



CHASS – the Next Steps

Discussion Paper

**HASS in the Capital
Canberra
3 September 2008**

“This false divide between the arts and science, between the arts and industry, between the arts and the economy: we’ve actually got to put that to bed. As if creativity is somehow this thing which only applies to the arts, and innovation is this thing over here which applies uniquely to the sciences, or technology, or to design. This is actually again a false dichotomy: it’s just not like that. Our ambition should be to create and to foster a creative imaginative Australia because so much of the economy of the twenty-first century is going to require that central faculty.”

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, in his closing address to the 2020 Summit in Canberra on 20 April 2008

Welcome and Introduction

On behalf of the Board of the Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS), I welcome your participation in this process of review of the role and function of CHASS. The lifeblood of CHASS is its membership, and it is appropriate and timely that we ask our membership for structured, in-depth feedback on our performance so far and for delineation of the challenges and opportunities ahead.

The short paper is designed as a discussion starter for ‘CHASS – the Next Steps’. At our meeting on 3 September speakers will be invited to respond to the issues raised in this paper and raise new issues they see as relevant to the current circumstances. There will be opportunities for small-group discussions before a concluding plenary session. Thus the foundations will be established to guide CHASS in the next phase of development.

CHASS: History of Profiling the HASS Sector

1. CHASS was inaugurated in June 2004 against the background of the great successes of science, engineering and technology in engaging government on the need to invest in that sector. This was most clearly borne out in the environment of the Backing Australia’s Ability packages of the early 2000s.
2. CHASS was brought into being by the Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and the Humanities and the Academies of Humanities and Social Sciences (with the strong involvement of a steering committee including Tom Stannage, Malcolm Gillies, Iain McCalman, Andrea Hull, Larissa Behrendt and Sue Richardson). (For all CHASS Boards, see <http://www.chass.org.au/about/board>.) Like subsequent ones, the original board (Malcolm Gillies, Linda Rosenman, John Byron, Julie Dyson, Stuart Hamilton, Andrea Hull, Libby Raupach, Sue Rowley, Tom Stannage and Julie Wells) included members from across our sectors, together with Toss Gascoigne, who made a signal contribution to the identity of CHASS as its inaugural executive director.

3. The objectives of CHASS, enshrined in the Constitution (<http://www.chass.org.au/about/constitution>), are to promote the interests of the humanities, arts and social sciences in Australia. Specifically, the aims of CHASS are to:
 - represent the interests of the sector
 - promote the contribution of the sector to government, industry and the public
 - provide a forum for discussion between the humanities, arts and social sciences sectors in Australia
 - build up the innovative capacity of Australia, through better linkages between this sector, and science, engineering and industry
4. During the first four years, CHASS has attracted a membership base of about 130 organisations – see the list at **Attachment A**.
5. During these four years CHASS has, with its members, helped to build a greater recognition nationally, and especially with government and the media, of the contribution the arts, humanities and social sciences can and do make to a prosperous, innovative, creative and inclusive Australia (to quote our current strategic plan, a copy of which is at **Attachment B**). Particular successes have included:
 - the annual ‘HASS on the Hill’ events, which have given opportunities for HASS people to interact with federal politicians. This included one HASS on the Hill event focused on early career researchers and professionals;
 - development of policy papers on issues such as the commercialisation of research, measuring the quality and impact of research, collaboration with the science and technology sectors, the challenge of multidisciplinary and collaborative research, and more recently design, creative practice and innovation;
 - being consulted by government in their own policy development including on research funding, research classification, and public investment in science and innovation;
 - bringing together groups such as the directors of university research centres, or working with the arts peak bodies, to assist in profiling their work within their institutions and their sectors;
 - establishing a regular media presence through expert commentary and opinion pieces.
6. We would have to admit to less success in engagement with industry, and perhaps a greater focus on research and to some extent creative practice than education. Also, it is perhaps inevitable that a new body, in spending time establishing itself nationally, will look at opportunities to promote itself while promoting the interests of its members. However, partnerships with fellow advocacy bodies, including some who are members, have also not always been achieved as effectively as they could have been.

The Review

7. At the end of 2007, the CHASS Board, recognising the issues mentioned above, and to ensure it was hearing the views of its stakeholders, commissioned a review of CHASS’s operations. The methodology was a focused stakeholder (both members and those we seek to influence) survey with detailed oral feedback against a semi-structured set of questions. Those interviewed were assured of confidentiality, so a copy of the review as a whole cannot be distributed. However the Executive Summary and Recommendations are at Attachment C. The review confirmed the mixed view summarised above – CHASS was broadly seen as successful, particularly with its outreach activities. The review did conclude that it was time for CHASS to revisit its core functions, and target areas where it can add particular value. Convening a membership forum such as this was one of the recommendations.

