ERA policy

Value of ERA

Q3.1 To what extent is ERA meeting its objectives to:

a. 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. [*A very large amount; A large amount; A moderate amount; A small amount; Not at all. Please explain your answer.]*

   Moderate amount: ERA is certainly rigorous and, because it assesses all research across a university, it does provide a reassuring framework for taxpayers. However, we do not see ERA influencing industry, government or community expectations or understandings around the excellence of Australian research. It is primarily only the university sector that takes an interest in ERA and the outcomes.

b. Provide a national stocktake of discipline level areas of research strength and areas where there is opportunity for development in Australian higher education institutions. [*A very large amount; A large amount; A moderate amount; A small amount; Not at all. Please explain your answer.]*

   Moderate amount: Looking across a discipline will show which universities are, on the metrics, stronger, and there is clarity about what research areas are being pursued by particular universities. But the data is not used so much as opportunity for development; rather, universities aim to reinforce the scores that are already high rather than develop in new areas. If anything, universities worry about getting a low score, which makes them less likely to develop new areas of research. Universities try not to submit in fields perceived as scoring weakly, and universities may even abandon those fields as research areas.

c. Identify excellence across the full spectrum of research performance. [*A very large amount; A large amount; A moderate amount; A small amount; Not at all. Please explain your answer.]*

   Moderate amount: ERA captures grant income and publication quantity, which is then assessed either through citations or – more pertinent to the fields InASA represents – peer review. The peer review approach is a vital form of quality assurance, where assessors are genuinely assessing the quality of research excellence. However, it is hard to say that this is effective across a full spectrum of research – particularly if institutions are gaming the system (more details in other questions) or if assessors or institutions are using publishers or metrics as proxies for excellence. ERA may disproportionately have adverse effects on regional universities or other smaller departments where excellent research is being conducted, but on a smaller scale or more focused on the local/national – which is less likely to be assessed as at or above world standard. All of these challenges point to why rigorous peer review is vital for quality assurance.

d. Identify emerging research areas and opportunities for further development. [*A very large amount; A large amount; A moderate amount; A small amount; Not at all. Please explain your answer.]*

Moderate amount: The 2012 and 2015 ERAs served this purpose: universities identified areas of strength (4 or 5) and areas of potential opportunity (3) and focused their attention there. But since ERA 2018 the strategies have been around reinforcing the strengths more so than identifying emerging areas. As said above, it is risky to invest in a new area because universities do not want to attain low ERA scores. Indeed, fields of research seen to have performed weakly are often abandoned as research areas rather than invested in.

e. Allow for comparisons of research in Australia, nationally and internationally, for all discipline areas. [*A very large amount; A large amount; A moderate amount; A small amount; Not at all. . Please explain your answer.]*

Moderate amount: ERA allows for easy comparisons within fields of research and units of assessment nationally – with some important caveats – but there is no way to use this as a baseline internationally. Those caveats: 1. ERA does not adequately assess excellent research being done on a small scale, and 2. It is hard to compare across peer-reviewed and citation disciplines, but worryingly, many institutions do.

Q3.2 The ERA objectives are appropriate for meeting the future needs of its stakeholders. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Neither agree nor disagree: This depends on what objectives are being considered. ERA does serve as a benchmarking exercise for research excellence. In that sense, if the stakeholders are tax payers seeking accountability for research funding, then it meets the objectives. But that said, stakeholders like the government or end users do not tend to refer to ERA in their public statements or in their choice of institutions for research partnerships. Moreover, since ERA is evaluating past performance, this is not necessarily reflective of what can meet 'future needs' of stakeholders.

a. If you disagreed with the previous statement, what should the primary purpose of ERA be going forward? [*Please explain your answer.]*

Q3.3 What impacts has ERA had on:

a. the Australian university research sector as a whole

ERA has reshaped university priorities and practices around research. On the positive side, it has established robust expectations around research excellence. Because the HASS disciplines are peer-reviewed, the ERA process itself has served as a relatively objective exercise to assess research excellence from the body of work put forward by each institution. It has also strengthened the reporting and value of NTROs. Finally, in some ways it has reminded smaller universities of their research responsibilities by providing this external measure of success.

However, these benefits have come at a significant cost because the sector as a whole has taken a more conservative approach to research and become metrics-driven, as well as sought ways to game ERA. While the extent of these practices have varied depending on the institution, we know that the following have occurred:

1. **Using publisher as proxy for research quality. This means relying either on the outdated and repealed 2010 ERA journal rankings, Scimago, professional association rankings and judgements based on the prestige of an institutional press.**
2. **Hiring practices have changed, where only those candidates who have track records aligned with the above, often unspoken publishing parameters, even get a look in. This has disproportionately and adversely impacted on the opportunities for ECRs.**
3. **Reclassifying staff whose outputs were not in top tier publications as teaching focussed so that their outputs would no longer be counted in ERA.**
4. **Focus on hiring research-only staff in permanent and/or contract positions, which has accelerated the casualisation of the teaching workforce.**
5. **Peer review is what makes the HASS assessment so rigorous and we 100% support retaining peer review. However, because citation disciplines are easier to 'measure', ERA has contributed to a perception that HASS research is inferior to STEM.**

b. individual universities

Policies and practices are varied, with some universities taking much more aggressive ERA strategies than others. There is a common trend towards implementing workload policies which allocate research hours or points to staff. The requirements in HASS disciplines focus heavily on where they publish – some universities use a carrot approach, incentivising publication in Scimago Q1 or formerly ERA 2010 A*/A ranked journals. Others use a stick, reducing workload allocations when people publish in journals or publishers not ranked as highly. Some universities have developed their own journal rankings or publisher lists (often heavily based on the repealed ERA 2010 journal rankings). Finally, there is the gaming of ERA through multiple means, but especially:

1. Strategically recoding outputs where possible. Outputs of high quality are usually coded towards research areas that the University wants to buttress, while those of low quality are usually 'dumped' into other FoR codes but with just enough to be under the evaluation threshold.

