

Communiqué from the Deans and Directors of Creative Arts 2015 Conference

This communiqué focuses upon the contribution that creative arts research makes to our institutions, society and economy. Despite much effort by individuals and disciplinary peak bodies, this contribution is not well recognised within the university sector and artistic disciplines remain inequitably represented in the national research evaluation and investment system.

Collectively, we have lobbied for improved recognition and have achieved important advances. The formal inclusion of creative arts research within ERA has given us a 'legitimacy' within institutional research and development and shown that our research performs well against world standards. However, in other performance evaluation measures, we still have to achieve full recognition.

An important feature that allowed us to demonstrate our strengths in ERA was the acceptance of formats in which we demonstrate research excellence as non traditional research outputs within the evaluation measures. As part of the DDCA's role to advocate for, and advance, creative arts within higher education, this communiqué suggests a suite of actions that we can take to develop arts-appropriate metrics and measures to better include our contribution within other parts of the evaluation system and provide an evidence base from which we can better position the work of creative arts researchers and research students

The contribution of creative arts research: A reminder for the university sector

Creative arts disciplines contribute much to the Australian society and economy, yet the contribution made by our research is not always recognised in higher education and research management and our capacity to participate in future improvement is often overlooked.

- **Contribution to economy and society**

The arts are deeply embedded in the cultural sector, and cultural activity . . . contributes \$50 billion to Australia's GDP, comparable to the GDP share in the USA. . . [and] people who engage with the arts have higher life satisfaction ¹

As active participants in Australia's professional arts sector, creative arts researchers, both staff and students, form part of the artistic milieu that is generating these outcomes in the cultural industry. Discovery and blue-sky research in the arts continues to inform and shape the future of cultural innovation and the arts and entertainment industry as is the case in any other academic discipline. It contributes new ideas, content, techniques and the skilled human resources to enhance Australia's critical and commercial reputation in these fields.²

Creative arts research makes an important contribution to broader industry advancement through the development and application of creative thinking and entrepreneurial problem solving approaches that are valued broadly by industry³ and through HDR graduates as 'embedded creatives', this cycle of innovation influence continues.⁴ Internationally this contribution to national economic growth is recognised⁵ and supported by research capacity building measures⁶.

Applied creative arts research contributes significantly to societal wellbeing, both through application for particular health or social inclusion objectives⁷ and broadly in the context of creating more a enjoyable and meaningful community experience.⁸

- **Contribution to university and community engagement**

Nearly all Australians attended live events, visited art galleries or read literature in 2013 (94%) . . . [and] . . . two thirds of Australians used the internet in some way to engage with the arts (66%)⁹

Artistic disciplines provide a central and visible demonstration of the university's place in its local, national and global communities. Through the products of its research, the creative arts establishes an immediate public connection whether through physical exhibition and performance or an increasing number of online artistic works. Art events bring diverse members of our community together in ways that are more difficult to achieve by other academic disciplines. In both urban and particularly regional settings, university arts and cultural activities are central to local community life, often communicating messages that invite individual connection with issues of global significance on a personal level.¹⁰

The social connectivity that is engendered through these activities is rarely strategically considered or supported as part of the broader university industry or philanthropic engagement strategies, despite awareness that many of those who can influence these agenda feature frequently in artistic audiences.¹¹ Engagement with the activities of visual and performing arts schools is often the first and most frequent connection that the public makes with their local university, helping to inform their understanding of the institution as they consider tertiary education options for their children, and increasingly lifelong learning opportunities for themselves¹². This is an important but all too frequently hidden contribution that artistic disciplines bring to their institutions.

- **Connecting research with the profession, practitioners and industry**

Almost two thirds of practicing professional artists in Australia hold a tertiary qualification . . . [and] more than one third . . . continue to engage in some form of training throughout their career¹³

The connections between creative arts researchers, practitioners and respective arts industry sectors are exceptionally strong. Indeed, creative arts researchers form part of that industry, swelling the ranks of our orchestras, visual and performing arts companies, galleries and collectives and through membership of peak bodies, committees and groups, creative arts researchers steer their industries in a way that is perhaps less evidenced in other academic disciplines. Through these connections, artistic disciplines attract significant in-kind contributions from their industry towards their research, ameliorating the costs that the university would otherwise be required to bear, yet university mechanisms fail to capture or recognise these contributions as part of performance evaluations.

