

SUBMISSION TO THE REVIEW OF RESEARCH POLICY AND FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION BY THE DEANS AND DIRECTORS OF CREATIVE ARTS

Background

The Deans and Directors of Creative Arts Inc. welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the Government's review of research policy and funding, and notes the Government's aim to drive improvements in all facets of research and contribute to Australia's improved economic productivity – particularly through improved collaboration between researchers in higher education, industry and end-users.

The *Deans and Directors of Creative Arts Incorporated (DDCA)* was inaugurated in February 2013 to advance the disciplines of the creative arts in the higher education sector, both nationally and internationally, and advocate more broadly for the role of the creative arts in society. Representing learning, teaching and research in the creative arts in Australia, and with a membership of over 22 universities and other higher education institutions, it builds upon the significant work that has already been carried out by the six peak academic bodies, representing the creative arts in higher education in Australia and Australasia. Internationally, DDCA works with colleagues across the region and beyond including: the Asia-Pacific Bureau (APB), the regional bureau of the UNESCO International Theatre Institute (ITI); the peak European creative arts organisations – the European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA) and the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC); and the College Art Association (CAA) in North America.

Research in the creative arts takes place within

... that domain of research and development in which the practice of art – that is, the making and the playing, the creation and the performance, and the works of art that result – play a constitutive role in a methodological sense¹.

Although creative arts research is formally recognised as part of: the national evaluation framework, Excellence for Research in Australia (ERA), the broader research policy settings do not capture, support or encourage the contribution that the arts make to current and future economic productivity – this includes the current research funding arrangements, many of the government's research investment mechanisms, and particularly HERDC. The contributions that creative arts research has made to industry and the economy to date have largely been without the government research support enjoyed by other disciplines.

Shaping innovative and entrepreneurial responses across industry sectors

Creative arts research and the entrepreneurial approach that these disciplines engender contributes to improved productivity in a wide range of industry sectors. The centrality of design to manufacturing and retail productivity is acknowledged by many of the world's most successful companies² and the

¹ Borgdorff, H. (2006). Artistic Research within the Fields of Science In *Sensuous Knowledge* 06. Bergen: Bergen National Academy of the Arts. p21. http://konst.gu.se/digitalAssets/1322/1322679_artistic-research-within-the-fields-of-science.pdf

² 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,

essential communication techniques that the arts provide are harnessed in marketing and promotion in private, public and not for profit sectors³. Australia has lagged behind other countries in recognising the value of creative arts research to national economic growth in a wide range of industries. In particular, it has failed to embrace the STEM to STEAM agenda in which

Science; Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) . . . [is] integrated together with the Arts to promote creativity. . . and move to STEAM to address ‘the complexity, interconnectivity, interaction and communication’ features of our current world⁴.

In the United States, this agenda has been recognised by a congress resolution which states

. . . that adding art and design into Federal programs that target the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields encourages innovation and economic growth in the United States⁵.

This recognition has been transposed within the US federal funding system where the National Science Foundation specifically supports projects that incorporate art and design⁶.

Direct contribution to Australia’s art, cultural and entertainment industry

Creative arts researchers contribute directly to the \$50 billion per annum that the art and cultural fields bring to the Australia’s GDP⁷. Unlike the disconnect between researchers with practitioners experienced by other research disciplines⁸, creative arts researchers and research students not only collaborate extensively with the arts, cultural and entertainment industry sectors, but as practitioners and professional artists they are part of the industry and contribute to our national and international reputation. Since 2007, for example, Australia’s Venice Biennale representatives and Archibald Prize winners included staff and HDR graduates from Australian public universities.

In the United Kingdom, the Arts and Humanities Research Council has supported capacity building in practice-led research in creative arts research through specific fellowships and granting programs for over ten years⁹, at a time when creative arts in Australia struggled to obtain ARC recognition. This UK strategy has successfully led to equitable inclusion of ‘practice-led research’ in the AHRC funding

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.