The New Environment: Challenges and Opportunities

8. We have a new government and new Ministers, specifically Kim Carr, Julia Gillard, and Peter Garrett. As summed up in the statement from the Prime Minister at the start of this paper, the government has new priorities and new attitudes. This provides us with both the opportunity and the need for a new start. Minister Carr, for example, has expressed strong support for the HASS sector, and has moved quickly to give credence to that support with a more balanced approach in key appointments (for example, the ARC Advisory Board, the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) and the team for the Review of the National Innovation System). There is growing evidence of a desire to see a rebalancing of the inputs into research and innovation. For example, a recommendation in the O’Kane review of the Co-operative Research Centres (CRC) program is that humanities and social science CRCs be encouraged.
9. This represents a historic shift in emphases and one for which CHASS, in partnership with many other advocates and organisations in our sector, has been working throughout its short life. However, it carries the challenge that, if HASS perspectives and appointees into government processes are to be effective, there is a need for well-coordinated and strategic activity. This is a major challenge for our diverse and, some may say, quite fragmented sector.
10. Membership growth in CHASS has been healthy and CHASS has been able to secure membership commitments at what it believes is a level necessary for the sustainability of the organisation. This has been through a four-tier membership structure which allows for a wide range of financial commitment reflective of the diversity of the sector. (The structure of our membership is detailed at **Attachment A**.)

Issues for Discussion

11. The growth of membership comes with a greater level of expectation from our membership that its interests and aspirations will be heard and filtered effectively by CHASS. What is the appropriate balance between advocacy, acting vertically as it were, and servicing the membership, horizontally as it were?
12. Do we have the mechanisms in place to insure robust feedback from our membership? How can we ensure, in our representations to government and other stakeholders, the voice of the membership is more fully brought to bear? In other words, how can CHASS be an effective representative of its diverse membership base?
13. When CHASS started, the potential range of policy fields, alliances and stakeholders was, by definition, open. Over the first four years, CHASS has tended to focus very strongly on research policy as it pertains to the higher education sector, with some focus on arts policy and players. While taking into account the limitations of a small organisation with a small secretariat and the ever-present need to prioritise and focus effort, should CHASS focus more on broader higher education issues of relevance to its membership? Should it seek to establish stronger links with the business community? It has often been suggested that the most effective form of advocacy is for a respected and/or influential third party to be publicly supportive and aligned with our interests. The business community has often expressed positions on the need for ‘soft skills’ education, on the need for innovation policy to be more focused on sectors such as finance, education, community services and the arts, which are supplied overwhelmingly by HASS graduates, and for a more holistic approach to innovation.

14. Should CHASS have the function of a peak body? There is some evidence of confusion about the degree of overlap or complementarity in the charters, constitutions and/or practices of bodies charged with advocacy for elements of the HASS sector, a confusion which probably extends to the broader sectors and within government. These bodies include CHASS, the learned academies, and the relevant university deans groups. While there is less evidence for potential overlap and/or confusion with arts bodies, this may also need to come under review. As implied earlier, we may have trodden on one another's toes at times, sometimes to the detriment of one another and, possibly, of the sectors we represent. Clearer understandings and observation of agreed processes are probably needed.
15. Should CHASS develop policy formulation capacity within itself, or should it derive positions from regular consultation with the membership? This is the question of the extent to which CHASS should derive its principal sources of expertise from within the sector itself, rather than seeking to develop it primarily in house. This is a critical issue to how priorities are set for CHASS, and how the policy and research work of the secretariat is organised.

Conclusion

The CHASS board wishes to encourage member participation in this important discussion. Please register online through the CHASS website.

Professor Stuart Cunningham
President, CHASS
12 August 2008

Attachments

- A List of members
- B Current strategic plan
- C CHASS Review – Executive Summary and Recommendations

Attachment A

List of members

Level 1 Members

Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia
Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities
Australian Academy of the Humanities
Australian National University
Deakin University
Macquarie University
University of Melbourne

Level 2 Members

Faculty of Education and the Arts, University of Newcastle
Griffith University
Murdoch University
National Library of Australia
National Tertiary Education Union
Queensland University of Technology
University of Western Australia

Level 3 Members

Australian Catholic University
Australian Council of Deans of Education
Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools
Australian Film, Television and Radio School
Design and Social Context, RMIT University
Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences, University of South Australia
Faculty of Arts, Monash University
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of New South Wales
Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Education, Central Queensland University
Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong
Faculty of Design, Swinburne University of Technology
Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Adelaide
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Technology Sydney
Institute of Advanced Study for Humanity (IASH), University of Newcastle
James Cook University
School of Social Sciences, University of Western Sydney
University of Canberra
Victoria University
Victorian College of Arts