Research students are increasingly enrolling for further study to improve their own practice and reinvigorate the genres in which they work. For many creative arts disciplines, the skills that universities seek to develop as part of the graduate student experience, are already finely honed and in daily use. The typical career path for professional creative artists is not one of company employment but as freelance consultant or small business¹⁴. They have portfolio careers within a global 'marketplace' and networking with international peers and audiences is central to their future success.¹⁵ In this aspect, creative arts has long been 'ahead of the curve' now being recognised in the global workplace.¹⁶

For creative arts research staff and students alike, the presumptions expressed in graduate destination, industry collaboration and the translation of research to practice are an awkward fit. The measures and metrics most frequently used fail to capture existing engagement and may serve to distort the current success enjoyed by researchers in these areas. Within the

limitations of the current graduate destination evaluations where, for example, a creative arts graduate who is employed in a retail outlet would be included as a successful 'output' while a graduate who establishes their own business and contributes to films, arts festivals or secures performance tours, would not.

The road ahead : developing arts-appropriate evaluation measures and improving ERA performance

Despite being formally recognised as research in ERA, national and institutional systems that capture, quantify and support research contributions remain lacking. In particular, current frameworks lack the capacity to gather and quantify data that are relevant to creative arts research. Alternative arts-appropriate models, measures and metrics are needed that can be incorporated into existing university processes.

If ERA performance in creative arts disciplines is to continue to grow, we need to build a stable and robust system of peer review for artistic research to demonstrate that non traditional research outputs that are submitted for ERA have undergone the same level of review as represented in the publication review process. This can sometimes be problematic for artistic disciplines where work may be presented and viewed by peers as part of the exhibition and performance of the work but formal evaluation and assessment is not fully captured to satisfy the ERA peer review requirements.

DDCA acknowledges that creative arts researchers themselves have a role to play and suggests a number of projects that could be progressed over the next twelve months to better position creative arts research in the current, and future, environment. We seek the input and support of our membership and the university sector to achieve these outcomes.

The following have been identified as potential projects for DDCA to undertake and support:

1. Improved Peer review for research evaluation

Recent discussions at Symposia into Artistic Research in Music held at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University and Monash University has proposed the development of a discipline-based peer review process, with rigorous and relevant assessment criteria and recognition of appropriate dissemination platforms. This will establish robust system of peer review of artistic research that universities can rely upon, and will be recognised for ERA submission purposes.

DDCA could support this project as **a disciplinary exemplar to inform development across other art forms.**

2. Better inclusion in HERDC or its replacement institutional funding arrangements

a) Capturing Artistic practice activities in HERDC (categories 2 and 3)

Not all artistic professional practice/creative arts research undertaken by creative arts researchers is pursued under through university auspices, but is conducted as private professional activity. There may be good reasons for this choice but the negative impact of these decisions is to poorly present the contribution of creative arts in relation to HERDC performance (cat 2 & 3). Questions that would guide such a project include:

- How do universities recognise arts professional practice / research conducted ‘externally’ currently? As local grants, commercial, consultancy, professional development or service?
- How do they recognise such research / consultancy activities in other disciplines (e.g. law, clinicians, medical schools, business schools)
- How do artists want to balance their private work and contribute to improved academic recognition and school funding?
- Can artistic professional practice be appropriately captured in university policy and process - What changes are needed to the current system?

By identifying the problems in existing institutional systems for recognising artistic practice and practice development, and exploring other models accepted and applied within other disciplines, DDCA could develop and recommend **institutional policy revisions that increase professional artistic research contributions to the current HERDC measures.**

b) Capturing and Quantifying in-kind contributions

This project proactively anticipates potential changes in government policy and funding arrangements towards greater recognition and reward of researcher-practitioner-‘industry’ engagement by capturing the variety of in-kind contributions that are typically made to artistic disciplines whether in resources, venues, or personnel involved in collaborations, and developing mechanism for quantifying this contribution.

