



Council for the
humanities, arts
& social sciences

Ms Clare McLaughlin
General Manager
Research Infrastructure and Science Policy Branch
Science and Infrastructure Division
Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research
Roadmap2011@innovation.gov.au

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Dear Ms McLaughlin

Strategic Roadmap for Australian Research Infrastructure 2011

The Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the development of a new 2011 *Strategic Roadmap for Australian Research Infrastructure*.

The Council was established in 2004, to represent and promote the interests of the humanities, arts and social sciences (HASS) community in Australia and now supports over ninety-two member organisations. Council members engage in research and professional practice in disciplines from education, history, languages and philosophy to demography, journalism, geography and sociology. Leading universities, discipline associations, peak bodies and collecting institutions are represented in the Council's membership body. Representatives promote the contribution of the HASS sector to government, industry and the public through discussion forums and engaging in the public policy space. CHASS is building up the innovative capacity of Australia through better linkages between the HASS sector and science, engineering and industry. Further information in relation to the organisation can be found at www.chass.org.au.

The Council applauds the Exposure Draft of the 2011 *Strategic Roadmap for Australian Research Infrastructure* and the good work of the Expert Working Group in producing a sound strategy for a coordinated and coherent approach to the provision of quality research infrastructure.

The Council notes the need for Australian research infrastructure to support the needs of Australian researchers across the range of disciplines in the humanities, arts and social sciences and their intersections with the natural and physical sciences. Researchers need to be equipped with the right research tools and to have access to leading-edge infrastructure. It is also important to ensure Australian researchers can sustain a high level of engagement with their colleagues in the international research community. For these reasons, a national approach to infrastructure developed within the context of international developments, and underpinned by global connectivity, is vital.

The Exposure Draft notes that the National Research Infrastructure Council has developed a *Strategic Framework for Research Infrastructure Investment*, in parallel with the development of the 2011 Roadmap, which sets out principles for research infrastructure investment—continuity of funding, holistic funding, prioritisation consistent with research priorities, excellence in research infrastructure, collaboration, co-investment, access and pricing, access to overseas-based infrastructure, and evaluation and monitoring.

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The Council acknowledges the appropriateness of these principles in supporting the development of a Strategic Framework.

The Council welcomes the additional research priority within the capability areas described in the 2011 Roadmap—‘*Understanding Cultures and Communities*’—reflecting the importance of research that will assist Australians to understand cultures and communities. With the addition of this priority, the five research priorities better encompass the research interests of the HASS sector. These include the social sciences and humanities which are deemed critical to the interface between science and society. For example, the outcomes and meaning derived from critical analysis from ethical, historical and cultural perspectives enable Australians to consider the impacts of research across the spectrum of activities.

The Council also welcomes the recognition that to meet the overarching goal of ‘Prosperity—a richer, fairer and greener Australia’, the five research priorities need to be underpinned by a set of capability areas. One of these is high-quality and strong eResearch Infrastructure. To meet the challenges they face in a globally competitive environment, Australian researchers need state-of-the-art tools that enable them to achieve synergies in collaboration with colleagues nationally and internationally.

The Council also notes the 2011 Roadmap’s appropriate recognition of the inter-relationship between the ‘*Understanding Cultures and Communities*’ research priority and the other key capability areas of ‘*Characterisation*’, ‘*Digitisation Infrastructure*’, ‘*Population Health Research Platforms*’, ‘*Cultures and Communities*’ and ‘*Urban Settlements*’.

One area that the Council has identified as requiring greater emphasis as a research infrastructure priority is that of human capital, specifically research training. This applies both to researchers and research support staff. To ensure that Australian research maintains and further develops its position within the international context, Australian researchers, both existing and developing researchers, must be equipped with the skills and incentives essential to conduct leading-edge research using state-of-the-art infrastructure. The Council considers research training an essential accompaniment to the development of research infrastructure and would urge the inclusion of specific provision for this aspect of research capability.

The Council is appreciative of the opportunity to provide input to the consultation phase of the development of the 2011 Roadmap and looks forward to the release of the final 2011 Roadmap for Australian Research Infrastructure later in the year. The Council also looks forward to receiving advice about the process for implementing the 2011 Roadmap.

Yours sincerely



Professor Sue Willis
President