2. Reclassifying outputs deemed weak (usually due to publisher prestige or journal ranking) from HERDC reportable outputs (A1, B1, C1) to other classifications (A2, B2, C2) so that they do not get included in the ERA data.

3. Hiring fractional appointments from overseas. Usually on .4 professorial salaries, these academics get flown to Australia for a few weeks of the year. In some instances, there are genuine collaborations with researchers in Australia; in others the connection is more tokenistic. But regardless, by purchasing these people on contracts the university gets to use their entire track records in their ERA data. The extent of this practice varies, with some universities pursuing it aggressively and others not even doing it.

c. researchers

As universities have aligned their research strategies with ERA and particularly around publishing, researchers have gone along with this agenda. That means only targeting certain journals or other publishers so that they are competitive for jobs and to maintain their research allocations. This is not to say that researchers should not aim for top publications, but there are plenty of good reasons to publish in a variety of journals. Some of the middle-ranked journals are read by more specialist audiences or may be the official journal of an association like InASA, and therefore have wider readership. The metrics-driven approach makes research inherently more conservative and may penalise research that is local or even national (e.g. many of the 'top' international HASS journals are not interested in Australian content). The pressure on researchers to publish only in top journals is harder for ECRs, as there is less scope for them to build a track record, climbing in quality like a ladder. Finally, as mentioned above, there are many researchers who have been pushed into teaching focused roles. As universities have invested more in established researchers, there have been fewer job opportunities for ECRs, who are increasingly only being offered casual teaching.

d. Other?

All of the above points to ERA driving universities to take a more STEM approach to research publications and measuring research quality. What makes the assessment of HASS research so rigorous is the peer review aspect, so it is vital to emphasise and strengthen this message across the tertiary sector.

Q3.4 How do you use ERA outcomes? [*Please describe.]*

As an association, InASA does not use ERA outcomes. We know our members may refer to them in job, promotion or ARC applications, but research environment is not the same as an ERA score. We also know that ERA has worried many of our members because international research is more highly valued than national or local research, which are core to our interdisciplinary field (Australian Studies).

Q3.5 ERA outcomes are beneficial to you/your organisation. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Neither agree or disagree: ERA outcomes do not have any bearing on InASA. However, to reinforce a point made in the previous question: the international focus of ERA has the potential to disadvantage Australian-

focused researchers and disciplines. For instance, none of the journals in Australian literature are ranked in the top tier of Scimago (and as of 2019, nor are any of the journals in Australian history). When universities take metrics and rankings as surrogates for quality, this may have adverse effects on researchers and therefore has career and research implications for scholars working in Australian Studies.

Q3.6 Do you have any suggestions for enhancing ERA's value to you/your organisation? *[Please explain your answer.]*

As an association, InASA's interests lie in supporting our members who work across the interdisciplinary fields of Australian Studies and supporting our journal, the *Journal of Australian Studies*. We therefore have an interest in ensuring that our journal is consistently ranked highly in Scimago and other ranking systems. We must ensure that the *Journal of Australian Studies* is not disadvantaged by the trend towards reading international outlets as a proxy for quality, so that universities will support researchers to publish there. All of this is a flow-on effect of how ERA has shaped research and researcher publishing practices.

ERA methodology

ERA methodology at a glance

Q3.7 The current methodology meets the objectives of ERA. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Agree: The peer review methodology is vital in HASS disciplines and meets the objectives. It also accounts for contextual indicators, including NTROs. We do note, though, that peer review can be challenging because it is somewhat subjective and it is time consuming. It is vital to emphasise the importance of rigor and fairness to assessors so that they do not read publisher or university status/prestige as proxy for quality.

Q3.8 What are the strengths of the overall methodology? *[Please describe.]*

Peer review ensures rigor and that publisher or metrics are not being used as proxies for quality. Unlike citation disciplines, it genuinely is an assessment of research quality rather than quantity.

Q3.9 What are the weaknesses of the overall methodology? *[Please describe.]*

The volume of work for ERA assessors can be high. Income can also be a challenging differential depending on the discipline, as certain fields of research more commonly attract external income than others. The methodology also lends itself to gaming – such as the strategic classifying of outputs into certain FoR codes or classifying lower ranked publications as C2/C3 or B2/B3 so that they are not assessed.

Citation analysis methodology

Q3.10 The citation analysis methodology for evaluating the quality of research is appropriate. *[Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Neither agree nor disagree. InASA's membership is primarily researchers in HASS disciplines where citation analysis is less relevant. However, we do question the robustness of citation analysis methodology which is based heavily on numbers of citations, rather than examining where or how citations are being used.

Q3.11 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?

The discipline-specific approach is vital because it reflects what are, genuinely, quite different practices and norms for research in HASS and STEM. However, having two different approaches does make it difficult for comparable evaluation across all disciplines. Citation disciplines tend to be achieving higher ERA scores. We attribute this to the fact that peer review is examining the quality of the outputs, rather than applying metrics. This makes peer review more robust.

Q3.12 What are the strengths of the citation analysis methodology? [*Please describe.]*

Q3.13 What are the weaknesses of the citation analysis methodology? [*Please describe.]*

There is no accounting for self-citation and negative citations (e.g. citing something which is actually being challenged). Sometimes researchers have arrangements where they cite each other's work.

Q3.14 Can the citation analysis methodology be modified to improve the evaluation process while still adhering to the ERA Indicator Principles? [*Yes/No.]*

a. If you answered 'Yes', please describe how the methodology could be improved.

Peer review methodology

Q3.15 The peer review methodology for evaluating the quality of research is appropriate. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Strongly Agree. Efforts at ranking journals in the HASS disciplines have consistently proven problematic. This is especially the case in an interdisciplinary field like Australian Studies because often the work is best suited to journals focused on Australia (even though international in reach) or Australian academic publishers. Those publishers and journals will rarely be seen as the top in the world, but the quality of the work is still outstanding and should be judged as such through peer review.