³ Reference for Business (2015) Encyclopedia of Management - Product Design. <http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/management/Or-Pr/Product-Design.html>

⁴ Boy, G. (2013). From STEM to STEAM: Toward a Human-Centered Education. In *Paper submitted to the European Conference on Cognitive Ergonomics, Toulouse, France*. See also: <http://stemtosteam.org/> and http://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/information_services/research/policy_roundtable/ReadytoInnovateFull.pdf

⁵ US congress (2013) H. RES. 51 <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-113hres51ih/pdf/BILLS-113hres51ih.pdf>

⁶ Centre for the Advancement of Informal Science Education (2014) Federally Funded STEAM Programming at <http://informalscience.org/perspectives/blog/federally-funded-steam-programming>

⁷ Australia Council (2015) *Arts Nation: An overview of Australian Arts. 2015 edition*. Australia Council for the Arts. Sydney. Retrieved from: <http://australiacouncil.gov.au/research/arts-nation-an-overview-of-australian-arts>

⁸ Woolf, S. (2008). The meaning of translational research and why it matters. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 299(2), 211-213.

⁹ Arts and Humanities Research Council (2015) Research Grants - Practice Led and Applied. <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/funding/opportunities/current/researchgrantspracticeledandapplied>

framework, with support provided for research centres in creative practice. This investment, together with the recognition of the centrality of arts to national economic growth, has been reflected in successful UK creative industries strategies¹⁰.

Improving innovation by supporting creative and entrepreneurial responses

ERA confirms significant innovation in creative arts research and development with over 13,000 new works being submitted to ERA in 2012 and nearly 16,000 in 2010. This ‘discovery research’ in creative arts contributes to innovation in the arts and entertainment industries in a similar way that any other disciplinary research influences its particular industry sectors. In the same way that runway fashion designs are heavily influential upon the retail fashion industry, discovery research in creative arts disciplines influences the commercial and critical artistic and cultural sector providing new techniques, ideas, content and skilled human resources.

As with other disciplines, it is crucial to support and advance ‘blue-sky’ discovery and skills development in artistic disciplines within the research funding and performance system to ensure that it can be applied for productivity improvement broadly for economic and social gain across industry and maintain its direct contribution to the arts, cultural and entertainment industry sectors.

Creative arts is centrally positioned to make a significant contribution to Australia’s industry policy realignment; to ‘facilitate the businesses of the future’¹¹ and support growth in entrepreneurial spirit if the barriers created by the research policy and funding environment are addressed. By maintaining the current neglect for the support of creativity in research policy and funding arrangements, Australia risks falling even further behind its US and UK counterparts in developing the creative responses and innovation that industry needs if it is to compete effectively in the global economy.

In responding to the specific topics posed by this review, DDCA has, of necessity, highlighted the gaps and difficulties present within the current system, but has included recommendations for reform that will allow Australia to catch up with international counterparts who already recognise and support the contribution of creative arts research and development to innovation, entrepreneurial behaviour and economic productivity.

DDCA is actively working with its members to develop metrics and measures that will meet the gaps in Australia’s current system and better include creative arts research in industry, practitioner and end-user engagement and graduate employment performance evaluation. However, unlike similar representative bodies in other disciplinary groups, DDCA is not funded as a scholarly academy and is dependent upon a small subscription based operating budget. It would welcome support and input by the Commonwealth Government to hasten the delivery of improved measures and metrics that will rectify the omissions in the current research policy and funding framework.

¹⁰ Technology Strategy Board (2013) Creative Industries Strategy 2013 to 2016.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creative-industries-strategy-2013-to-2016>

¹¹ Macfarlane, I. (2015) Ministerial Statement: Science and Innovation - Building Australia’s industries of the future. <http://minister.industry.gov.au/ministers/macfarlane/speeches/ministerial-statement-science-and-innovation-building-australias>

DDCA RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION TOPICS AND QUESTIONS

Consultation Topic 1: Overview of Current Policy and Funding Framework for University Research

Despite the connectivity between creativity and innovation and its direct contribution to productivity in industry through for example: design (product and communication); to the arts, culture and entertainment industry through creative content (sound, visuals, new ‘works’ and technologies) – the majority of current government support mechanisms for research and innovation exclude or are less accessible to research in creative arts.

