



Australian Academy of the Humanities
Submission to *Draft National Strategy for International Education*
Consultation Paper, June 2015

The Australian Academy of the Humanities (AAH) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the draft *National Strategy for International Education* (the Strategy). The AAH strongly endorses the development of a strategic approach to international education, and in particular the broad scope of the Strategy which is inclusive of research, teaching, infrastructure, workforce development, student and researcher mobility, and services for international students in Australia.

The AAH is a national contributor to strategic thinking, innovative planning, and effective programming for international engagement in higher education research and scholarship. As one of Australia's four Learned Academies, a key role of the Academy is to provide independent expert advice to government and policy makers, promoting the social significance of humanities scholarship and its importance in shaping effective public policy. The AAH appreciates the acknowledgement in the Strategy of the contribution made by the Learned Academies to support international collaboration by Australian researchers. The AAH maintains relations with a wide range of international bodies concerned with the humanities to promote the international status of Australian humanities research and teaching; operates grants and awards programmes in support of international research collaboration and mobility; and conducts research, data collection and analysis to inform strategic policy and planning.

In responding to the Strategy, the AAH has drawn on a number of research projects we have undertaken over the past five years, specifically directed at promoting excellence and better understanding the quality and depth of international collaboration in the humanities and the broader research system. They are recommended to the Department and detailed in Appendix A. Referenced throughout this submission are three reports in particular, *Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia*¹ (2014), *Measuring the Value of International Collaboration*² (2015) as well as the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) report led by AAH Fellow, Professor Ien Ang FAHA, *Smart Engagement: Leveraging Language, Research and Culture*³ (2015). A further report, *The Humanities in the Asia Region: Capacity for Research Collaboration*⁴, is currently in preparation with the aim of strengthening collaboration between researchers in Australia and Asia.

This submission focusses on a number of key themes, outlined below, and has been developed in consultation with both Academy Fellows and early- and mid-career researchers in the humanities. The Academy welcomes the opportunity to be involved in further consultation, and would be pleased to elaborate on any of the observations contained in this submission.

1. Underpinning principles

The AAH considers that the principle of reciprocity should be explicitly referenced in the Strategy.

The AAH endorses the focus on quality as one of the foundational tenets of the engagement strategy. Australia's reputation for excellence forms the foundation for our international engagement – both at a research and a teaching level. Any strategy looking to build on our current international success should ensure that maintaining this standard and reputation of excellence is a top priority. International research collaboration has a central role to play in ensuring the ongoing excellence of Australian tertiary education institutions, and enhancing the international reputation of Australia's education and research systems.

The Strategy's emphasis on the public benefits of international education, which are acknowledged by the Minister as extending "well beyond the mainstay of our economy", is particularly welcome. A fuller understanding of the social and cultural benefits will be vital for building an informed policy and planning process.

The AAH considers that the principle of reciprocity should be explicitly referenced in the Strategy. The *Smart Engagement with Asia* report (2015) also notes that "smart engagement" strategies mean "more than the pragmatic emphasis on economic benefit". It means "working towards nurturing wide-ranging, long-term, deep and mutually beneficial relations, based on the principle of reciprocity".⁵ The AAH considers that an effective, long-term strategy must be underpinned by the principle of reciprocity – Australia will continue to benefit from its international engagements in direct correlation to the quality and substance of what we in turn contribute/offer.

2. Strategic policy development for whole of system

To maximise its effectiveness for the nation, the Strategy should aim to develop capabilities for international education and research engagement across the whole of system. This will require strategic planning and support across the disciplines; as well as a coordinated approach between education and research responsibilities.

Currently there is no overarching education and research strategy for the whole of the system in Australia. The Chief Scientist's development of a national science strategy for STEM is to be highly commended; there is also need to ensure proper planning and strategic support for the humanities, arts and social sciences (HASS), the other half of our research system. Together with their STEM colleagues, HASS researchers and teachers are vital to the success of the international education system.

HASS teaches 65% of Australia's university students, with 55% of the nation's teaching workforce. Across the university sector, two HASS fields – Management and Commerce (26%) and Society and Culture (21%) – have the largest share of enrolments.⁶ International enrolments in Management and Commerce have underwritten growth across the entire system, with just over half of all enrolled students in Management and Commerce being overseas students in 2011, up from a little over a third in 2002.

HASS produced 34% of the nation's research outputs, and contributed 42% of the total number of units of evaluation in ERA 2012. HASS researchers comprise 42% of the research workforce.