Level 4 Members

Australasian Association for Theatre, Drama and Performance Studies
Australasian Society for Classical Studies
Australian and New Zealand Communication Association
Australian Association for Research in Education
Australian Business Deans Council
Australian Historical Association
Australian Library and Information Association
Australian Major Performing Arts Group
Australian Society for the Study of Labour History
Australian Society of Archivists
Centre for Cultural Research, University of Western Sydney
Centre for Public Culture and Ideas, Griffith University
Centre for Values Ethics and Law in Medicine, University of Sydney
Centre for Women's Studies and Gender Research, Monash University

Collections Council of Australia Ltd
Cooperative Research Centres Association Inc.
Council of Australasian Museum Directors
Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations
Design Institute of Australia, Icarus Industrial Design
Division of Humanities, Macquarie University
Division of Humanities, Curtin University of Technology
Division of Society, Culture, Media and Philosophy, Macquarie University
Faculty of Art and Design, Monash University
Faculty of Arts, Charles Sturt University
Faculty of Arts, University of Southern Queensland
Faculty of Education, University of Southern Queensland
Faculty of Education and Arts, Research and Higher Degrees, Edith Cowan University
Faculty of Music, University of Melbourne
FORM Contemporary Craft and Design
Helpmann Academy
Institute of Australian Geographers
Museums Australia
National Council of Tertiary Music Schools
National Gallery of Australia, National Gallery of Australia
National Institute of Creative Arts and Industries, University of Auckland
National Museum of Australia
QUT Creative Industries
Research School of Humanities, Australian National University
School of Communications and Contemporary Arts, Edith Cowan University
School of Indigenous Studies, University of Western Australia
Screenrights
Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney
The Australian Sociological Association, Faculty of Life and Social Science
Wesley Institute
Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, Edith Cowan University

Level 5 Members

Art Association of Australia and New Zealand
Art Education Australia
Arts, English and Literacy Education Research Network,
Australasian Association of Philosophy
Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association
Australian and New Zealand Association for Medieval and Early Modern Studies
Australian and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools
Australian and New Zealand Society for Theological Studies
Australian Association for Consulting Archaeologists Inc
Australian Dance Council - Ausdance
Australian Federation of Modern Language Teacher Association
Australian Screen Production Education and Research Association
Australian Society for Music Education Inc.
Centre for Applied Social Research, RMIT University
Centre for Citizenship and Human Rights, Deakin University
Centre for the History of European Discourses, University of Queensland
Centre of Peace and Social Justice, Southern Cross University
Ceres Solutions
Cornell Chapter of the University of Adelaide Alumni Assoc
Council of Australian Law Deans
Craft Australia
Cultural Studies Association of Australasia
Currency House Inc.
Dictionary of Australian Artists Online
Drama Australia
EIDOS

Film Australia
Hecate Journal and Centre for Research on Women, Gender, Culture and Social Change
Independent Media Foundation Inc. in Victoria
Innovation Xchange
Institute for Social Research, Swinburne University of Technology
Interior Design/Interior Architecture Educators' Association
Jumbunna: the Indigenous House of Learning, University of Technology Sydney
Manning Clark House
Melbourne College of Divinity
Music Council of Australia
National Arts and Culture Alliance Inc.
National Association for the Visual Arts
National Centre in HIV Social Research
National Institute of Dramatic Arts
Regional Arts Australia
South Australian Youth Arts Board
Taylor & Francis Australia
Tertiary Dance Council of Australia, Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts
UNSW Press
Visual Arts Department, North Melbourne Institute of TAFE
Wiley-Blackwell Asia-Pacific



Strategic Plan

Mission

To promote the Humanities, the Arts and the Social Sciences, and support their contribution to a prosperous, innovative, creative and inclusive Australia.

Aims

CHASS will:

- represent the interests of the sectors
- promote the contribution of the sectors to government, industry and the public
- provide a forum for discussion between the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences sectors in Australia
- build up the innovative capacity of Australia through better linkages between these sectors, and science, technology, engineering and medicine

Domains

CHASS will contribute to this environment through engaging with governments, industry and the public. This three-year Plan contains strategies to strengthen:

- advocacy and promotion
- education, learning and training
- research and practice
- communities of scholarship and practice
- infrastructure
- organisational sustainability