The Arts are excluded from research funding allocated by science agencies, rural research and development corporations, and ‘other science and innovation activities’ listed within the review issues paper. They are severely underrepresented in access to competitive grants scheme with only the ARC providing a relatively open access policy for creative arts, yet only a few ARC grants are awarded to progress the advancement of the creative arts disciplines (as opposed to employing artistic techniques to achieve advances in other disciplines, for example: cultural studies, education, social inclusion, and technology).

The Australia Council for the Arts and many other ‘arts funding’ agencies and schemes are excluded from AGCR list by the criteria that regulates inclusion and which specifically excludes schemes that fund ‘literary and artistic activities’ – despite the level of research and development that is inherent in their production and the competitive nature of the award process¹². The reasoning appears to be based on an unclear differentiation between practice and research, yet a better connection between researchers and practitioners outside academia is exactly what is sought from this reform.

Creative arts research is also limited in its ability to demonstrate excellence in international benchmarking because not all international ranking systems used by universities adequately capture excellence in the creative arts. The measures they rely upon are predominantly focused on text-based publication and the institutions with which they benchmark ignore many of the leading global creative arts schools which operate outside the university sector. The progress of creative arts research has been disadvantaged in institutions where international ranking performance influences internal research investment. In the longer term, such prioritisation strategies can undermine overall university ranking performance, as recent changes to rankings methodology has demonstrated¹³.

This broad exclusion from many of the current mechanisms used to evaluate and invest in research excellence limit the capacity of creative arts research to fully contribute to national improvements in research and development.

Recommendations

DDCA welcomes a review of the current support mechanisms to ***better reflect the contribution of creative arts research to industry and innovation, and to increase the translation of research conducted within academia*** for improved practitioner and industry adoption and engagement with end users.

¹² DET (2015) Australian Grants Register. 2015 ACGR application for listing form: Explanatory Notes http://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/2015applicationforlisting2015acgr_late_applications_22dec2014.pdf

¹³ 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>

Ideally, DDCA would like to see a comprehensive revision of the current policy and funding arrangements which would allow arts-related companies, practitioners and researchers to fully participate in the Government's R & D and innovation support framework. However, if the current ACGR framework is to be retained, the Australia Council should be included in the ACGR and recognised as a 'category 1 funder' and the criteria for ACGR inclusion should be modified to recognise innovation in research based practice in the arts, and arts funding agencies actively encouraged to apply for inclusion.

The issues paper canvasses a change to the current 'dual funding system' whereby institutions have the autonomy to allocate a proportion of RBG funding which is untied to specific funded projects, to support their own strategic direction. Given the exclusion of creative arts within the current competitive grants framework, this untied institutional funding is an essential mechanism for investment in research, development and training in artistic disciplines. Without significant reform and increased equitable access to other parts of the research investment framework, the dual funding system should not be amended

Consultation Topic 2: Research Block Grants (RBG)

The issues paper states that the current formulae is structured 'to allow winners and losers' but the creative arts are rarely among the winners, irrespective of size or age of institution. The allocation formulae that is currently applied has never been 'fit for purpose' in relation to creative arts research and its connectivity with its practitioners and industries.

Current formula applied in HERDC does not recognise outputs which are outside specific written scholarly formats. This not only ignores creative arts research outputs which are communicated within formats appropriate to their industry and practice, but also neglects other forms of research dissemination and communication which may be more likely to influence and engage with industry and end-users (reports, media items, film, web sites etc.). For those disciplines outside the arts seeking to engage with industries outside academia, the skills in these forms of communication that arts disciplines possess could contribute to more effective industry and end-user engagement.

HERDC measurement criteria are weighted towards narrowly focused ACGR schemes which exclude creative arts research projects and thus creative arts disciplines are disproportionately affected by RBG allocation that is given to support indirect costs of ACG research. This acts as a 'double disadvantage'¹⁴ for creative arts research support when ACGR success is used as a measure of institutional decision-making for research investment.

