

Open Access Australasia Submission to the

Academy of Social Science of Australia

Concerning the Decadal Plan for Social Science Research Infrastructure 2023-32

Submitted on behalf of the [Open Access Australasia Executive Committee](#)

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Open Access Australasia is a membership organisation of 23 Australian university libraries, 8 Aotearoa New Zealand university libraries through the Council of New Zealand University Librarians, Creative Commons Australia, Tohatoha Aotearoa Commons, Australian Library and Information Association, Australian Digital Alliance, Wikimedia Australia, the Australian Citizen Science Association and National and State Libraries Australasia. 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 Aotearoa New Zealand research sectors.

Our interest in this plan relates specifically to the importance of open access and open science in the future of social science research. We note that the diversity of research and research outputs in the social sciences could lead to challenges in relation to the implementation of open access and open science, but at the same time offers significant opportunities.

We have addressed the following questions:

Q1. How would you modify or augment our description of the current state of assets, systems, rules and skills and Training?

We welcome the framing of this plan to tackle the toughest social problems and the comprehensive overview of the building blocks of research infrastructure. However, we note that the discussion seems largely to focus on data with little mention of the enormous diversity of other research outputs in the social sciences, except under the section on PID generation. We recommend that there is a specific acknowledgement of the very diverse range of outputs and the challenges associated with developing processes that encompass this diversity.

The current state does not specifically mention open access (other than once to data) or open science. We do note that the FAIR and CARE principles are mentioned.

We recommend that the principles of open science are included into the current state, given work that is going on internationally (e.g. through the [UNESCO Open Science Recommendation](#)) and, to some extent nationally, to build these into the research system.



Q3. Which needs can be met through improvements to existing assets, systems, rules or skills and training? Briefly describe the improvements required.

There is already an ecosystem of dissemination of research outputs - through traditional journals - both large and small, repositories based in universities and elsewhere and more experimental models. However, as research becomes more open there is a need for this ecosystem to be supported, in particular to ensure that the diverse mechanisms for dissemination are allowed to flourish and that control of these sits within the research community, rather than within commercial organisations. This concept - “[bibliodiversity](#)” is increasingly recognised globally as being essential for a thriving research system. As open access and open science have become more important in research overall, it is clear that there is a need for training, both in their underpinning concepts and in their application - for example that of [rights retention](#)

Q4. Which needs require that the sector advocates for new assets, systems, rules or training? Briefly describe any new infrastructures you think are required, including where possible examples and any requirements for successful implementation (e.g., incentives, funding, partnerships).

There is a need to support a diverse system of dissemination of research outputs that align with principles of open science. In particular, investment is needed to support academic-led and experimental methods of dissemination, underpinned by open science and the CARE and FAIR principles. Successful examples include the [Open Libraries of the Humanities](#) (OLH) and preprint servers such as [SocArXiv](#)

There is a critical need for reform of incentives in research. Especially in the social sciences, the diverse range of outputs does not easily fit into research assessment practices in a way that recognises their diversity and value, and that supports open research practices. We encourage consideration of research assessment principles as discussed by [DORA](#) and the [Hong Kong Principles](#) in order to change research culture incentives and assessment practices to value social sciences and Indigenous knowledges equally alongside other fields of research.