

Submission to the Evaluation of *Knowledge and Innovation* Reforms
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There are two issues that we wish to comment upon:

3.2 The role of publications

The outcome of all research should be its contribution to knowledge and its impact in terms of fostering change in behaviour, policy or processes. Refereed publications are a poor proxy for this, but are the only universally accepted criterion. If there is an increase in quantity of publications, it is a worldwide phenomenon and is, in all likelihood linked to university selection, tenure and promotion criteria and the overall explosion of information sources. The change in the Australian IGS formula three years ago is unlikely to have had any discernable effect on this worldwide trend.

Impact of research output cannot be measured through citations. Much high-quality and high-impact research in the social and behavioural sciences (as well as the humanities and some parts of other areas) is not published in journals, which citation counts measure. Rather, they are published as book chapters or monographs. In some fields, social science theory and methodology are developed much more through these outlets than through journal articles, which tend to involve the publication of smaller pieces of empirical research. Furthermore, many research findings published through reports to government, policy documents, in journals read by practitioners or policy makers rather than other academics, have great impact in changing behavior, policy or practices that can impact upon millions of people

Citation indices privilege certain kinds of research (short empirical studies), certain fields (those which use journal outlets predominantly, certain kinds of outlets (some journals) and certain readers (academics) over others. We would be extremely opposed to any suggestion that citation indices should become a proxy for “quality”. Any proposal to use citation count or Citation Index measures would not be relevant or appropriate for the social sciences.

In our view, the current performance based funding formula should either remain as is, or publications be removed from the funding formula completely. We would not favour an RAE-type process, as any potential benefits would be far out-weighted by the excessive cost and time dedicated to such an exercise, money and time that could be better devoted to increasing the funding for research and to freeing researchers to carry it out.

3.3 Equal weighting of research income

The apparent intent of this change was to assist in creating an appropriately entrepreneurial culture. Since only 20% of block grant funding is driven by NCG's it appears that the strategy of equal weighting of income has both encouraged and recognized the wide range of funding for research that is sourced by Australian researchers, and encouraged them to become more entrepreneurial and outward focused in their search for funding. To return to a privileging of NCG's over other sources of research funding would create exactly the opposite signals to those apparently intended: namely, that funding from government sources is valued above funding from non government sources and sources outside Australia.

We applaud the statement that "The Knowledge and Innovation" framework was intended toprovide the support and encouragement to... produce excellent research that ... contributes to the social, intellectual and economic well-being of the nation. This requires recognition the contribution that Australia's social sciences and humanities research already make to these objectives and that this too needs to be further nurtured." The proposals to reweigh NCG's and to use citations as an index of quality have the potential to disadvantage social and behavioural science research even further than it already is.

We look forward to seeing suggestions from the review team for how such nurturing of the social sciences and humanities might take place. In this regard the formation of separate Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council(s) as has occurred in Canada and the United Kingdom is worthy of consideration. These councils which have the mandate not only of assessing, and funding research applications, but also of leadership in setting the agenda for social science and humanities research are have been effective in gaining the confidence to social science and humanities researchers that the research agenda operates from a broad base and supports and values all disciplines.