

F.A.I.R. POLICY STATEMENT

Research Australia University Roundtable | 16 March 2017

INTRODUCTION

The Research Australia University Roundtable is a committee of Research Australia and operates under a Charter approved by the Research Australia Board in November 2012 and most recently ratified in April 2016.

The Roundtable is invited to consider the attached F.A.I.R. Policy Statement, and make a recommendation to the Research Australia Board as to whether Research Australia should endorse this policy.

RESPONSIBLE

Greg Mullins, Head of Policy

ACTION

For review and recommendation

BACKGROUND

Originally developed as set of principles to be applied to data, the concept of F.A.I.R. (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) is now increasingly being applied to other research outputs. The application of F.A.I.R. principles to research outputs ensures that anyone find, read, use and reuse them.

In July 2016, under the auspices of the Universities Australia's Deputy Vice-Chancellors (Research) Committee, a working group of representatives of university, research, business and the not-for-profit sector, with observers from government bodies, drafted a national statement of principles aimed at opening up access to Australia's research. The draft statement was sent for consultation across the Australian higher education sector as well as to relevant government agencies, peak bodies, and industry associations involved in research in Australia. High-level feedback was also sought from relevant international bodies working in open access.

The resulting statement proposes a framework for this access that builds on principles already established for data: namely that all Australia's research outputs should be F.A.I.R. (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable).

The Australasian Open Access Strategy Group (OASG) is undertaking coordination of the statement and its dissemination, and has invited Research Australia to endorse the Policy Statement. (Dr Virginia Barbour, Executive Officer of the OASG, presented to the University Roundtable in November 2015 on the work of the OASG and the movement for Open Publishing.)

As at 1 March, 'statements of support from the Council of Australian University Libraries (CAUL), the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), Creative Commons Australia, the Open Data Institute, Queensland (ODI-Q), Knowledge Unlatched, and Australia Policy Online were 'in hand or promised and it is being considered by a number of others including National and State Libraries Australasia and the various Learned Academies.'

Further information is available at <https://www.fair-access.net.au/fair-statement>

POLICY STATEMENT ON F.A.I.R.¹ ACCESS TO AUSTRALIA'S RESEARCH OUTPUTS

Introduction

In the new knowledge economy, skills, knowledge and new ideas are a country's most valuable resource. Keeping ahead of this economic transformation requires a new approach to knowledge discovery and dissemination that combines strong policies with core infrastructure and cultural change.

Other countries—including the USA, Canada, China and in the UK and European Union—are making policy, funding and legislative changes to improve the discoverability and impact of their research publications and data. A new model, F.A.I.R., is being adopted worldwide to make research output data Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable².

Australia's ability to remain competitive and contribute fully to the global economy relies on it grasping the new opportunities available for research dissemination to advance knowledge, solve complex real world problems and stimulate innovation. Lack of access to interlinked evidence in research publications and research data currently inhibits national and international research and scholarship, collaboration, and public debate.

This statement affirms the need to make Australia's publicly funded research outputs F.A.I.R., recognising this will require different approaches across different types of research output, a long-term national commitment, and consideration of the global change agenda.

With F.A.I.R. access, Australian research will be more visible, the broader community will have better access to well-founded knowledge, Australian researchers will be able to more easily collaborate locally and globally, including with industry, and the Australian research enterprise will be more accountable to the community it serves. Furthermore, implementing a national approach of F.A.I.R. access to Australia's publicly funded research outputs will position Australia as a participant and leader in the growing international open research and innovation ecosystem. It will ensure that Australia maximises the return on its public investment in research and innovation.

F.A.I.R. Access Policy Statement

All Australian publicly funded research outputs will be Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable. Access to research outputs will accord with international practices that are well defined, secure and trusted, and delivered through sustainable, fair, and efficient dissemination models. Publicly funded researchers will be expected, supported and rewarded to disseminate their work in such a way that anyone can find and re-use research publications and research data for further research, policy development, innovation, education and public benefit.

¹ Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable

² The FAIR Data Principles <https://www.force11.org/group/fairgroup/fairprinciples>

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

By 2020, Australian publicly funded researchers and research organisations will have in place policies, standards and practices to:

1. Make publicly funded research outputs findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable.
1. Specifically:
 - a. make research publications immediately free to read at the time of publication through a range of different strategies, either via a publisher's website or an institutional or other acceptable public repository.
 - b. make research data directly related to research publications as open as possible and as closed as necessary, in accord with the *Australian Government Public Data Policy Statement*.
 - c. apply Creative Commons licences and utilise international metadata standards to research outputs to ensure accessibility, interoperability and reusability.
 - d. ensure that authors/creators obtain and retain all necessary rights to enable the authorisation of publication and re-use in any format at any time.
 - e. support the development of incentives for researchers to make research outputs available in accord with this policy.
2. Value and practically support a range of dissemination models, recognising discipline diversity, whilst maintaining a commitment to the principles of this policy.
3. Ensure that the application of this policy is in accordance with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* and other codes of practice which lay out requirements to disseminate research responsibly, ethically and for the benefit of the Australian and international community.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles inform the application of this statement:

1. A commitment to the highest standards of excellence, impact and engagement in research practice, including the provision of support for effective and appropriate review processes and reproducibility.
2. Support for a diversity of financially sustainable, transparent and trusted dissemination models in recognition of disciplinary differences.
3. Support for approaches that encourage collaboration and the transfer of knowledge between researchers and users of research in industry, government and the general community.
4. A commitment to disseminate research outputs arising from public funding in a timely and easily accessible way that fosters social, economic, cultural and environmental benefits and promotes the development of human capacities.