



Response to the Collections Council of Australia Ltd

Australian Framework and Action Plan for Digital Heritage Collections

APSR would like to congratulate the Collections Council on its comprehensive and forward-looking discussion concerning the future of Australia's digital heritage collections. APSR was established with a view to becoming a centre of excellence for the management of scholarly assets in digital format, and as such, shares many of the aims and concerns of the Collections Council in relation to digital data.

APSR notes the wide range of heritage collections covered by the Collections Council, while acknowledging the difficulty in defining the precise nature of what constitutes a heritage collection. There are many collections held in the higher education and research sectors which have not been noted in the report and which cannot be neglected in discussing the need for long-term preservation of Australia's heritage. These are not necessarily of a cultural nature but include such collections as the Atlas of Living Australia being developed by CSIRO and the Pollen and Spore Atlas under development at the Australian National University. It would be possible to name many more. Similarly there are collections held by government organizations, both state and national, which have value in this regard.

APSR is currently engaged in a number of activities of relevance to digital collections in the cultural sector. APSR outreach activities, which include conferences, seminars and other events, are open to and well-attended by the staff of libraries, museums and archives. The number of applications from various parts of the cultural sector to attend the forthcoming Digital Preservation Management Workshop to be held in Sydney in October of this year is a strong indicator of relevance.

The Online Research Collections Australia (ORCA) Registry project is designed to improve the capacity of institutional repositories, archives and data centres to create and share collection-level information and resources. Its aims to develop a discovery portal for collections information (that is, information about research collections), but its relevance is by no means limited to higher education and research as the main priority addressed by the ORCA Registry is to provide a better discovery environment for data collections produced by the wide range of individuals and institutions involved in the Australian innovation system. This includes all Australian higher education institutions; Government-funded research organisations (such as CSIRO); and commercial and not-for-profit organisations in sectors with research interests (such as archives, museums and libraries).

In considering the future of Australia's digital heritage, it is apparent that the issues facing the cultural sector have much in common with those of the higher education and research sectors. The "Principles for creating and managing digital heritage collections" set out on pages 12 and 13 of your report, for example, are just as relevant to other sectors. The Collections Council advocates a coordinated and collaborative approach within the cultural sector. We would suggest that the need for cooperation and collaboration goes beyond the cultural sector and should take into account the interests and activities of other sectors involved in the effective management and sustainability of digital data. There would be considerable advantage in working together and taking advantage of mutually beneficial developments.

The importance of data re-use and sustainability to underpin research activity has been recognized in a number of national and international reports, such as *Data for Science*, the Report of the Working Party of the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council (PMSEIC) and the *Final Report* of the eResearch Coordinating Committee.

The National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) is part of the Government's Backing Australia's Ability - Building our Future through Science and Innovation and is of relevance to developments in the cultural sector . Of particular significance to your Action Plan is Platforms for Collaboration, the Final Investment Plan for the Research Capability. This outlines key investment areas which will provide significant advances in the technologies and other requirements of digital data management. These will be of importance to all sectors.

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