Q3.16 What are the strengths of the peer review methodology? [*Please describe.]*

Peer review in HASS fields means that there should not be a rigid interpretation of journal rankings or publishers, as the ARC has

recognised. The emphasis should be on the quality of the work, which is a genuine assessment of research excellence.

Q3.17 What are the weaknesses of the peer review methodology? [*Please describe.]*

Peer review is time consuming, particularly when there is a high volume of work. Readers and universities looking for shortcut use may use metrics, rankings and university prestige as a substitute for quality, disregarding the how peer review is meant to work.

Q3.18 Can the peer review methodology be modified to improve the evaluation process while still adhering to the ERA Indicator Principles? [*Yes/No.]*

YES

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

If the two major challenges are volume of work and reading publisher as proxy for quality, then any changes need to target these problems. One way to do so is to facilitate evaluation of a percentage of outputs, rather than all of them. This would reduce the volume of work for assessors and have the flow-on effect of ensuring that they do a deep evaluation, rather than reading publisher outlet as proxy for quality. Moreover, it would be beneficial to have more resourcing available for peer review, starting with more time. Finally, instructions for assessors can always be re-evaluated and improved to ensure that peer reviewers are being fair and unbiased in their evaluations.

Contextual indicators

Q3.19 The volume and activity indicators are still relevant to ERA. [Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]

Agree. In and of themselves, the volume and activity indicators are useful for benchmarking disciplinary standards and expectations. However, to the degree that universities are tying ERA outcomes to workload models, volume and activity indicators are being mechanistically applied to other purposes for which they were not designed.

Q3.20 The publishing profile indicator is still relevant to ERA. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Agree. As above, the publishing profile indicator is useful for benchmarking standards in ways that differ from discipline to discipline. For instance, government reports might be highly valued in some disciplines while books are highly valued in others.

Q3.21 The research income indicators are still relevant to ERA. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Agree. As above all the contextual indicators are relevant and useful for benchmarking *within* disciplines but may not be relevant for benchmarking *across* disciplines.

Q3.22 The applied measures are still relevant to ERA:

a. Patents. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Neither agree nor disagree. In HASS disciplines this applied measure is not so relevant to ERA, but that said, it does not tend to factor highly in the final evaluations anyway.

b. Research commercialisation income. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Neither agree nor disagree. In HASS disciplines this applied measure is not so relevant to ERA, but that said, it does not tend to factor highly in the final evaluations anyway.

c. Registered designs. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Neither agree nor disagree. In HASS disciplines this applied measure is not so relevant to ERA, but that said, it does not tend to factor highly in the final evaluations anyway.

d. Plant breeder's rights. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Neither agree nor disagree. In HASS disciplines this applied measure is not so relevant to ERA, but that said, it does not tend to factor highly in the final evaluations anyway.

e. NHMRC endorsed guidelines. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Neither agree nor disagree. In HASS disciplines this applied measure is not so relevant to ERA, but that said, it does not tend to factor highly in the final evaluations anyway.

ERA rating scale

Q3.23 The five-band ERA rating scale is suitable for assessing research excellence. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Agree. In principle the 5-band scale is as suitable as any other kind of scale. The problem, however, is that the meaning of the scale shifts with each ERA iteration. In ERA 2012 most universities understood a 4 to be a strong outcome, and a 3 was an acceptable one. By ERA 2018 universities were widely setting targets for 4s and 5s, whereby 4 was an acceptable rather than strong score and 3 was a poor score. If all universities are setting high targets for 5s it becomes a meaningless score. In fact, at many universities ERA scores have become part of senior management KPIs. As more institutions only want 4s and 5s, the flow-on effect is that anything that has consistently achieved a 3 or lower is unlikely to be submitted in that field in the future.

Q3.24 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 excellence? [*Yes/No.]* **YES**

a. If you answered, 'Yes', please explain how the rating scale can be modified to identify excellence.

This is a more complex question than a mere yes/no. HASS fields have not substantially improved, in part because of the rigor that peer review brings to the process, which is harder to game. As identified above, universities have targeted their research priorities into the areas that have already been identified as at or above world standard. In areas that would be below world standard, they do their best to ensure that they do not meet the threshold levels. Therefore, it is not surprising that 90% of evaluations are now at or above world standard. Changing the rating scale would be unfair because if that research is at or above world standard, the standard should not be raised. If anything, this has demonstrated how ERA has become an exercise in directing university research priorities and practices. Perhaps ERA is now a redundant, unnecessary exercise.

ERA low-volume threshold

Q3.25 The ERA low-volume threshold is appropriate. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Agree. It is not fair to evaluate universities when there may be, say, one researcher in a field. The problem is how universities have been using the low-volume threshold to manipulate FoR codes.

Q3.26 Are there ways in which the low-volume threshold could be modified to improve the evaluation process? [*Please describe.]*

There needs to be a stricter implementation of FoR codes so that the low-volume threshold is genuinely about where there is low volume, rather than a dumping ground for outputs that an institution does not want evaluated. One option to avoid the above-below threshold issues would be to discard the system where everything is evaluated, and only to evaluate a high-quality portion.

ERA staff census date

Q3.27 What is the more appropriate method for universities to claim research outputs—staff census date or by-line? *[Please explain your answer].*

By-line. To go even further: for staff to be counted they should be Australian residents for tax purposes. That will stop gaming through the employment of overseas academics on fractional contracts.

Q3.28 What are the limitations of a census date approach? [*Please describe.]*

Poaching of researchers across institutions before the census date in order to buy their entire track record – even though the bulk of the work was funded by another University (through salaries and possible internal grants).

Q3.29 Would a by-line approach address these limitations? [*Yes/No. Please explain your answer.]*

Yes it would, because those outputs produced before moving institutions could not be counted towards the new institution. A by-line approach would also limit the purchasing of overseas' researchers' track records.

