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Open Access Australasia and CAUL Support the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science

The adoption of the [UNESCO Open Science Recommendation](#) at the 41st Session of its General Conference this week in Paris is a strong global signal of the importance of a coherent approach to open science. Open science is an inclusive and ambitious endeavour, needed for equitable access to knowledge. The UNESCO Recommendation explicitly recognises the breadth of open science and the importance of each of its components including open access to research, open data, open educational resources, open source software, source code, and hardware.

The UNESCO Open Science Recommendation is the result of more than two years of work, which started before the pandemic. In 2020, it became especially clear that global collaboration on open science was essential to address the global challenge presented by the pandemic, and to enable the pandemic response. The UNESCO Recommendation makes explicit reference to the need for future collaboration and is itself a manifestation of that collaboration.

Australia and New Zealand are members of UNESCO. Earlier this year an Australian delegation supported the language within the Recommendation during the final drafting in an intergovernmental meeting of experts. In a [speech at the 41st Session](#) Australia's delegate stated that "Australia commends UNESCO for its work on the draft Recommendation on Open Science, which will benefit people around the world".

Discourse around open science has been increasing in Australia and New Zealand. In 2019, the Australian House of Representatives inquiry into Australian Government Funding Arrangements for non-NHMRC Research [recommended that](#) "the Australian Government develop a more strategic approach to Australia's open scholarship environment". In 2020, the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) and Open Access Australasia (previously AOASG) coordinated [national and international consultations](#) with a broad range of senior stakeholders on a potential policy approach to open research in Australia. More recently, in 2021, Australia's Chief Scientist, Dr Cathy Foley, began a body of work focused on developing a [national approach to open access](#).

The UNESCO Recommendation should be the impetus for countries to develop their own nationally coordinated approaches to open science. The National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) Roadmap currently under development in Australia offers an opportunity to invest in foundational infrastructure. To support this work, a strong policy response is also needed. Open Access Australasia and CAUL continue to explore how to further advance and support a coordinated approach to open science in Australasia. The UNESCO Recommendation provides a useful frame for our ongoing work in advocating for, and supporting progress around, not only open access, but the broader concept of open science, and everything that it encompasses. Both CAUL and Open Access Australasia are keen to hear from groups who are interested in further discussions.

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About Open Access Australasia

[Open Access Australasia](#) is a membership organisation of 20 Australian university libraries, all 8 New Zealand university libraries through the Council of New Zealand University Librarians, Creative Commons Australia, Tohatoha Aotearoa Commons, the 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 New Zealand through advocacy, collaboration, awareness, and capacity building across the Australian and New Zealand research sectors. oaaustralasia.org

Contact: Dr Ginny Barbour Director, Open Access Australasia director@oaaustralasia.org

About the Council of Australian University Librarians

The [Council of Australian University Librarians](#) is the peak leadership organisation for university libraries in Australia. CAUL members are the University Librarians or equivalent of the 39 institutions that have representation on Universities Australia and the eight members of the Council of New Zealand University Librarians (CONZUL). CAUL makes a significant contribution to higher education strategy, policy and outcomes through a commitment to a shared purpose: To transform how people experience knowledge – how it can be discovered, used and shared. CAUL's vision is that society is transformed through the power of research, teaching and learning. University libraries are essential knowledge and information infrastructures that enable student achievement and research excellence. CAUL has strategic programs of work that aim to advance open scholarship ([Advancing Open Scholarship Program](#)) and open educational resources ([Enabling a Modern Curriculum Program](#)). CAUL is committed to progressing the open access agenda through strategic procurement activities as part of the [CAUL Consortium](#). www.caul.edu.au

Contact: Catherine Clark, CAUL Program Director Advancing Open Scholarship Program caul@caul.edu.au