Domain	Objective	Key Strategies
1. Advocacy and promotion	To represent the interests, and promote the contribution, of the HASS sector to government, industry and the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain close links with government, particularly the Commonwealth Government; and Opposition and minor parties • Foster public awareness of, and support for, HASS • Gain recognition that the contribution HASS makes is comparable to that of the natural sciences
2. Education, learning & training	To strengthen Australian society and culture and build its innovative capacity through promoting the contribution of HASS education, learning and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote HASS in school and post-secondary education (including vocational education and training). • Contribute to provision of high levels of literacy amongst Australians • Demonstrate the value of HASS qualifications • Ensure that good students are attracted to HASS study • Ensure that HASS education is funded and resourced to enable it to deliver these benefits to Australia
3. Research, practice and knowledge transfer	Identify policy and funding mechanisms to support HASS research, practice and knowledge transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper recognition for HASS research in national research priority areas • Ensure that HASS is assessed appropriately in Research Quality Framework • Investigate other means for promoting HASS research and creative practice • Advocate guidelines for ethical research that reflect the nature and values of HASS research • Identify and demonstrate the beneficial impact of HASS research and practice on Australian economy, society, culture and environment
4. Communities of scholarship and practice	Build communities of scholarship and practice within and between HASS sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and foster networks within the HASS sectors • Establish and maintain links with similar advocacy bodies in other countries and international co-federations
	Build communities of scholarship and practice within and between HASS sectors, and with the STEM sectors, to enhance collaboration between practitioners, researchers, scholars and teachers across the disciplines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake joint cross-sectoral advocacy on ideas of mutual interest • Promote co-operation between HASS and STEM sectors
5. Infrastructure	Promote robust physical, information and other infrastructure to support education, scholarship, research and practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify infrastructure needs and develop strategies for meeting these needs • Ensure that HASS scholars and practitioners can publish their work in a changing information environment • Advocate for policies to preserve collections held in museums and libraries, and to enable access to them.
6. Organisational sustainability	Build and maintain membership base for CHASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide services and demonstrate value to HASS sector • Involve CHASS members in informed debate of contemporary developments in HASS policy
	Secure adequate funding to support the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement membership-based income-generation strategies • Increase income from subscriptions • Develop other funding streams
	Establish Planning cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a planning and review cycle
	Avoid overlaps and clashes on policy issues and events with other bodies interested in HASS matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a lead role in discussions with other bodies interested in HASS matters, to ensure clashes are minimised and collaborations maximized

Review of CHASS 2008

Executive Summary and Recommendations

The Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences commissioned Dorothy Illing to conduct an external review of the organisation to help evaluate CHASS's progress since it was established in 2004. The review was based on interviews with 20 senior people whose perceptions of CHASS were considered a valuable source of feedback to the organisation.

The establishment of CHASS was widely recognised as a positive move. It has filled a gap in advocacy for the humanities, arts and social sciences and enabled important input into national policy at a time when the research agenda could have run counter to the interests of the HASS sectors. Its role was viewed as reaching beyond that of the Academy of the Humanities and the Academy of the Social Sciences, and to this end CHASS has been successful, particularly with its outreach activities.

But changes in the external environment and a broadening of CHASS's membership base suggest it is time for CHASS to revisit its core functions. In the end this might mean reaffirming its mission but finding better ways to communicate it. It might mean making adjustments to processes and procedures to improve consultation and representation. It might involve establishing new parameters for engagement and re-defining its primary stakeholders.

A common thread to emerge from interviews was a lack of clarity about CHASS's role, how this intersects with the academies and, in essence, what CHASS stands for. Because CHASS represents such a broad community the reviewer believes it needs to be more targeted with its objectives and strategies. It is no longer sufficient to say it represents the interests of the whole. By attempting to be "all things to all people" CHASS has diluted its message and weakened its lobbying position. A first step would be to establish its Unique Value Proposition so that when it approaches potential members, current members, government, sponsors and industry CHASS can clearly and confidently articulate its reason for being.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Hold a two-day retreat or members forum to:

- establish consensus on CHASS's role and key goals
- identify key objectives, themes and priorities for the next 12 months
- identify its primary and secondary stakeholders
- establish parameters for consultation with stakeholders

Recommendation 2

Develop a Stakeholder Relationship Management Plan. This should include but not be restricted to government relations, internal stakeholder relations and industry relations.

Recommendation 3

Establish protocols for making public statements and "ownership" of those statements; seek agreement from primary stakeholders on implementing these.

Recommendation 4

Establish a reference group or committee to provide expert input on key issues for public communication.

Recommendation 5

Develop a program of strategic activities outside CHASS's normal program of activities eg. an international forum on the social impact of climate change. Seek sponsors.

Recommendation 6

Identify opportunities for partnerships and joint activities with other peak bodies eg. the Australian Industry Group, international bodies.

Recommendation 7

Produce a publication/report on CHASS's achievements in the past four years, its wins and future directions. Use this as a marketing tool for potential members, government and others.