Q3.30 What are the limitations of a by-line approach? [*Please describe.]*

For various reasons, researchers do not always have a byline (e.g. an NTRO or a book chapter may not include biographies and affiliations). There would need to be some flexibility in this approach to capture those instances. Also, there would need to be considerations for pre-print, long publication queues, and the fact that then authors/publishers could be put under pressure to constantly fiddle with by-lines.

ERA interdisciplinary research and new topics

Q3.31 ERA adequately captures and evaluates interdisciplinary research. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Disagree. While interdisciplinary research can be captured through multi-coding outputs, still the evaluations are in specific fields of research. This is not a major problem per se; in an interdisciplinary field like Australian Studies, most researchers see themselves grounded within a particular field of research.

a. If you disagreed with the previous statement, how could interdisciplinary research best be accommodated? [*Please describe.]*

   The new FoR codes may help capture interdisciplinary research, but universities will always classify research in the areas they prioritise.

ERA and Indigenous research

Q3.32 My institution would meet ERA low-volume threshold in Indigenous studies at:

a. Two-digit? *[Yes/No. If you answered 'yes', please list which ones.]* **N/A**

b. Four-digit? [*Yes/No. If you answered 'yes', please list which ones.]* **N/A**

Q3.33 In ERA, the best approach for evaluating Indigenous Studies is *(choose one)*:

a. Using established ERA methodology i.e. the low-volume threshold would apply to the Indigenous Studies discipline and all its specific disciplines

b. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies by combining low-volume disciplines into single units of evaluation

c. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies by combining low-volume disciplines into two units of evaluation (one unit comprising Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences disciplines and one unit comprising Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics disciplines)

d. Other. *[Please describe.]*

   These are important questions, and InASA supports evaluating Indigenous Studies – which will likely be facilitated more by the new FoR codes in this field. However, InASA believes it is most appropriate for Indigenous researchers and associations specifically in this field

(e.g. AIATSIS, the National Centre for Indigenous Studies) to answer these questions about what is the best approach.

Q3.34 What would be the advantages and/or disadvantages of your preferred approach for evaluating Indigenous studies in ERA? [*Please describe.]*

ERA process

Collection of ERA data

Q3.35 ERA should move to an annual collection of data from universities. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Neither agree nor disagree. The answer to this question is contingent on some of the other answers to earlier questions. For instance, under the current system of census date the annual collection of data would minimise some of the gaming (e.g. poaching of researchers) because the data would be a genuine reflection of the work conducted at the university in a given year. But if there is a shift to a byline approach, this concern becomes moot. If there is a shift to annual collection, it must be emphasised that the evaluation of the data should not be annual.

Q3.36 What would be the advantages and/or disadvantages of an annual data collection? [*Please describe.]*

The research offices can better speak to the advantages and disadvantages from a systems and implementation process. As indicated above, an advantage would be yet another process that makes it harder for institutions to game ERA. However, a significant disadvantage could be new pressures on researchers to guarantee regular outcomes in every year, which would not suit all research methodologies or disciplines (e.g. in fields where monographs are a measure of value but take several years to eventuate).

Publication of ERA data

Q3.37 In future ERA rounds, should the volume of outputs submitted for each unit of evaluation be included in the National Report?

a. Yes, [*Please explain your answer*.] **YES: This is important for transparency.**

b. No, [*Please explain your answer.]*

Q3.38 In future ERA rounds, research outputs should be published with their assignment to specific disciplines following completion of the round. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Agree. This would be important in the interests of transparency. We would also advocate publishing the volume that is under threshold. For instance, when universities have 49 outputs in one FoR, just under the evaluation threshold, it is usually code for it being a dumping ground. This should be publicised.

a. What would be the advantages? *[Please explain your answer.]*

b. What would be the disadvantages? *[Please explain your answer.]*

Q3.39 What other data do you think the ARC should publish following an ERA round? [*Please describe.]*

1. **For each university we would like to see staffing data published for each academic level. This data is published for the entire FoR code, but it is important to see the breakdown of staffing levels at each institution.**
2. **Similarly, it would be valuable to see the outputs and income per staff level. Some universities are now taking the average number of weighted publications and the average amount of annual income for each FoR code and calling that the sector benchmark, and that factors into workload allocations. But it is unclear what that means – should a Level B, C, D or E academic be attaining that so-called benchmark? Having more data for accurate benchmarking will help researchers to argue their strengths in promotions, grants and job applications.**
3. **As above, the number of outputs submitted by each institution in each FoR code – including those that were not evaluated because they were under the low-volume threshold.**

We understand that these issues revolve heavily around the ways universities are using ERA which may be beyond what ERA was designed to do. However, any decisions around ERA's operation and methodology *must* consider the flow-on consequences for researchers and institutions.

Section 4—Engagement and Impact Assessment

EI Overview

Q4.1 Considering that EI is a new assessment, to what extent is it meeting its objectives to:

a. encourage greater collaboration between universities and research end-users, such as industry, by assessing engagement and impact? *[A very large amount; A large amount; A moderate amount; A small amount; Not at all. Please explain your answer.]*

Small amount. Collaboration between universities, researchers and end users was already happening. However, the EI assessment has encouraged more transparency and documentation around these collaborations. Moreover, the artificial separation of Engagement and Impact – which really are two sides of the same coin – does not adequately tell a story about the application of research beyond academia.

b. provide clarity to the Government and the Australian public about how their investments in university research translate into tangible benefits beyond academia? [*A very large amount; A large amount; A moderate amount; A small amount; Not at all. Please explain your answer.]*

Small amount. The EI exercise has provided transparency and detailed case studies about some of the ways in which researchers are translating research investments into benefits beyond academia. However, we have not seen Government, media or the Australian public engage with this information in a substantial way. Moreover, the metrics used for EI, which draw heavily on ERA data, are not designed to measure EI.

c. identify institutional processes and infrastructure that enable research engagement? [*A very large amount; A large amount; A moderate amount; A small amount; Not at all. Please explain your answer.]*

