



Australian
National
University

HUMANITIES RESEARCH CENTRE

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 5-YEAR REVIEW

SCHOOL OF LITERATURE, LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS



Response to the Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

1. Whether the HRC continues to be positioned as a centre of excellence for innovative and cross-collaborative Humanities scholarship and research, at home and abroad;
2. The effectiveness of the HRC in promoting and enabling educational activities, including graduate teaching programs and workshops, that interacts with students and leading scholars in the Humanities, with demonstrated benefits;
3. How effective the programs and linkages of the HRC are; locally, nationally and internationally, in attracting visitors, adjuncts and students to the HRC that contribute to the future sustainability of the Centre and to a stimulating Humanities environment at the ANU in general;
4. The continued relevance of the HRC and its programs to achieving the strategic objectives contained in *ANU by 2020* and the CASS Operational Plan;
5. The appropriateness of the governance and organisational structure of the HRC within the ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences to achieve its overall strategic objectives and maintain long term sustainability.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1.1

The ANU renew its commitment to the Humanities Research Centre and take steps to promote and enhance its role as Australia’s foremost centre for excellence in humanities research;

The Panel felt strongly that it is vital for the ANU to take a leading role in the humanities nationally and internationally and that the HRC should be the flagship of our efforts to fulfil this role. Moreover, the ANU has an exceptional body of scholars in the humanities and creative arts (broadly defined) and the HRC should be the principal focal point for harnessing this talent.

Recommendation 1.2

RSHA seek funding to make a strategic fixed-term (3-5 year) appointment of a Head of the HRC at Level E;

To help to implement Recommendation 1.1 the Panel felt that the provision of additional resources for a senior appointment would be an important indicator of the extent of the University’s commitment to the HRC as a flagship Centre. The Panel felt that in the event that this does not prove possible in the current financial climate, the Head should be appointed via an EOI.

Recommendation 1.3

For administrative purposes the HRC continue to be attached to the School of Literature, Languages and Linguistics;

The Panel reaffirmed the decision of the HRC Change Management Sub-Committee that, for administrative purposes, the HRC be attached to SLLL. However, the Panel also recognized and reaffirmed the importance of preserving the HRC’s independence and protecting and promoting its reputation as a centre for excellence in interdisciplinary research and engagement with a broad range of humanities disciplines.

The Panel endorsed the recent relocation of the HRC to the A. D. Hope Building, but affirmed that this is not to be seen to imply ‘ownership’ of the Centre.

Recommendation 1.4

The HRC's budget to conduct a Visiting Fellows and Conference program continue to be hypothecated;

The Panel believes that a hypothecated budget, which will ensure that the HRC continues to offer a Visiting Fellows and Conference program, is essential for the HRC to fulfil its mission.

Recommendation 1.5

The Head of the HRC be supervised jointly by the Director of the RSHA and the Head of SLLL; and that HRC Head present an Annual Report to the HRC Advisory Board (see Recommendation 1.6 below);

The Panel believes that it is important to underscore the continued independence of the Centre (especially during this period of transition) and address any lingering concern that the HRC has lost its independence resulting from nesting it in a disciplinary-based School. Accordingly, the Panel recommends that that the Director of RSHA and the Head of SLLL jointly supervise the Head of the HRC. Moreover, to further enhance accountability the Head of the HRC would also be required to present an annual report to the HRC Advisory Board, which includes all the Heads of School, the College and external stakeholders (see Recommendation 1.6 below).

Recommendation 1.6

The governance structure of the HRC be simplified viz. that the Executive and Advisory Board be combined into a single HRC Advisory Board;

The Panel believes that the existence of an Executive and a Board is cumbersome and overly bureaucratic. The Panel noted the importance of giving a broader sense of ownership of the HRC in RSHA and the College more generally and felt that the combination of Executive and Advisory Board would not compromise this. The role of the combined Board would be to oversee the strategic direction and good governance of the Centre. It may choose to establish a sub-committee to consult with heads of disciplines in relation to the selection of an annual theme and visiting fellows.

Recommendation 1.7

The composition of the HRC Advisory Board be:

- **Heads of Schools in RSHA (or their delegate)**
- **Director, RSHA**
- **Three external members representing stakeholders outside the ANU**
- **A College representative outside RSHA (nominated by the Dean)**

- **Head HRC (ex-officio);**

The Panel believes that this composition will combine good governance and broadly-based representation of the relevant stakeholders in an efficient and effective configuration.

Recommendation 1.8

We appoint a high profile individual (possibly from outside the ANU) to Chair the HRC Advisory Board.

In the past a prominent individual, often from outside the ANU, chaired the HRC Advisory Board. The Panel believes that the appointment of a high profile individual (again possibly from outside the ANU) to Chair the re-established Advisory Board would assist the Head to promote the Centre as Australia's leading humanities centre and a national and international centre of excellence.