In noting the value of international education to Australia, the Strategy highlights the vital role of international education for the Australian economy as a whole. It is equally vital at the institutional level. International enrolments in HASS disciplines, particularly in Management and Commerce, underpin the provision of STEM disciplines and HASS disciplines of low enrolment at the institutional level through significant cross-subsidies for research, for lab-based teaching and research training, and for languages of low enrolment offered in the national interest. It is essential that initiatives designed to expand private provision for international students take full account of their possible impact on Australia's international standing in STEM and in HASS disciplines provided in the national interest, including Asian languages.

Australia's future depends on building our strategic knowledge of the societies and cultures of key interest to Australia such as our geographical neighbours and trading partners. The humanities – together with the arts and social sciences – contribute this vital knowledge. For example, 67% of research outputs in ERA 2012 that had an Asia focus were from HASS fields.⁷ A standing capability in language and culture expertise is required for us to respond usefully and appropriately to emergent interests.

The AAH encourages the Department to reference the full range of world quality research in Australia in the Strategy. Of the top five broad fields of research in the last Excellence in Research (ERA) for Australia in 2012 (those with the highest numbers of a ranking of 5 or 'well above world standard'), two are from the humanities: History and Archaeology; and Language, Literature and Communication.⁸

A whole of system strategy will also require a coordinated approach between education and research responsibilities and international engagement, currently spread between several portfolios. The draft Strategy evidences a strong understanding of the international education side of the equation, but the research component less so – for instance, the level of data analysis underpinning the Strategy. The Coordinating Council for International Education will play an important role in ensuring that the division in portfolio responsibilities across research, science, international engagement and diplomacy is not inadvertently reflected in the final Strategy.

3. Building enabling capacities in languages and intercultural literacy

To achieve long-term benefits in international education, Australia needs to build the enabling capabilities in linguistic and cultural expertise. There is a critical need for strategic assessment of Australia's capacity to deliver on the objectives outlined in the Strategy, including a national plan for languages and intercultural literacy.

The Strategy recognises that developing Australia's capabilities in languages and intercultural literacy will be vital to facilitating the outward mobility of Australian students and researchers, and will also improve the integration of international students and researchers into Australia. The AAH applauds the goal of rejuvenating and strengthening language teaching and learning.

However, if more Australian students are to learn languages other than English, there is an urgent need for a national strategy for supporting Languages Other Than English (LOTEs) in

Australian universities, especially in regional centres where languages provision is disappearing.

The *Mapping HASS* report found that there has been an increase of some 5,000 EFTSL over the 2002-2011 period in language enrolments in Australian universities, reflecting a positive increase in student interest in languages and some important structural initiatives undertaken by institutions over that time, including a university entry bonus for Year 12 language study, and the introduction of a Diploma of Language allowing for concurrent study with an undergraduate degree.⁹ A recent initiative, involving the Languages and Cultures Network of Australian Universities (LCNAU), and funded by the Office for Learning and Teaching, will develop a national language studies portal to provide potential and current students with information about language study options across the sector.

While there are encouraging signs at the aggregate level, there are concerns relating to capacity at the institutional level in both teaching and research. Improving the quality and quantity of languages education in our universities is also contingent upon workforce planning. Data in the *Mapping HASS* report suggests the language studies workforce shows a high dependence on junior and casual staffing, and a long-term decline in the proportion of senior staff. Taken together, this poses a serious risk to our ability to meet the language goals outlined in the Strategy, most notably 3.2.

The plan for improving languages education in primary and secondary schools will also teacher availability and training. More teachers need to be trained in our universities, equipped both with language skills, and an understanding of new research and approaches to bilingual and immersion programmes. Language offerings in primary and secondary schools are highly dependent on group size and teacher availability, making it common for student learners to be forced to switch languages more than once, leading to them struggling to develop conversational or beyond fluency.

Universities therefore need to be adequately resourced now and in the future with skilled teachers capable of teaching the diverse range of languages. The *Mapping HASS* report also points to worrying signs in relation to research capacity. In ERA 2012, only four Universities submitted UoEs in Languages Studies, down from an already low base of nine UoEs submitted in 2010. As the report notes, 'this, in combination with other factors, raises questions of capacity and sustainability. It is the low number, rather than the reduction per se, that is important here because low numbers implies lack of activity, and stands out against the overall growth in outputs across HASS disciplines between the two rounds' (*Mapping HASS*, p63).