While HERDC does not currently count ‘in-kind’ contributions, funding schemes such as ARC Linkage scheme does value and quantify in-kind contributions and similarly, philanthropic donations are valued by institutions. Much of the in-kind contribution that is provided to the arts is not captured or translated to monetary value. This means that artistic disciplines are less able to present evidence of the value of their research, the extent to which it is supported by internal and external contributions and the savings that are generated for the university through such contributions. It proactively anticipates potential changes in government policy and funding arrangements towards greater recognition and reward of researcher-practitioner-‘industry’ engagement and impact. This project would include:

- Data gathering of the type and source of in-kind contributions that are provided to the arts - whether in infrastructure, resources, donations or personnel
- Analysis of how these contributions may be quantified using existing mechanisms for example by applying formulae used in existing granting programs, methodologies used for tax deduction for donations etc.
- Development and testing mechanisms for capturing and quantifying in-kind contributions as part of a recommended way forward for universities

Through this project DDCA could recommend **measures by which the value of this ‘in-kind economy’ can be recognised in university strategies** for research to industry translation and quantified in terms of opportunity cost and savings to university budgets.

3. Research impact and engagement

Although at this point there is no declared intention to add impact evaluation measures such as those included in the RQF evaluation model that was proposed prior to the introduction of ERA, institutional and government attention is returning to the need to consider the impact of research and the extent to which it engages with industry, practice and end-users. Artistic

disciplines engage extensively with all these constituents and this project recognises the importance of measures that capture the types of engagement in the arts and suggest metrics that will quantify this engagement. Questions guiding this project will include:

- How do artists engage and shape with their communities of practice?
- How can we capture and ‘count’ these examples?
- To what extent do creative arts researchers contribute to the \$50 billion GDP contribution made by the national arts and cultural sector?

By mapping examples of impact and engagement against existing cultural impact measurements and identifying appropriate ways that these can be applied within the university evaluation context, DDCA could deliver **a platform paper on the impact of creative arts research and an implementation model** for adoption by universities.

4. Graduate Destination Survey

The current measures used to capture and assess graduate employment success are irrelevant to many graduating artists whose careers will typically feature not full-time employment with one employer but portfolio and freelance self employment with a variety of agencies and industries. This project will develop and test alternative measures that will demonstrate the success of graduate artists who enter a career path as professional artists and practitioners.

This project will:

- Gather data to identify examples that provide evidence of a professional arts career and identify appropriate metrics; and
- Provide case studies of methods that may be used to capture and record this data

Armed with this information, DDCA could provide **detailed models and metrics for application at national and institutional level** to better reflect not only career destinations of creative arts graduates but the reality of work within the new global workplace

5. An ‘Arts-appropriate’ policy league table

Although there are examples of institutional policy and practice that equitably include creative arts research, in many parts of the university sector, the arts remains excluded from consideration in the cycle of policy revisions that take place. This can be exemplified by research investment policies, such as centre or institute status which focuses upon track record in ACGR schemes; in promotion or ‘research active’ definitions that weight text based publications higher than creative arts outputs; or the application of commercial and consultancy policies that apply overhead charges to the essential professional development activities undertaken by creative artists. There is a lack of awareness across the sector of good practice that is being implemented within individual universities, that would allow those employed in less progressive institutions to argue for reforms. To date, there has been little institutional interest in evaluating ‘arts-appropriate’ nature of their policies and practices, but

The recent introduction of higher weighting to arts and humanities disciplines in the QS world ranking methodology, which saw the majority of universities fall within the global rankings¹⁷ may be an impetus to turn attention to the position of arts disciplines within the policy setting. This project suggests the production of a table that facilitates comparison of universities performance in relation to ‘arts-appropriate’ policy and shares case study exemplars of good practice that can be adopted by those who wish to improve their ‘ranking’. This project would:

- Identify five or six broad policy areas (e.g. academic career, research investment; infrastructure support) and analyse institutional policy libraries to identify exclusive and inclusive features
- Develop method and measures by which these can be ranked comparatively
- Produce an online league table and accompanying ‘best practice’ handbook

Through such a project, DDCA could **highlight the inequities that exist within current university policy settings and provide evidence of good practice** by which the position of creative arts research can be improved across the university sector

¹ Australia Council (2015) *Arts Nation: An overview of Australian Arts. 2015 edition*. Australia Council for the Arts. Sydney. <http://australiacouncil.gov.au/research/arts-nation-an-overview-of-australian-arts> p 4

² For example; academic staff and HDR graduates are increasingly included as winners and finalists of Australia’s leading art prizes and film festivals and as Australian representatives at international biennale.

