

The Library Profession in Australia and the RQF

A report on ALIA's role in the Australian Government's Research Quality Framework (RQF) discussions appeared in a recent issue of *inCite*. The DEST website for this initiative is at <http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/policies_issues_reviews/key_issues/research_quality_framework/>.

Just when we thought we'd almost finalised our contribution to the RQF discussion, another request came for representation at yet another Panel 11 meeting. In attendance for the LIS sector were Dr Kerry Smith and Emeritus Professor Don Schauder (ALIA), joined by Eve Woodberry, President of CAUL and Andrew Wells the CAUL Deputy President.

Panel 11 was the group with the longest list of outstanding issues needing to be resolved. The meeting was also an opportunity to meet Panel Chair, Professor Hilary Charlesworth, an expert in International Law from the ANU.

Why did Panel 11 stand out in this way? Its general title is Law, Education and Professional Practice. When you consider its membership categories which, as well as librarianship, include journalism, communication and the media; other journalism; education studies, curriculum studies, professional development of teachers, other education; social work; curatorial studies; professional development of practitioners; justice and legal studies; law enforcement; and other law, the research practices of such a diverse group were causing problems of definition and scope in DEST circles.

We met to discuss potential measures of quality and impact of research emanating from these disciplines. The LIS group endeavoured to ensure consideration of the:

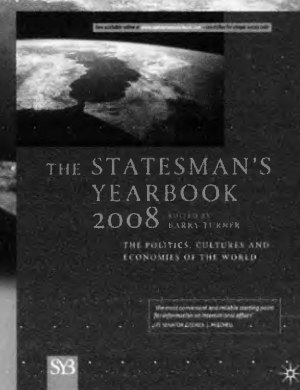
- non inclusion of citations and citation ranking in LIS research measures except when they are included as strong evidence in the 'context statement' and 'body of work' in a research centre submission. Why? Because it was clearly stated that less than 20% of all Panel 11 research appears in ISI (Institute of Scientific Information) listed journals.
- non ranking of LIS journals in measures of quality. Why? Particularly when our Australian LIS educator and research sector has undertaken a ranking exercise of journal titles? It was the general view of the meeting that if DEST accepts journal titles under the general categories in peer-reviewed (or otherwise scholarly-assessed) academic journals in the fully reported categories, and articles in professional journals or newsletters in the selectively reported category of the body of work submitted for assessment, then this would be the best outcome. If it comes to pass that a ranked list of journal titles is required, then our sector has such to submit.
- inclusion of informatic products as outputs of research projects.
- inclusion of researchers in our field who are professional librarians working in libraries. The inclusion of academic staff only of level B and above in research centre claims will not give an accurate portrayal of key researchers in many LIS projects.
- inclusion of non-competitive grants in the 'Grants' category of assessable material.

It is pleasing that the profession continues to be represented at these discussions. From my point of view, the presence of CAUL colleagues who represent a significant contributor to LIS research in Australia is invaluable. And my thanks go to Don Schauder for his valuable and ongoing support and expert contributions to the deliberations.

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