

*Mapping HASS: One Year On...*  
DASSH 2015

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# Sources of funding & support

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# Main data sources

- Australian Bureau of Statistics R&D data (Businesses, Government and Private Non-Profit Organisations, and Higher Education Organisations data)
- Australian Research Council:
  - National Competitive Grant Programme (NCGP) data, and
  - Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) National Reports 2010 and 2012
- Department of Industry/Department of Education: Higher Education Staff and Student Statistical Collections
- Graduate Careers: Graduate Destinations Survey and Beyond Graduation Survey

# Research questions

- What are the major areas of research and teaching strength in HASS in Australia?
- What is Australia's public investment in teaching and research in the HASS disciplines?
- What are the current trends in HASS enrolments in Australian universities?
- Where are the gaps in research capabilities and research infrastructure now and in the future?
- What is the current profile and capacity of the academic workforce in HASS?

# Research profile

- HASS fields of research generate only 16% of the nation's research income, and receive 28% of Higher Education R&D investment, but they are responsible for 34% of the nation's research outputs. HASS contributed 42% of the total number of units of evaluation in ERA.
- Sum of ARC NCGP funding: HCA 9.7%, SBE 13.8%.
- The fields with the largest share of ARC NCGP funding in HASS were Studies in Human Society (21%), Psychology (16%), and History and Archaeology (12%).
- Dominance of project rather than programme funding. 53% of HASS ARC funds from Discovery; 22% from Linkage.

# Research profile continued

- Discovery funding: 68% of ARC funds went to Go8, 4% to regional institutions.
- Capacity building/critical mass/ infrastructure: HASS (and the humanities in particular) has limited participation and success in the Centres of Excellence (CoE) and the Linkage Infrastructure Equipment and Facilities (LIEF) schemes, securing 3 of 32 CoEs, and 73 of 810 LIEF grants over the period.
- Of the top 5 Fields of Research in the last ERA (those with the highest numbers of a rating of 5), 2 are from HASS: History and Archaeology, and Language, Literature and Communication.

# Teaching profile

- HASS teaches 65% of Australia's students with 52% of the staff.
- Demand for the BA is declining slightly: between 2001 and 2010, despite an increase in the number of students enrolling in the Society and Culture FoE, the number of students enrolled in a BA degree as a proportion of enrolments in the Society and Culture FoE dropped from 32% to 26%.
- Significant reductions in number of course offerings, tagged degrees, but increase in dual degree enrolments.
- Languages teaching expanded over the period by nearly 5,000 EFSTL but declined in certain language groups, notably Southeast Asian Languages and Australian Indigenous Languages.
- Over 2002-12, the average staff-student ratio (SSR) in HASS was 22.6, while in STEM it was 16.8. This was preceded by increase in HASS SSRs over the previous decade of between 27% and 35%.
- Many issues specific to particular fields of education in the report, with each FoE given separate analysis in the appendices.

# HASS in the workforce

- 60% of tertiary-educated Australians have a HASS degree. This would suggest that something around that percentage of those currently in the workforce are HASS trained.
- HASS graduates are highly employable, across a wide range of occupations but mainly education, service and retail. Four years out from graduation, 90% of graduates from the Society and Culture FoE who are available for employment have found fulltime employment.



# Academic workforce

- Ageing workforce: baby boomers make up 42% of the national workforce but 56% of the academic workforce.
- 50% of HASS academics are over 50 years of age.
- Staff profiles unplanned and skewed in various ways.
- Increase in casual employment: 43% in casuals as against 13% in FTE. Not systemic, but widespread strategy of cost reduction adopted by many universities.
- Consequences include the diminution of career prospects, lack of staff and curriculum development, reduced research capability, and the alienation of junior staff from the sector – all raise questions about the renewal of the workforce into the future.
- Significant increase in workloads over the period – student load increased 40%, staffing by 22% resulting in higher SSRs; burden of online teaching, fewer FTE staff to share admin and planning roles.

# Issues for the future

**The demand-driven system has led to market failures with implications for the sector as a whole.**

- Reduction in offerings in areas of national importance such as languages (only 9 institutions offering less commonly taught languages such as Cantonese and Hindi), with fewer majors and tagged degrees (but increase in dual degrees).
- Worrying contraction of HASS teaching from regions into the metros and Go8 institutions.
- No effective systemic consideration of addressing market failure with courses of low enrolment, and no central planning to maintain national knowledge base in areas of significance. But, some models for how this might be addressed.
- Some evidence of institutional dis-investment in HASS in response to cluster funding and shifts in student demand. (Four universities teach no languages, and some key disciplines such as history are missing from the regionals).

# Systemic impediments

## **There remain significant impediments to HASS' full participation in the research system**

- Exclusion from the tax concession for research.
- Exclusion of HASS from certain strategic research initiatives.
- Design of some sector-wide initiatives implicitly or even systemically privileges STEM research.
- Minimal levels of research infrastructure spending on HASS-related capabilities through central government programmes and by the universities.
- Delays in access to CRC and international Science Linkages funding, among others, and poor accommodation once access was gained.
- Poor fit between HASS research models and CoE model.

# The role of the universities

**We need to stress the importance of the universities' institutional investment in the health and future of the HASS disciplines.**

- Both government and the universities are the custodians of our national capacities in these fields, and their maintenance in the national interest. Individual institutional investments have sectoral implications, even when their decisions are primarily in response to intra-university concerns.
- The sector needs to recognise the long term effects of short-term decisions made in response to immediate funding concerns: they carry consequences for our national capacities in the HASS disciplines, for the viability and sustainability of these disciplines and of their workforce.
- Sector needs to come up with its own solutions, at the level of the individual university, in order to counteract the deleterious effects of the market and of current policy settings such as cluster funding.

# One year on....

- Dissemination: presentations over the last year in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Brisbane to individual universities; media coverage – ‘the humanities are not in crisis’; international engagement (via allied organisations), and network of Education and Science Counsellors.
- National policy advocacy/strategy: AAH’s policy submissions over the last year; early- and mid-career researchers roundtable; consultation with Department of Industry and Science capability mapping for Science and Research Priorities.
- *The Power of the Humanities* (AAH, 2015) launched by Minister Pyne 17 September 2015 at Parliament House in Canberra.

- Institutional planning: engagement from ARC and peak bodies such as DASSH, ACHRC, LCNAU, AUHE, etc; engagement from disciplines directly affected, at the level of their own university; the RUN online initiative on HCA course offerings in regional universities.
- Research projects: *Smart Engagement with Asia* (ACOLA, 2015); *Measuring the Value of International Research Collaboration* (AAH, 2015); *The Humanities in the Asia Region* (AAH ARC-LASP, 2014-2016).

# Priorities for further work

- Research engagement and collaboration
- Research priority mapping
- International comparisons
- Academic workforce issues
- Institutional investment and disinvestment
- Graduate destinations