In addition to the need for language support recognised by the Strategy, consideration also needs to be paid to developing strong intercultural literacy among Australians. Language and cultural understanding has applied benefits across the gamut of Australia's international engagement activities, including: multinational and global business endeavours; disaster and humanitarian assistance missions; international diplomacy; and international migration management.

As a national priority, there is an urgent need to undertake capability mapping to inform a strategic assessment of Australia's capacity to deliver on the languages and cultural literacy objectives outlined in the Strategy.

4. Build on strong networks of people-to-people links

The Strategy should aim to understand and build on the potential opportunities offered by diasporic researchers in Australia, as well as the strategic contribution of humanities research and teaching to building bridges of mutual understanding between Australia and international counterparts, including in interdisciplinary collaboration.

Australia's scientists, researchers, artists and cultural professionals are actively working to build international cultural exchange and collaboration for our long-term mutual benefit. In relation to the Asia Pacific region, the recently released *Smart Engagement with Asia* (2015) report finds that many researchers who are at the forefront of building these connections with the region are in fact from the Asian diaspora. "The roles that Australia's Asian and Pacific Islands communities play in wiring Australia into the region through global networking, while often overlooked, is particularly striking."¹⁰ In the research arena, Australia's engagement with China, for example, is strongly led by diasporic researchers (*Smart Engagement*, p97). The Strategy should acknowledge the role being played by diaspora communities in Australia's international education and research engagements, and aim to build upon the potential opportunities offered by diasporic researchers in Australia.

As noted above, "smart engagement" strategies also mean working towards "nurturing wide-ranging, long-term, deep and mutually beneficial relations, based on the principle of reciprocity".¹¹ The humanities fields of education and research have a core role to play here, as is exemplified in the work of Professor Colin Mackerras FAHA, who was singled out for special mention when China's President, Xi Jinping, addressed the Australian parliament in November 2014. The President thanked Mackerras for building "a bridge of mutual understanding and amity between our people". And he praised his "tireless efforts to present a real China to Australia and the world, based on his personal experience of China's development and progress". While trade can play a significant role, Mackerras says that "studying and engaging with another people's culture over a long period fosters a deeper understanding and builds more durable bridges [than trade]".

5. Researcher mobility & workforce development - Early and Mid-Career Researchers

A well-trained and internationally connected research and teaching workforce will enable Australia's access to the vast amount of knowledge discovery which takes place outside our borders, and provide us with the skills to take advantage of new discoveries. There is a role for government in research workforce development, in particular researcher mobility programmes, which have the potential to build our national capacity.

Research has always been a collaborative process, and in today's globalised world is more international than ever. A two-way flow of researchers into and out of Australia is essential to building and maintaining the Australian research workforce.

Over the years, the Academy has administered a number of programmes supporting international collaboration by humanities researchers, mostly directed at the ECR cohort. The Humanities Travelling Fellowships (HTF) scheme has operated since 1985, offering funding to support the travel of early career Australian researchers to visit with potential overseas collaborators and to access scholarly resources held across the world.

These programmes, however, have been necessarily modest in nature as they have been funded from within the Academy's operating budget. The International Science Linkages (ISL) programme was the last government programme to specifically target funds towards supporting international collaboration at the researcher level. It focused on the natural and physical sciences up to 2009, when humanities, arts and social sciences researchers became eligible. None of the programmes or initiatives noted under Strategic Action 2.2 have a scale or international collaboration focus like that of the ISL programme, the evaluation of which found significant direct and indirect benefits for Australia could be attributed to the programme.

The current bilateral focus of the China and India Research Funds is welcome, but to facilitate a broader engagement in the region, there is a need to mobilise and build expertise in a range of bilateral and multilateral engagements. For example, our survey of Fellows in 2014 found many strong engagements between Australian and US or European researchers were on Asian or Pacific topics, suggesting there is much more scope for Australia to broker multilateral research collaborations in its region.

Connecting younger Australian researchers with international knowledge networks is crucial for Australia's future research capacity. Connections, made initially informally through overseas post-doctoral experience or staff exchanges, or conference networking, are developed over time into deeper relationships resulting in formal collaboration – ranging from co-authored publications to jointly funded research projects or centres. Yet most EMCRs have limited funds available for travel, and as such lack the means to establish these connections.