Recommendation 1.9

A formal system of Associate Membership of the HRC be created;

The Panel believes that a formal system that allows any member of the ANU academic staff to register as an Associate Member of the HRC would greatly increase the sense of 'ownership' of the Centre by a broader academic constituency.

Recommendation 1.10

The long-standing relationship with the Freilich Foundation be restored;

The Panel noted that the Foundation was established under the auspices of the HRC and was supported by the HRC for 18 years, until the recent RSHA restructure. It is principally a result of the relocation of the HRC to a disciplinary-based School that the rupture has taken place. The Panel feels that it is in the best interest of the College, the HRC and the Foundation that the relationship be restored and felt that every effort should be taken to effect the re-establishment of the symbiotic relationship between the Centre and Foundation.

Recommendation 1.11

The HRC's international mission be reaffirmed;

The Panel recommended that new partners be sought to extend further the Centre's international links. In particular, the Panel believes that Centre should seek to establish further bi-lateral and multi-lateral linkages with IARU partners.

Recommendation 1.12

The HRC reaffirm its institutional commitment to the Consortium of Humanities Centres and Institutes (CHCI) and seek reciprocal affirmation from the Board of the CHCI;

The Panel noted that several of the submissions from within the CHCI urged us strongly to make no change to the current structure and mission of the HRC. The Panel expressed concern that in light of the submissions the adoption of any change resulting from this review may strain our longstanding relationship to CHCI. The Panel noted the importance of addressing any such problems.

Recommendation 1.13

The HRC continue its role in graduate education;

The Panel noted the contribution of the HRC to graduate education in the College. The Panel believes that the HRC should continue to draw upon its visiting fellows program to enhance graduate education in the College through the provision of master classes and workshops. HRC adjuncts should continue to supervise doctoral students where possible and continue to facilitate the Thesis Writing Workshop.

Recommendation 1.14

The Panel does *not* accept that there is a need for the creation of a separate interdisciplinary humanities graduate program;

The Panel noted that submissions (verbal and written), including the submission from the HRC advocated the creation of an Interdisciplinary Humanities Graduate Program. The Panel noted that context for this proposal was the final report of the 2013 Change Management Committee. The outcome of the Change Management Process was that for administrative purposes the Interdisciplinary and Cross Cultural Research (ICCR) program be located in the School of Archaeology and Anthropology (SoAA) in the new Centre for Heritage and Museum Studies. The Panel recognized the HRC's essential role in the establishment of the ICCR Graduate program. The Panel noted the concern expressed in submissions (verbal and written) that over time this might skew the focus of the program away from its current focus on broadly defined interdisciplinary humanities and arts. The Panel did not accept that this was an inevitable outcome of the changed administrative arrangements but strongly reaffirmed the importance of ensuring the ICCR program retain its broad focus on interdisciplinary humanities and arts and that all areas have responsibility for this.

Recommendation 1.15

The HRC develop an annual intensive Summer School in Interdisciplinary Research;

The Panel believes that as part of its contribution to graduate education the HRC should develop a Summer School in Interdisciplinary Research Methods. This could be a core course for Masters specialisation in Public Humanities and Culture and would provide credit towards postgraduate coursework requirements and it would be available for professional development. It could also be developed as an online program and possibly be taught at ANU House in Melbourne.

Recommendation 1.16

The HRC's mission to play a leading role *within* Australia be reaffirmed;

The Panel noted that there was broad agreement from the written submissions and interviews that the role of the HRC should be to serve as a platform to benefit the humanities more generally. Many of those interviewed (and others in written submissions) pointed to the need for the HRC to assume an advocacy role in Australia. The appointment of a high-profile Chair of the HRC Advisory Board would assist the incoming Head in fulfilling this role.

Recommendation 1.17

The HRC broaden its engagement with humanities research centres and scholars located in the Asia Pacific (including New Zealand);

The Panel noted again the strong relationship that the HRC has historically enjoyed with Centres in Britain and North America, which is evident in an analysis of the Visiting Fellows program. However, the Panel believes that the HRC should engage extensively in the region.

Recommendation 1.18

The HRC establish two designated 3-month periods for Visiting Fellowships (June – August) and (December – February);

The Panel believes that the establishment of two distinct periods for Visiting Fellowships will produce a greater concentration of Fellows, which will in turn allow for the creation of greater synergies among them and with ANU colleagues and generate opportunities for ongoing collaboration in general. The periods have been designated to maximize the potential for scholars in both the northern and southern hemisphere to apply noting issues of seasonality for southern hemisphere scholars in the past. The Panel also believes that concentrating the HRC Visitors program in this way will provide opportunities for the Head

(and any other academic staff of the Centre) to focus on the other priorities outlined in the Centre's mission.

