

Call for investment in open scholarly publishing system in Australia

Background

The importance of unfettered access to academic research has never been clearer than over the past two years of the global pandemic. The extraordinary scientific advances by many thousands of scientists – for example the ground-breaking work in Australia on airborne transmission of COVID-19 and the understanding of its epidemiology – were made possible by unprecedented support for open publishing of academic research. This open publishing was a direct result of high level international political intervention.

As we emerge from the pandemic, there is an opportunity to reflect on what worked and what did not, in order to direct future investment in scholarly communication in Australia that supports equitable and diverse approaches. It is now clear that a lack of access to research will threaten Australia’s ability to respond to looming global challenges, such as climate change.

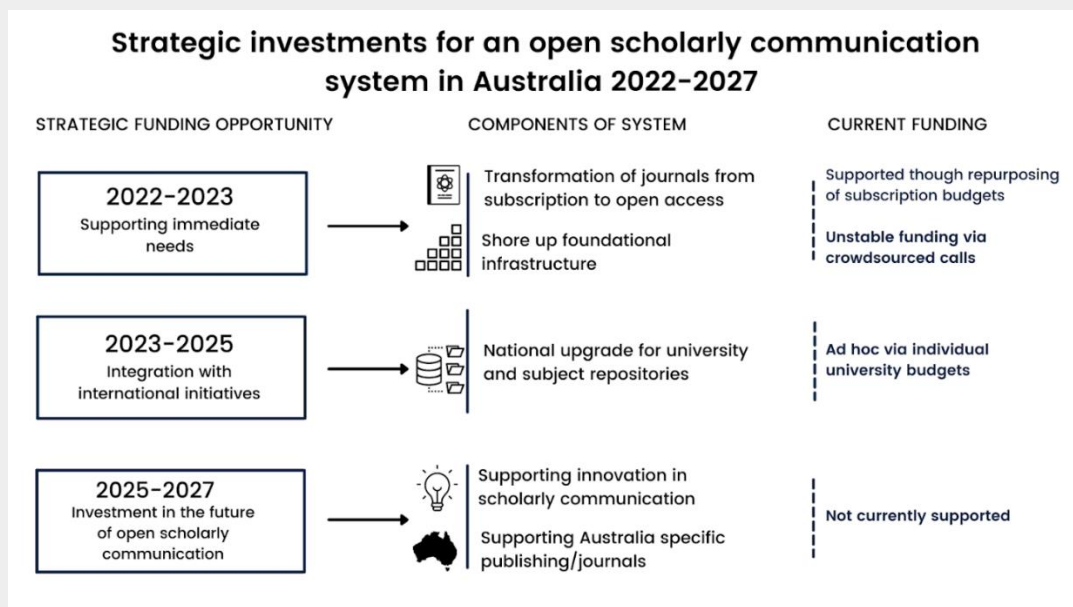
In Australia, scholarly publishing is supported by a diverse ecosystem which includes large and small commercial publishers, individual academic-led journals and university repositories. There has been no Federal government investment in this ecosystem since the funding for university repositories in 2006.

The opportunity at this election

We fully support efforts to increase open access being spearheaded by the Office of the Chief Scientist. In addition, we call on the next government to demonstrate leadership and to pursue opportunities to make academic research accessible to all Australians through long-term investment in the diverse scholarly publishing system.

We are calling for investment in three waves:

- Support for immediate needs, specifically for transforming closed access journals to open access, and for the systems and technical infrastructure that underpin open scholarly publishing
- Integration with international open science initiatives, specifically by upgrades of university and subject repositories that curate open research outputs
- Investment in the future of open scholarly research, including specific investment in the publication of research that is unique to Australia and support for innovative scholarly communication approaches.



Open Access Australasia is a membership organisation of 20 Australian university libraries, all New Zealand university libraries through the Council of New Zealand University Librarians, Creative Commons Australia, Tohatoha Aotearoa Commons, Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), Australian Digital Alliance (ADA) and Wikimedia Australia. Its mission is to attain open access to research in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand through advocacy, collaboration, awareness, and capacity building across the Australian and New Zealand research sectors.

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