Not at all. More often than not, researchers are developing partnerships with end users without there being clear institutional processes or infrastructure in place. The EI exercise is not designed to capture this because the metrics used, derived from ERA data, do not speak to this in all disciplines.

d. promote greater support for the translation of research impact within institutions for the benefit of Australia beyond academia? *[A very large amount; A large amount; A moderate amount; A small amount; Not at all. Please explain your answer.]*

Small amount. Universities now speak to the importance of Engagement and Impact and many have even established portfolios to support researchers in EI activities. However, this is primarily lip service – university priorities still follow the ERA/quality agenda and there is little on the ground support for researchers doing EI activities.

e. identify the ways in which institutions currently translate research into impact? [*A very large amount; A large amount; A moderate amount; A small amount; Not at all. Please explain your answer.*]

Small amount. Universities are only beginning to develop mechanisms to record and measure how researchers are translating research into impact. It has also been uneven across disciplines, with HASS areas finding it particularly challenging. For instance, HASS research impact often is about contributing to public awareness and debates or takes longer to measure. There is a lot of confusion around the difference between Engagement and Impact, which could be resolved if these were seen as two parts of the same process rather than as separate measurables.

Q4.2 The EI objectives are appropriate for the future needs of its stakeholders. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Disagree. This is a question primarily for stakeholders to answer. However, we have not seen any demands for EI from stakeholders/end users, and some of them are baffled by the over-determined approach which creates more paperwork (e.g. documentation of engagement and impact activities) and obscures the actual collaboration and their real-world impact. Moreover, the fact that EI measures past activities means it is hard to assess how the assessment is meeting the 'future needs' of stakeholders.

Q4.3 What impact has EI had on:

a. the Australian university sector as a whole? [*Please describe.]*

The impact of EI has been uneven across institutions and fields of research. Generally speaking, institutions need more time to develop mechanisms to document and communicate EI activities. Moreover, the weighting of 'approach to impact' does not accurately reflect the fact that the sector as a whole has not yet developed the tools to record and communicate the wide range of EI being done.

b. Individual universities. [*Please describe.]*

Some universities are more advanced than others in this space, with some developing policies (e.g. around academic workloads) to encourage EI activities while others are still prioritising the ERA/quality agenda. For those institutions that are investing in EI, it is also unevenly applied. For instance, some are already picking what they see as their case studies and only devoting resources there, rather than trying to resource EI across the board.

c. researchers. [*Please describe.]*

Many researchers were already doing a range of EI activities, as evidenced by the high successes in EI 2018. However, researchers are now being more explicit about their EI activities in grant, promotion and job applications. In HASS, they are also thinking through outputs beyond the traditional journal articles and books (e.g. submissions to inquiries, exhibitions, reports to end users). These are all positive developments, but they require institutional support. As mentioned

above, universities are still prioritising traditional sorts of metric driven outputs and it sometimes feels like the quality/ERA agenda is competing with the EI agenda.

d. other sectors outside of academia? [*Please describe.]*

HASS researchers have traditionally worked with end users from the GLAM sector, community groups and government. EI as an assessment has not changed how researchers or universities engage with these groups. Much of their decisions are based on funding available, institutional priorities and the existing relationships between researchers and staff in the end users' institutions. Many of these end user organisations – particularly community groups which are often volunteer-run and short on resources – have no understanding or interest in the EI assessment and just want to get on with the work together.

Q4.4 How do you, or your organisation, use EI outcomes? [*Please describe.]*

As an organisation, InASA does not use EI outcomes.

Q4.5 The EI outcomes are valuable to you or your organisation. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Strongly disagree. Of course, the assessment is of interest to our members and if they do have outputs or activities that they wish to promote, we include them on our website and email circulars. However, the outcomes produce no value to our organisation, particularly as the assessment is limited in what they measure.

Q4.6 How else could EI outcomes be used? [*Please describe.]*

As an observation, the EI outcomes are only of interest to tertiary institutions and even there they are being used unevenly to support (or not) researchers through funding and workload allocations.

EI definitions

Q4.7 The current Engagement definition is appropriate. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree.]*

Strongly agree.

a. If you don't agree, what are your suggested amendments to the Engagement definition? [*Please describe.]*

Q4.8 The current Impact definition is appropriate. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree.]*

Agree.

a. If you don't agree, what are your suggested amendments to the Impact definition? [*Please describe.]*

Q4.9 The current end-user definition is appropriate. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree.]*

Disagree

a. If you don't agree, what are your suggested amendments to the end-user definition? [*Please describe.]*

The definition itself is okay, but the term 'end-user' is not something used by the sorts of organisations HASS researchers partner with. A term like 'stakeholder' or 'research partner' would be much more appropriate.

b. 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.]*

Yes. There are often end-users who have honorary or fractional appointments at universities. For instance, in HASS disciplines, there are people who are employed at museums and have a part-time appointment at the university. The definition needs to be amended to facilitate counting those persons as end users when they are working in that non-university capacity.

Q4.10 Are there other key terms that need to be formally defined? [*Yes/No. If you answered 'Yes', please explain your answer.]*

No.

EI methodology

Unit of assessment

Q4.11 Are the two-digit Field of Research codes the most appropriate method to define units of assessment for Engagement and Impact? [*Yes/No. Please explain your answer.]*

This is an area where our association has not arrived at a consensus. Assessing at the two-digit FoR code may not adequately capture to what extent EI activities are or are not happening at an institution because there are so few cases examined. On the other hand, as this is a newer assessment, and it is assessing work already done in the past, assessing at the two-digit code gives more flexibility for institutions to select from the work already done. A good compromise option would be to continue with the two-digit FoR codes for the next EI but to expand to four-digit codes after that.

Q4.12 Are there other ways to classify units of assessment in EI, for example, SEO codes? [*Yes/No. Please explain your answer.]*

No. We do not support using SEO codes. This would be inconsistent with ERA, and researchers usually see their work classified around FoR codes rather than SEO codes.