Recommendation 1.19

HRC-funded Conferences be held in the designated Fellowship periods with the introduction of a subsidiary conference program in Summer themed around regional educational and research policy issues as they arise;

The reasons for this recommendation are the same as for Recommendations 1.16, 1.17 and 1.18. An annual winter theme and more flexible themes in summer will facilitate broader international engagement and importantly better utilise the university downtimes of the southern hemisphere.

Recommendation 1.20

The HRC Visiting Fellowship program be co-ordinated with the RSHA Distinguished Visitor funding;

The Panel noted that RSHA receives an annual grant from the College Research Committee to bring Distinguished Visitors to the University. The funding is distributed via application from academic staff in RSHA by a Committee comprising Heads of Schools and Chaired by the Director RSHA. The Panel believes that there is considerable potential to coordinate these schemes to ensure that they are complementary and that the maximum benefit of each is achieved.

Recommendation 1.21

The HRC clearly articulate how it expects its visiting fellows to participate and contribute to the HRC community;

The Panel noted from a verbal submission that the College is seeking more details of the proposed contribution to the College to be made by Visiting Fellows, Adjuncts and Emeriti prior to their appointment. The Panel endorsed this approach and recommends that it be adopted in relation to the HRC.

Recommendation 1.22

The HRC should continue to attract and appoint resident Adjuncts and Visiting Fellows as members of its academic community, to promote and support HRC programs as valuable stakeholders in the HRC community;

The Panel noted that the HRC has been very successful in recruiting a highly-motivated and active cohort of Adjunct Professors and Adjunct Senior Fellows. Collectively they make

significant contribution to the Centre through various forms of public engagement, graduate supervision and scholarship. Winner of the 2013 Prime Minister's Prize for non-fiction, for example, is a longstanding HRC Fellow. The Panel strongly supports the continuation of this approach to engaging with Adjuncts and long term Visiting Fellows.

Recommendation 1.23

The HRC Faculty Fellowship Scheme be continued but focussed on ECRs and linked to agreed outcomes;

The Panel found that Faculty Fellowships have provided important opportunities for staff and have resulted in some significant outcomes. The Panel noted, however, that the numbers of applications for the Fellowships have been low and not widely spread. The Panel believes that the scheme should continue but be limited to ECRs and linked to agreed outcomes. It should also be noted that Associate Memberships will also assist to get the word out about the Faculty Fellowship Scheme.

Recommendation 1.24

The HRC use Adjuncts and Visiting Fellows to mentor early career researchers;

Further to the previous recommendation (1.23) the Panel felt that the HRC should play a direct role in mentoring ECRs in the humanities at the ANU by involving adjuncts and visiting fellows in a mentoring role.

Recommendation 1.25

In addition to the collection of narrative Reports from Visiting Fellows and Conference Convenors that the HRC systematically collect quantitative data in relation to its programs and outcomes of Visiting Fellow visits;

The Panel believes that the HRC needs to be better able to measure the impact of its programs against performance indicators in research, funding and education. At present, narrative reports from Visiting Fellows and Conference Convenors are collected. Those examined by the Panel vary in length and usefulness for the purposes of program evaluation. The Panel believes that it is important for the HRC to collect statistical information to complement and supplement the narrative reports. The Panel noted the need for strict mechanisms to capture all research and publication outputs generated from its visiting fellowship program, conference program as well as a comprehensive record of activities that could be defined as public impact.

Recommendation 1.26

The HRC develop a strategic plan in relation to philanthropy and in attracting external funding;

The HRC submission drew the Panel's attention to the difficulties posed by a lack of philanthropic support, especially when compared to the situation in the US. However, the HRC has previously had success in attracting philanthropic support. The Panel believes that the HRC needs to work with the College and the University's Endowments and Philanthropy staff to establish a strategy in this area.

Recommendation 1.27

The HRC establish a 'Friends' group to leverage off its Alumni;

Over the past forty years the HRC has hosted hundreds of Visiting Fellows and Conference Visitors. The Panel recommends that a systematic attempt be made to involve some of these 'HRC Alumni' in the support of the Centre.

Recommendation 1.28

The HRC be provided with appropriate accommodation, facilities and administrative support to maintain its reputation as a world-class Centre to visit.

The Panel noted that a highlight of the submissions (verbal and written) as well as evidence in the Fellows' reports was the appreciation expressed for the administrative support provided by the HRC and the important role administrative staff have played in the Centre. The Panel believes that maintaining the quality of the 'HRC experience' is an important part of promoting and sustaining its international reputation as a desirable place to visit. The Panel believes that it is important that the HRC retain an appropriate level of resourcing noting that inadequate administrative resourcing could limit the capacity to build and sustain the HRC.

Membership of the Review Panel

Chair:

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Professor Paul Eggert
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