

Combining Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) and the Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC)

Consultation paper:
Australian Research Council
Department of Education

Submission by the Australasian Research Management Society Inc.



**Australasian Research
Management Society**

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ABOUT ARMS

The Australasian Research Management Society (ARMS) is the professional society for specialists in management and administration of research. Founded in 1999, the ARMS network has grown to involve more than 2000 people from universities, research agencies and institutes, medical research institutes, R&D corporations, research centres, government departments, funding bodies, industrial R&D teams, service providers, commercialisation bodies and consultancies.

ARMS is an international organisation dedicated to the professional development of research managers and administrators, the promotion of the profession of research management and the enhancement of the research enterprise.

PREFERRED MODEL

Thank you for inviting comment on the preferred model for a single Federal Government research data collection, with implementation commencing 2016-2017.

ARMS is the professional society for specialists in management and administration of research across Australian, New Zealand and Singapore. In this submission we offer a research administration perspective on the proposal.

We note that ARMS, through its wide member networks and professional groupings, is exceptionally well placed to contribute to the discussion from both an operational and strategic level.

ARMS recognises that the sector as a whole shares the Australian Government's commitment to fostering and rewarding Australia's university research excellence, effort, and capacity. It is important, we believe, that performance monitoring and reporting for institutions is both as simple and as equitable as possible.

We wish to make four points.

- 1) Reduction in research collection data submissions is strongly supported. This is in-line with our commitment to efficient administration processes.
- 2) ARMS endorses the aim of the PhillipsKPA *Review of the Reporting Requirements for Universities* to reduce the administrative and reporting burden that current falls to Universities. The growth in regulatory and reporting requirements means institutions spend considerable time and resources on process that often duplicate data requirements.
- 3) We are not convinced that a single data collection point would in fact reduce the workload. While it intuitively would appear to be the case, ARMS argues that this approach needs much more consideration of the specific details and mapping of the processes before such a conclusion can be draw. We strongly argue this ought not to be a working assumption but rather a proposal to be rigorously tested.
- 4) There are other streamlining opportunities available through (1) alignment of the ERA and HERDC eligibility criteria, (2) inclusion of non-traditional research outputs (NTROs) in both ERA and HERDC.

FINAL COMMENTS

We provide in-principle support for the streamlining of the HERDC and ERA collections, while recognising that the devil is in the detail. We therefore support the development of a robust set of principles that will drive the development of a new collection system/s. This includes a consultation process that can sufficiently test the various potential outcomes from a redesigned data collection system.

We also strongly encourage the Department to provide sufficient consultation and review time for institutions during the development period. ARMS looks forward to providing any further input into this initiative.