The Measures of Success included in the Strategy include 'increased support for student and researcher mobility' and the AAH would welcome any new initiatives or government support in this area. Building capacity in our EMCRs should be a central tenet of any such programmes – both through direct support but also in encouraging collaboration with senior researchers both here and abroad.

6. Improve data collection and analysis to better understand the opportunities, and improve policy and programme design and evaluation.

In developing a long-term strategy for international education Australia needs to understand the 'how' and 'why' and not simply the 'what' and 'who' – which is where our evaluative processes currently focus. This requires a broader range of robust quantitative and qualitative data to inform policy and programme development and evaluation. Network mapping offers a way to understand the range of interactions, relationships, flows and values associated with international education and research collaboration.

The Academy views with interest the draft Measures of Success in the Strategy, having recently undertaken a research project on measuring the value of international research collaboration.

One of the measures listed refers to 'more high quality joint research relationships and publications'. This represents a very narrow conception of international collaboration, much of which is undertaken informally, or results in outputs not covered by publication impact statistics, particularly for humanities researchers but also scientific researchers. While one of the primary sources of information about international research collaboration is

bibliometric data, it is now widely acknowledged that these data offer a limited evidence base because they do not capture the different modes of collaboration outside co-authorship and cannot help us to fully understand the value, quality or intensity of international engagement. Using publication statistics not only ignores a large volume of the output from collaboration, but it may also serve to discourage collaboration with some partners in regions specifically targeted in the Strategy (Latin America, Africa and the Middle East).

With the increasing tendency to rely on metrics-based evaluation, the Academy would strongly encourage Australian policymakers to be guided by the Leiden Manifesto in this area.¹² Developed by metrics experts the Leiden Manifesto key tenets include the need for a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches; data should be in service to human judgment and analysis; research needs to be evaluated in respect to its mission; and evaluative frameworks need to be attuned to discipline-specific practices.

Recent work undertaken by the AAH for the Department of Industry and Science has examined the need for more nuanced qualitative and quantitative measures in order to better understand the complex networks involved in international collaboration. The project sought to draw from social sector approaches to evaluation, where collaborative partnerships are commonplace as a way of harnessing organisations and resources to achieve outcomes that could not be otherwise achieved.

We would note the need to explore a wider range of data in support of effective programme evaluation. The project also investigated the potential of network mapping – a methodology originally developed in the social sciences – for better understanding the range of interactions, relationships, flows and values associated with international collaboration, offering a way to measure the ‘high quality research relationships’ identified in the Strategy.

7. Case studies

It is important when considering case studies of successful international collaborations, that more often than not they are the result of years spent building up deep partnerships in small ways, through shared staff visits, symposia and conferences, co-publication, student exchanges, and myriad other formal and informal ties.

The AAH is currently finalising a publication which profiles innovative and powerful new research in the humanities, many of which involve international collaboration. A copy of this publication will be forwarded to the Department in the coming weeks.

In the meantime, a sample of international research collaborations in the humanities that have led to significant benefits to Australia and collaborating partner countries is at Appendix B.

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- ¹ Turner, G. and Brass, K. (2014) *Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia*. Australian Academy of the Humanities, Canberra. Available from http://www.humanities.org.au/Portals/0/documents/Policy/Research/MappingProject/txt/Mapping_HASS_Aust_FinalReport_All_Oct2014.pdf
- ² Cahill, T., Brass, K., Fitzgerald, J., Parolin, C. (2015) *Measuring the Value of International Research Collaboration*, a report prepared for the Australian Department of Industry and Science.
- ³ Australian Academy of the Humanities, *The Humanities in the Asia Region*, forthcoming.
- ⁴ Ang, I., Tambiah, Y., and Mar, P. (2015) *Smart Engagement with Asia: Leveraging Language, Research and Culture*. Australian Council of Learned Academies. Available from <http://www.acola.org.au/PDF/SAF03/SAF03%20SMART%20ENGAGEMENT%20WITH%20ASIA%20-%20FINAL%20lo%20res.pdf>
- ⁵ Ang, Tambiah and Mar (2015), p14.
- ⁶ Turner and Brass (2014), p12.
- ⁷ Turner and Brass (2014), p66.
- ⁸ Australian Research Council (2012) Excellence in Research for Australia report, pp193, 199. Available from http://www.arc.gov.au/era/era_2012/outcomes_2012.htm
- ⁹ Turner and Brass (2014), p31.
- ¹⁰ Fitzgerald, J. (2015) Speech at the launch of the *Smart Engagement with Asia* report. Footscray Arts and Community Centre, Melbourne, 5 June 2015.
- ¹¹ Ang, Tambiah and Mar (2015), p14.
- ¹² Hicks, D., Wouters, P., Waltman, L., de Rijcke, S., and Rafols, I. (2015), 'The Leiden Manifesto for Research Metrics', *Nature*, 520, pp. 429–431. http://www.nature.com/polopoly_fs/1.17351!/menu/main/topColumns/topLeftColumn/pdf/520429a.pdf

