eve Woodberry, *University Librarian, University of New England*

LPO Box 8169
Australian National University
Canberra ACT 2601

Telephone +612 6125 2990
Fax +612 6248 8571

caul@caul.edu.au
eve.woodberry@une.edu.au
<http://www.caul.edu.au/>

CAUL members support the recommendation in draft finding 5.1, and note that the ARC has recently implemented a voluntary scheme for its 2008 Discovery Grants whereby researchers will be encouraged to deposit research outputs in an institutional repository and be required to give reasons if they decide not to follow this course of action. This encouragement is an important step in policy development for wider access to research information. CAUL supports the submission to this inquiry by the Scholarly Publishing & Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) which lists specific parameters to realise a stable and predictable regime for public access to publicly funded research.

CAUL wishes to make the strong point that the infrastructure required to realise draft finding 5.1 is well developed in Australia. Many Australian university libraries have well developed institutional repositories in production. Thirteen universities require doctoral and master's research students to deposit digital versions of theses into an institutional repository. One Australian university (QUT) mandates the deposit of research into its institutional repository. There is evidence that this research is discovered and used. For example, the ARROW Discovery Service provides access to thousands of research outputs in institutional repositories around Australia. Statistics show increasing use of the openly accessible research outputs.

I thank the Commission for the opportunity to comment on this report.

Yours sincerely,

Eve Woodberry
CAUL President

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