The current focus on research income as a measure of excellence rewards *input* and not the *outputs* of research – potentially encouraging inflation of research costs rather than rewarding those who produce research outputs more economically or with extensive industry participation / in-kind contributions. Research in the arts is more likely to, and does, attract significant in-kind support: in personnel; infrastructure; and research resources; generating savings for institutions and government, but these are rarely recognised in terms of academic researcher or group research performance.

Current RBG calculation measures do not appropriately capture or provide incentives for industry, practitioner and end-user engagement in the arts. This is clearly demonstrated by the extent to which artistic disciplines engage with practitioners, industry and end-users but receive little return through HERDC formulae.

Recommendations

DDCA recommends ***the merger of the current HERDC and ERA evaluation mechanisms and a revitalisation of the criteria that is used***, particularly to reduce the weighting given to

¹⁴ Strand, D. (1998). *Research in the Creative Arts. Evaluations and Investigations Program Report*. Canberra.

research income and increase recognition for industry, practitioner and end user engagement. It would also like to see government encouragement for universities **to better recognise external engagement within institutional funding allocations** however, it recommends that the current system of self-determination for the allocation of block grant funding remains. DDCA is currently working on the development of measures that will better capture creative arts research engagement data and would welcome government support to undertake this task.

Consultation Topic 3: Competitive Grants Programmes

Comparatively few ARC grants are awarded to creative arts researchers, particularly when the aim of the research is to advance the artistic discipline itself rather than applied for the advancement of other disciplines. The appointment of a practitioner as Executive Director HCA is welcome and it is to be hoped that this will engender a greater understanding about the nature of creative arts research. A greater involvement of arts practitioners from inside and outside academia would add significantly to ARC understanding of the contribution of creative arts to research and development and economic growth within the art, cultural and entertainment industries, as would a closer relationship between the ARC and the Australia Council for the Arts.

The current disproportionate weighting given to ACGR scheme income within HERDC and ERA can act as a disincentive to institutional research investment in disciplines such as creative arts where access to ACGR schemes is more limited. This can result in a cycle of disadvantage which diminishes rather than advances research activity through reduced funding from both external and internal sources and concomitant reduction in ‘research time’ in institutions where ACGR receipt is used to determine workload allocations.

Creative arts research is frequently applied to generate improvements in health, education and community wellbeing.¹⁵ Inclusion of societal benefit as an essential component within competitive granting schemes would better recognise the societal improvement contribution made by the arts, as would a greater weighting towards ‘industry/ practice’ experience and end-user engagement, providing that arts industry, practitioner experience and end-users/ consumers of artistic product were adequately encompassed in revisions.

Some artistic disciplines would benefit from competitive schemes which support early stage commercial research endeavours, providing that the criteria and descriptions used were inclusive. Such start-up activities could include support for seed activities leading to external production or event investment and the creation of commercial art galleries, performance or film companies to support emerging businesses and entrepreneurs who will lead future success in Australia’s arts, cultural and entertainment industry sector.

Recommendations

DDCA agrees that **the conditions and expectations that determine award of competitive grants should be reviewed**, and should ensure that **the contribution that creative arts research makes is more clearly encompassed**. It would also welcome the inclusion of mechanisms that recognise the societal benefits of research, the inclusion of practitioners and industry in decision-making and the establishment of schemes to support start-up activities, providing that the contribution of the arts is appropriately and equitably considered.

DDCA suggests that to better understand and extend the contribution of creative arts research to Australian society and economy, the ARC consider establishing a capacity-building scheme for creative arts research, perhaps in collaboration with the Australia Council.

¹⁵ 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>

Consultation Topic 4: Performance of the Research System

Creative arts research enjoys exceptionally good practitioner, industry and end-user engagement. A recent analysis of university web sites¹⁶ reveals over 160 specific exhibition and performance spaces located in universities across the country which are regularly used to engage industry and arts practitioners, end-users and public audiences in the results of creative arts research. This engagement data is not collected as part of the current framework and there is little exploration of how such engagement can be used to enhance industry collaboration.