Selectiveness of EI

Q4.13 Should there be more or fewer units of assessment per university? [*More units of assessment; The same number as in EI 2018; Fewer units of assessment.]*

a. How many and why? *[Please explain your answer.]*

Similar to the above, we would support the same number as in EI 2018 for the next EI, but with the possibility of expanding this in future

rounds once universities have more entrenched practices to encourage, capture and disseminate EI.

EI low-volume threshold

Q4.14 The EI low-volume threshold should continue to be based on the number of research outputs submitted for ERA. *[Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree.]*

Strongly agree.

a. If you disagree, how should eligibility for assessment in EI be determined? [*Please explain your answer.]*

Q4.15 The low volume threshold is set at the appropriate level. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Strongly agree. It is important that the thresholds be consistent with ERA so that they are not just focused on quality, but also EI. In other words, if they are doing the work for ERA then they should equally be doing EI work. However, we would like to see scope for universities that do not meet the threshold to submit EI case studies voluntarily. This would benefit institutions which have smaller programs in particular FoR codes but where the researchers are undertaking significant EI work.

Engagement indicators

Q4.16 Overall, the engagement indicator suite for the assessment of research engagement is suitable. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Disagree. The indicator suite is not a problem per se, but it does not accurately reflect the engagement that goes on. Often HASS researchers are working with government or community organisations where there is no exchange of income and therefore the engagement would not be captured by the suite of indicators. Indicators need to be able to account for types of engagement which do not have financial transactions involved.

Q4.17 The cash support from research end-users indicator using HERDC data is appropriate for the assessment of research engagement? [*Strongly agree; agree; neither agree nor disagree; disagree; strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Neither agree nor disagree. As above, it is appropriate as *an* indicator, but lots of end-users do not exchange money so this needs to be captured too

Q4.18 The research commercialisation income is appropriate for the assessment of research engagement. [*Strongly agree; agree; neither agree nor disagree; disagree; strongly disagree. Please explain your answer]*

Neither agree nor disagree. This is more relevant for STEM disciplines. It does not hurt HASS disciplines having it there, but generally it is not relevant.

Q4.19 Are there additional metrics that would be appropriate across many or all disciplines? [*Yes/No. If you answered 'Yes', please outline the metrics. If you answered 'No', please explain your answer.]*

There need to be additional metrics which are not specifically about money. This may be something as simple as a list of organisations with research partnerships and explanations of the nature of those partnerships, or encouraging more formal MoUs.

Q4.20 Are there alternative metrics that would be appropriate across many or all disciplines? [*Yes/No. Please specify the metrics.]*

The solution is less about alternative or additional metrics and more about reconceptualising Engagement and Impact as being seen together, rather than measured as separate items.

Q4.21 Should any of the current Engagement metrics be redesigned? [*Yes/No. If you answered 'Yes', which ones and how?]*

The current assessment which separates out Engagement, Impact and Approach to Impact needs to be redesigned to combine these all. That way the case study narratives can speak to all aspects of Engagement, Impact and Approach to Impact because they genuinely are all pieces of the same story, rather than separate measurable components.

Q4.22 The co-supervision of HDR students should be made an engagement indicator in future rounds of EI. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Strongly disagree. Many universities have limits on who can be a supervisor (e.g. having a PhD qualification) which already limits this indicator. Other institutions are encouraging more HDR candidatures to have an end user supervisor for the very reason of playing into EI – in a sense a form of gaming. If all universities adopt this practice then this indicator just becomes meaningless.

Q4.23 In your opinion, are any of the ERA applied measures appropriate indicators of research engagement in EI?

a. Patents. [*Yes/No. Please explain your answer.]*

No. This may be appropriate in STEM disciplines but certainly is not in HASS fields.

b. Research commercialisation income. [*Yes/No. Please explain your answer.]*

No. This may be appropriate in STEM disciplines but certainly is not in HASS fields.

c. Registered designs. [*Yes/No. Please explain your answer.]*

No. This may be appropriate in STEM disciplines but certainly is not in HASS fields.

d. Plant breeder's rights. [*Yes/No. Please explain your answer.]*

No. This may be appropriate in STEM disciplines but certainly is not in HASS fields.

e. NHMRC endorsed guidelines. [*Yes/No. Please explain your answer.]*

No. This may be appropriate in STEM disciplines but certainly is not in HASS fields.

Engagement narrative

Q4.24 The narrative approach is suitable for describing and assessing research engagement with end-users. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Strongly agree. The narrative is the most significant part of the EI assessment because it is where the institution can explain what engagement activities really do happen and which are not captured in the income-focused metrics. The Engagement and Impact narratives should be combined, though, as they are both sides of the same coin rather than two separate processes.

a. If you disagree, what alternative approach could be used to replace the narrative? [*Please explain your answer. If you are suggesting indicators, please be specific.]*

Q4.25 One engagement submission per broad discipline is sufficient for capturing the research engagement within that discipline. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Strongly Agree. As above, we believe the Engagement and Impact narratives need to be combined to capture the level of research engagement, as tied to impact, in each discipline.

Q4.26 The engagement narrative needs to be longer. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Strongly Agree. In addition to combining with impact, there needs to be more space because so much engagement activity is not linked to the indicators and money. There needs to be more scope to detail these non-financial engagement (and impact) activities.

Q4.27 Additional evidence is needed within the narrative. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer*.]

Strongly agree.

a. If you agreed, what evidence should be provided? [*Please describe.]*

As above, the engagement and impact narratives need to be combined. The narrative can then speak to the different organisations being partnered with, the nature of the collaborations, and the impacts generated.

Impact narrative

Q4.28 The narrative approach is suitable for describing and assessing impact. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Strongly agree. We do offer two important caveats: 1. As indicated throughout this submission, we believe Engagement and Impact need to be combined rather than separated into two different narratives, and 2. Approach to Impact should be incorporated into the Impact narrative rather than separated as a discrete area for assessment.

a. If you disagree, what alternative approach could be used to replace the narrative? [*Please explain your answer. If you are suggesting indicators, please be specific.]*

Q4.29 One impact study per broad discipline is sufficient for capturing the research impact within that discipline. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer*.]