New Research – International Collaboration in the Humanities

The AAH has initiated a number of research projects in recent years specifically directed at promoting excellence and better understanding the quality and depth of international collaboration in the humanities:

1. *Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia* – the Academy led and authored the project's final report. Co-funded by the AAH, the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, Department of Industry and Science, and the Office of the Chief Scientist, the Mapping HASS report is designed to complement the work on STEM undertaken by the Chief Scientist in the *Health of Australian Science* report (2012).
2. The Australian Research Council (ARC) Learned Academies Special Projects (LASP) funded project *The Humanities in the Asia Region: Capacity for Research Collaboration* is mapping the humanities in the Asia region and identifying opportunities for strengthening collaboration between researchers in Australia and Asia.
3. A report commissioned by the Department of Industry and Science 'Measuring the Value of International Collaboration' which surveyed new and emerging approaches to measuring the values that flow from international collaboration in the research sector.
4. The Academy has also conducted a large-scale survey of the Humanities and Creative Arts (HCA) researchers in 2009-10; and in 2014 a comprehensive survey of its 600-strong Fellowship to ascertain the scope, intensity and breadth of collaboration.

The AAH is also closely involved, along with our colleagues in the other three Learned Academies, in the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) research programme, *Securing Australia's Future* (SAF). Many of the projects undertaken under the SAF programme have an international frame – and seek to understand and maximise Australia's comparative advantages. Of particular note in the context of the development of the Strategy is the recently launched report from the 'Asia Literacy' project led by AAH Fellow, Professor Ien Ang FAHA, *Smart Engagement: Leveraging Language, Research and Culture*.

Humanities case studies

The following is a select sample of the international collaborative work happening in humanities education and research, it is an indicative and by no means exhaustive list.

- [Professor Tessa Morris Suzuki FAHA](#) whose ARC Laureate Fellowship is developing a new framework for observing emerging and significant, but little understood, forms of political activity in rapidly changing areas of Asia. Professor Suzuki was the recipient of a [Fukuoka award](#) in 2013, in honour of her community-based research engagement, which has “formulated a new way forward for regional cooperation, which can reach beyond the national borders, and has contributed to mutual understanding between Asian people” (extract from Fukuoka citation).
- The [ARC Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language](#) is building strong international collaborative networks in linguistics and languages across [North America, the UK and Asia](#).
- [Professor Joseph Lo Bianco AM FAHA](#) whose work focuses on the interrelations of multilingualism, citizenship and identity. Professor Joseph Lo Bianco has been appointed by UNICEF under its Peace Building and Education international project to conduct a research and intervention project on language, social cohesion and peace building in three SE Asian countries: Thailand, Myanmar and Malaysia.
- The network of **Australian Studies Centres**, which have received support from DFAT’s bilateral Councils have been a catalyst for students in Europe, North America, China, Japan, India and Indonesia to develop an engaged knowledge of Australia. There is strong potential for promoting international research collaboration through these networks.
- [Professor David Christian FAHA](#) who is working, with the support of Bill Gates, on the creation of a free online high school syllabus on the [Big History](#). Big History weaves evidence and insights from many scientific and historical disciplines across 13.7 billion years into a single, cohesive story. Professor Christian’s work highlights the strong connections between the humanities and the science curriculum.
- Australia is a world leader in **archaeology** and **cultural heritage**. Just one example is the [Angkor Research Programme](#) at the University of Sydney, headed up by Professor Roland Fletcher. The programme “has taken the study of Angkor from theory, through pure research and applied research, to creating international business opportunities for Australian industry and developing teaching resources on Angkor for the High School curriculum in Australia”.
- The interdisciplinary fields of **environmental humanities** and **digital humanities**. Australia playing a leading role in developing international connections via institutions such as the [Sydney Environment Institute](#) and the [Australian Association for Digital Humanities](#).