Creative arts research provides innovative thinking, enhanced communication and new design approaches to a range of products, industries and even research programs, but the current framework does not provide incentives for such collaborative exploration. The lack of data is compounded by a paucity of institutional mechanisms for positively rewarding such activity and contributes a disincentive to greater industry engagement and commercialisation by creative arts researchers.

Recommendations

DDCA supports *the on-going development of engagement metrics* and their application as a mechanism to reform and reshape Australia's research policy and funding environment, providing *that the metrics are sufficiently inclusive to reflect the contribution of creative arts research*. DDCA will shortly embark on a project to capture and consolidate the extent of engagement undertaken by creative arts researchers and develop a suite of arts-appropriate engagement metrics that can be applied to better reflect this contribution in institutional evaluation systems.

DDCA recommends that the government urgently considers *the adoption of strategies to progress productivity and build capacity in creative arts research*, such as those adopted in the UK and US. It recommends that, at the very least, there should be a specific focus on supporting creative arts research within the new Industries Growth Centres, whether this is as part of a focus on specific arts industries such as film, or on the contribution that creative arts research can bring to industry research and development more broadly.

DDCA is *opposed to the introduction of a uniform policy for university application*. There is presently much variation in how universities consider and respond to creative arts research within University IP and commercialisation policies, and it is unlikely that a standardised national IP policy would contain sufficient consideration of the complexity of IP ownership and rights in the creative arts to usefully improve engagement and commercialisation in these disciplines.

Consultation Topic 5: Research Training and Employment

A growing number of higher degree research (HDR) students in creative arts disciplines are already embedded within their practice and industries, and focus on improving their productivity and that of their industry through their research. Institutional systems need to be encouraged to better accommodate and recognise this.

The current higher education expectation that graduates will become employed by 'an employer' does not recognise the number of graduates in creative arts disciplines who will take up self employment or start their own small businesses. Only a quarter of practicing artists are located in traditional 'employer-employee' settings compared with three quarters operating as freelancers or self

¹⁶ Wilson, J. (2015). 'The hidden topography of Australia's arts nation: The contribution of universities to the artistic landscape'. *Australian Universities Review* (in press).

employed¹⁷. The ‘portfolio career’, identified as an emerging feature of employment for the next generation¹⁸ is a familiar scenario for arts professionals¹⁹ yet the majority of university performance and management measures do not reflect this reality.

In relation to traditional ‘employed’ settings, creative arts experience and skills are important to employers across many industries:

“We need people who think with the creative side of their brains,” says GlaxoSmithKline’s Annette Byrd, “people who have played in a band, who have painted, been involved in the community as volunteers. It enhances symbiotic thinking capabilities, not always thinking in the same paradigm, learning how to kick-start a new idea, or how to get a job done better, less expensively²⁰.”

The ability for HDR students in creative arts disciplines to engage and embed within the global industries and practice worlds where they will work is crucial, yet within some institutions this opportunity is hampered by internal processes and outmoded enrolment requirements. This can prevent HDR students engaging fully with the global industry. For example, institutional residential restrictions can prevent participation in international initiatives²¹ which connect the Australian creative arts with global opportunities, audiences and peers.

Recommendations

DDCA recommends that the government ***develop and include metrics that are able to measure graduate success outside the current traditional employee-employer setting*** to better capture and encourage the entrepreneurial realities of the current global workplace. DDCA will shortly embark on its own data gathering and analysis in creative arts to develop and propose alternative metrics and would welcome government support for this project.

DDCA further suggests that ***the university sector be encouraged to review their own systems to reflect the needs and reality of HDR student engagement*** with practitioners in their industries and to facilitate better engagement with global HDR initiatives and networks.

¹⁷ 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. australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/do_you_really_expect_to_get_paid-54325a3748d81.pdf

¹⁸ 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>

¹⁹ 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

²⁰ 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 20001.

²¹ DutchCulture /TransArtists (2015) About: Mission. <http://www.transartists.org>