Neither agree or disagree. Our association does not have a consensus view on this. We believe that one impact study per discipline is not necessarily sufficient to capture the research impact in the discipline. Moreover, requiring only one impact narrative per discipline could encourage universities to invest heavily only in one project rather than supporting impact across the discipline. However, we are also conscious that as this exercise is measuring activity already done, universities may not have enough scope to deliver more than one impact case study per discipline. Having only one case study gives more flexibility to choose the best. If there is an expansion to more than one case study, we suggest it be phased in and that the number of required case studies be pro rata based on the number of outputs submitted for ERA or FTE staff.

Q4.30 The impact narrative needs to be longer. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Neither agree or disagree. As indicated earlier, we encourage a combined engagement and impact narrative which would need to be longer. However, in its current form, the issue is not the length of the narrative so much as the organisation of it.

Q4.31 There is a need for additional evidence to be provided within the narrative. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Neither agree or disagree. As above, the narrative needs to be more flexible in what is incorporated rather than necessarily longer. We also recommend that approach to impact be incorporated into the impact narrative rather than have its own narrative.

a. If yes, what evidence should be provided? [*Please explain your answer.]*

Q4.32 In your opinion, are there quantitative indicators that could be used to measure the impact of research outside of academia? [*Yes/No. Please explain your answer.]*

Yes. This will be very case study specific.

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

This will be very case study specific. In cases where there are quantitative indicators, these can be incorporated into the narrative.

Approach to impact Narrative

Q4.33 The narrative approach is suitable for describing and assessing approach to impact. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Strongly disagree. The approach to impact is often repetitive to what is in the case study narrative and the engagement narrative.

a. If you disagree, what alternative approach could be used to replace the narrative? [*Please explain your answer. If you are suggesting indicators, please be specific.]*

As this is just another component of a bigger story, it should be incorporated into the impact narrative rather than have its own narrative.

Q4.34 One approach to impact narrative per broad discipline is sufficient for capturing the activities within that discipline. *[Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Strongly agree. While our association believes there should not be a separate approach to impact narrative, if it is retained then it would be consistent for the broad discipline.

Q4.35 The approach to impact narrative needs to be longer. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Strongly disagree. The approach to impact narrative should be eliminated and incorporated into the Impact narrative.

Q4.36 There is a need for additional evidence to be provided. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Strongly disagree. There is already scope to provide sufficient evidence in the Impact and Approach to Impact narratives.

Q4.37 Would there be benefit in combining engagement and approach to impact? [*Yes/No. Please explain your answer.]*

Yes. This is our most significant recommendation for EI: Engagement and Impact need to be combined rather than assessed as two separate processes. Engagement is part of the research process which then generates impact. Moreover, many activities that HASS researchers undertake – e.g. submissions, reports, exhibitions, media – can be seen as examples of Engagement and/or Impact depending on how they are framed, documented and measured. Thus it is very hard to separate out these activities, particularly as they occur hand in hand over time.

EI rating scales

Q4.38 The engagement rating scale is suitable for assessing research engagement. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Strongly disagree. For consistency with ERA – and to provide more differentiation in assessments – we recommend a five-point scale.

Q4.39 The descriptors for the engagement rating scale are suitable. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Neither agree or disagree. We have no strong opinions on the descriptors on the rating scale but acknowledge that they would need to be adjusted if a five-point scale is adopted (as we recommend).

Q4.40 The impact rating scale is suitable for assessing impact. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Strongly disagree. For consistency with ERA – and to provide more differentiation in assessments – we recommend a five-point scale.

Q4.41 The descriptors for the impact rating scale are suitable. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Neither agree or disagree. We have no strong opinions on the descriptors on the rating scale but acknowledge that they would need to be adjusted if a five-point scale is adopted (as we recommend).

Q4.42 The approach to impact rating scale is suitable for assessing approach to impact. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Strongly disagree. Approach to impact should be eliminated as a discrete category and be incorporated into the assessment of impact. If it is retained, then as above we recommend a five-point scale.

Q4.43 The descriptions for the approach to impact rating scale are suitable. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree or disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Strongly disagree. Approach to impact should be eliminated as a discrete category and be incorporated into the assessment of impact. If it is retained, then as above the descriptors would need to be adjusted if a five-point scale is adopted (as we recommend).

EI interdisciplinary research

Q4.44 Should EI continue to include an interdisciplinary impact study in addition to the two-digit Fields of Research impact studies? [*Yes/No. Please explain your answer.]*

As an interdisciplinary association, we strongly believe that EI should continue to include an interdisciplinary impact study. The new FoR codes which have more interdisciplinary fields may facilitate this more easily. However, we are also conscious that universities are unlikely to put forward case studies where they are optional because they are risk averse and do not want to risk attaining a low score. There need to be clear benefits for universities to encourage them to take up this option.

EI and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research

Q4.45 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? [*Yes/No. Please explain your answer.]*

Yes, the same low-volume threshold should be applied for consistency. However, as indicated earlier, we recommend an opt-in option for

institutions that do not meet the threshold but still wish to put forward this or any other FoR for assessment.

Q4.46 Should the unit of assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research include engagement in EI 2024? [*Yes/No. Please explain your answer.]*

Yes. We strongly support this because engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is the underlying principle for any ethical research in this area. Similar to above concerns, though, this cannot be so dependent on financial and quantitative data for indicators because often there is no money exchanging hands.