³ For example, Kling, K., & Goteman, I. (2003). IKEA CEO Anders Dahlvig on international growth and IKEA's unique corporate culture and brand identity. *The Academy of Management Executive*, 17(1), 31-37; Isaacson, W. (2012). The real leadership lessons of Steve Jobs. *Harvard business review*, 90(4), 92-102; Doyle, S. A., & Broadbridge, A. (1999). Differentiation by design: the importance of design in retailer repositioning and differentiation. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 27(2), 72-83; Casner-Lotto, J., & Barrington, L. (2006). *Are They Really Ready to Work? Employers' Perspectives on the Basic Knowledge and Applied Skills of New Entrants to the 21st Century US Workforce*. Partnership for 21st Century Skills. 1 Massachusetts Avenue NW Suite 700, Washington, DC 2001

⁴ CCI Australian Creative Economy Report Card 2013 , ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation, <http://www.cci.edu.au/Creative_Economy_report_card.pdf>

⁵ US congress (2013) H. RES. 51 <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-113hres51ih/pdf/BILLS-113hres51ih.pdf>; Boy, G. (2013). From STEM to STEAM: Toward a Human-Centered Education. In *Paper submitted to the European Conference on Cognitive Ergonomics, Toulouse, France*.

⁶ Arts and Humanities Research Council (2015) Research Grants - Practice Led and Applied. <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/funding/opportunities/current/researchgrantspracticeledandapplied/>; Centre for the Advancement of Informal Science Education (2014) Federally Funded STEAM Programming at <http://informalscience.org/perspectives/blog/federally-funded-steam-programming>

⁷ Putland, C. (2012). Arts and health—a guide to the evidence. Institute for Creative Health. <http://instituteforcreativehealth.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/A-Guide-to-the-Evidence.pdf>

⁸ Australia Council (2015) *Arts Nation: An overview of Australian Arts. 2015 edition*. Australia Council for the Arts. Sydney. <http://australiacouncil.gov.au/research/arts-nation-an-overview-of-australian-arts>

⁹ Australia Council (2015) *Arts Nation: An overview of Australian Arts. 2015 edition*. Australia Council for the Arts. Sydney. <http://australiacouncil.gov.au/research/arts-nation-an-overview-of-australian-arts> p11

¹⁰ Wilson, J. (2015). ‘The hidden topography of Australia’s arts nation: The contribution of universities to the artistic landscape’. *Australian Universities Review* (in press).

¹¹ Bennett T, Savage M, Silva E, Warde A, Gayo-Cal M and Wright D (2009) *Culture, Class, Distinction*. London: Routledge.

¹² Surveys undertaken by Gallup (2003) and The MetLife Foundation(2005) revealed that 85% of respondents regretted not learning to play a musical instrument and 67% want to learn; and that retiring baby boomers aspire to improve their communities through art.

¹³ Australia Council (2015) *Arts Nation: An overview of Australian Arts. 2015 edition*. Australia Council for the Arts. Sydney. <http://australiacouncil.gov.au/research/arts-nation-an-overview-of-australian-arts> p 16)

¹⁴ Throsby, D., & Zednik, A. (2010). Do you really expect to get paid?: an economic study of professional artists in Australia. Australia Council for the Arts. Retrieved from: www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/do_you_really_expect_to_get_pa-54325a3748d81.pdf

¹⁵ Bartleet, B., Bennett, D., Bridgestock, R., Draper, P., Harrison, S. & Schippers, H. (2013). 'Preparing for portfolio careers in Australian music: Setting a research agenda'. *The Australian Journal of Music Education*, 2012(1), 32–41

¹⁶ Foundation for Young Australians (2015) The new work order: Ensuring young Australians have skills and experience for the jobs of the future, not the past. <http://www.fya.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/The-New-Work-Order-FINAL-low-res-2.pdf>; See also, Salt, B (2015) Towards a super connected Australia. NBN Co. <http://www.nbnco.com.au/content/dam/nbnco2/documents/towards-a-super-connected-australia.pdf>

¹⁷ Hare, J (2015). 'Unis tumble in league rankings as science research downplayed'. *The Australian*. 15 September 2015. <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/university-rankings/unis-tumble-in-league-rankings-as-science-research-downplayed/story-fna15id1-1227527171486?sv=6d9298849418bc3387f8e13724c9c8b5>