

Professor Stuart Cunningham  
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Dear Professor Cunningham

**Research Quality Framework (RQF) and the impact in the visual and performing arts**

Thank you for your letter of 29 September 2006 concerning the Australian Government's proposed RQF and the impact in the visual and performing arts.

I would like to congratulate the Council for Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS) on its recent meeting to discuss the RQF through the bringing together of experts across your discipline. Your continuing interest in the RQF process is commended.

I understand that CHASS has been contracted by the Department of Education, Science and Training, following a request from the RQF Development Advisory Group, to undertake two projects: the collection of data from universities on novel bibliographic measures in the areas of History and Political Science, and advice on splitting the Humanities and Law panel into two parts.

I would like to respond to some of the issues you raise in your report to me about this meeting.

First, I have asked my Department to note the interest of the tertiary councils in being involved in any future nomination process for assessment panels. I have also asked my Department to note new technologies commonly used in music, dance and art, such as your example of ACID PRESS, to enhance existing methods of recording and sharing research that will be considered by assessment panels.

Secondly, you raise concern about the outdated nature of the current Research Fields, Courses and Disciplines (RFCD) codes. I am aware that the Australian Bureau of Statistics' classification for Research and Development has not been reviewed since 1998 and my Department has been in contact with the ABS about this matter.

I have instructed officers from my Department to begin a process with the ABS to seek revision of the standard research classifications. This process will involve planning for technical work, securing financial and human resources, as well as

providing a mechanism for consultation with user groups. The timeframe for review will need to be determined in due course should the revision occur.

In the meantime, I am confident that the RQF Development Advisory Group will be able to refine the model for the first RQF with due consideration given to the place and use of specific disciplines.

Finally, you have highlighted that constituents of CHASS are keen to participate in a follow-up workshop to consider metrics and peer evaluation criteria for the whole sector and specific disciplines.

My Department will be organising discipline specific workshops for the RQF early next year, if the RQF process is adopted by the Australian Government. These workshops will bring together experts to determine the appropriate indicators for individual disciplines and there will be scope for your constituents to be involved in this process.

Your continuing interest in the RQF process is appreciated along with the significant work CHASS has done to improve the quality and impact of research in your field.

Yours sincerely

JULIE BISHOP