Section 5—Overarching Issues Common to both ERA and EI

Frequency of ERA and EI

Q5.1 How often should ERA occur? [*Every three years; Every five years; Other, please specify. Please explain your answer.]*

Our association does not have a consensus for this but believe either every three or five years. A longer period of time would be of benefit in HASS fields where often much attention is placed on monographs and these take longer to produce. Moreover, a five-year cycle would allow for the periods under assessment to overlap such that the end of the previous cycle becomes the start of the next cycle. This is useful for measuring research continuity and strengths over time. However, the three-year cycle would be consistent with current practice and would alleviate the problems identified in the next question.

Q5.2 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? [*Please explain your answer.]*

During the intervening years, universities and researchers would in essence be 'locked in' to the previous ERA results. This could have ramifications in promotion applications or workload allocations. While these are instruments that ERA was never designed to influence, we cannot divorce the reality of how ERA results affect researchers on the ground within institutions and being locked into results can have ramifications that take longer to alter. Moreover, universities will be less likely to invest in fields of research for improvement if it is a gamble that takes five years to pay off (or not).

Q5.3 How often should the EI assessment occur? [*Every three years; Every five years; Other, please specify. Please explain your answer.]*

For consistency with ERA, EI should occur the same frequency as ERA. That said – while there is a strong case for ERA to remain in a three-year cycle, for EI a five year cycle may be more beneficial because impact can take longer to generate.

Q5.4 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? [*Please explain your answer.]*

Similar to ERA, a longer cycle will have results locked in and this can have ramifications for the careers of researchers in particular disciplines. However, the advantage of a longer cycle for EI is that – for HASS disciplines in particular – it often takes longer to measure impacts of research and a longer cycle will allow extra time to gather that data.

Streamlining and simplifying ERA and EI

Q5.5 ERA and EI should be combined into the one assessment. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Strongly agree. Currently universities prioritise ERA/quality over EI. Partly this is because ERA is more established and partly it is because ERA links

more to the types of metrics used in international university rankings. Putting ERA and EI together makes universities more prone to take EI seriously. In fact, not only do we advocate combining the two assessments, but we recommend having an additional ranking. So there would be rankings for quality, engagement, impact and 'Overall' which assesses how these all combine and work together. That would really encourage universities not to see ERA and EI as competing, but rather as all part of the package of research excellence.

a. What would be the advantages and/or disadvantages? [*Please explain your answer.]*

The only disadvantage would be the extra workload of preparing so many narratives at once. However, this could be alleviated if EI were streamlined into one narrative (as we recommend). As indicated above, the key advantage is to ensure that ERA and EI receive equal priority from universities.

Q5.6 Are there other ways to streamline the processes to reduce the cost to universities of participating in ERA and EI? [*Yes/No. Please explain your answer.]*

Yes. Combine Engagement and Impact as a single step evaluation with one narrative. This would also eliminate the separate 'approach to impact' narrative, which would instead be weaved into the common EI narrative. For ERA, consider allowing the submission of only a percentage of research outputs for peer review, rather than the entirety of outputs. This would substantially reduce the workload for assessors and also make them less prone to take shortcuts such as reading publisher as proxy for quality.

Q5.7 In your view, what data sources could ERA utilise? *[Please explain your answer.]*

Q5.8 In your view, what are the most time-consuming elements of an ERA submission? [*Please describe.]*

In the submission process, the most time-consuming elements are the drafting of the narrative and the allocation of FoR codes (which is necessary for outputs but also lends itself to gaming). In the assessment exercise the most time-consuming element is the peer review. We absolutely support retaining peer review but suggest more time and resourcing be devoted to it.

a. Are there efficiencies that could be introduced? *[Yes/No. Please describe.]*

Yes. For peer review, allow only a percentage of material to go forward for evaluation. When it comes to FoR codes, have more pre-determined FoR codes. This would reduce the scope for gaming and the work associated with coding outputs.

Q5.9 In your view what are the most time-consuming elements of an EI submission? [*Please describe.]*

Preparing the multiple narratives is the most time-consuming element, as well as trying to interpret and explain the data to meet the limited terms of evaluation.

a. Are there efficiencies that could be introduced? *[Yes/No. Please describe.]*

Yes. Combine Engagement and Impact into one common narrative. Eliminate 'approach to impact' as a separate category and narrative, instead incorporate it into the other narrative.

Utilising technological advances and pre-existing data sources

Q5.10 ORCID iDs should be mandatory for ERA. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Neither agree nor disagree. ORCIDs are a new tool which are only now being taken up in HASS disciplines, but in an uneven and haphazard way.

a. What are the advantages and/or disadvantages? [*Please explain your answer.]*

We have no strong opinions on this but do caution to think through the consequences of anything like ORCIDs in terms of how they may or may not open ERA up to further gaming.

Q5.11 The automatic harvesting of output data using ORCID iDs would streamline a university's submission process. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Neither agree nor disagree. Not everything is captured in an ORCID, such as books and book chapters, and not all journals automatically translate across to authors' ORCIDs.

a. What are the advantages and/or disadvantages? [*Please explain your answer]*

Similar to above, we are just conscious that any changes need to be thought through about the consequences for gaming and for researchers. For individual researchers there will be extra burden to ensure their ORCIDs are always up to date.

Q5.12 DOIs should be mandatory for ERA. [*Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.]*

Disagree. Many outputs – books, book chapters, NTROs – do not have DOIs. All of the eligible outputs are already captured annually by HERDC, so it makes sense to stick with that.

a. What are the advantages or disadvantages? [*Please explain your answer.]*

This will create yet another layer of work for researchers to go back and track down DOIs for outputs when they may not have recorded it. If it reduces the scope for gaming (e.g. ensuring that outputs cannot be recoded) then that would be an advantage.

Q5.13 Are there new 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? [*Yes/No. Please explain your answer.]*

No. As an association we do not have any specific response to this question. However, we again emphasise that before the ARC adopts any new data collection or reporting requirements they need to consider the consequences for universities and researchers. This means considering how universities may attempt to game any processes and how there may be unintended policies or practices implemented within universities which adversely influence research practices and behaviour.

a. What are the advantages and/or disadvantages? [*Please explain your answer.]*