Name of Submitter:

Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (DASSH)

Draft 2016 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap Submission Template

The Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (DASSH) welcomes the Expert Working Group's inclusion of Digital Data and eResearch Platforms (2.1) and Platforms for Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS) (2.2) as key research infrastructure focus areas. These two areas are vital for research within HASS disciplines as well as more broadly and have traditionally been given little focus and limited support. The inclusion of these areas in the Roadmap will ensure the continued development and streamlining of these resources, greatly assisting current and future researchers in our fields.

DASSH also welcomes the recognition of the importance of national, state and territory collecting institutions to research broadly, but particularly to HASS research. However, the omission of specifically highlighting the contributions of the GLAM sector (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) in their research infrastructure role concerns us. As stated in our initial submission to the inquiry, cultural institutions in the GLAM sector continue to play a critical role in research by collecting and disseminating digital documents, archives and collections, and expanding their reach (while reducing research costs) through networked research infrastructure. For example, UNESCO's Memory of the World documentary heritage repository provides access to the Tasmanian convict record and is linked to the Port Arthur and Tasmanian Archives and the National Archives through the ARC funded Founders and Survivors project. This data linkage allows a rich historical analysis and the capacity to compare the digital convict records with current health and biobank data to better understand factors shaping health and well being at a population level. The digitising and networking of research collections in the GLAM sector are essential ingredients in the achievement of eResearch Platforms (2.1) as well as Platforms for HASS (2.2). On-going support for these institutions is vital for continuing this important contribution to the research community.

While the inclusion of Digital Data and eResearch Platforms is important, DASSH reiterates the need for greater consideration of the relationship between the gathering of social media data and related data analytics, and the Digital Humanities agenda. In HASS disciplines social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc) give researchers tools to register real time reception of contemporary cultural works by participants and to allow for

new analysis of significant social and political events through data analytics (e.g. tracking trends in the recent Australian and US elections).

The rapid growth of the computational social sciences in Australia and the world is further example of this, and it is the social scientists and our disciplines that are well placed as scholarly leaders in this burgeoning field and as service disciplines to efforts in other fields. As the use and collection of these data increase, a national research infrastructure that not only makes archival material digitally accessible but also facilitates access to real-time data on human and other activities is imperative. Infrastructures built around these data could and should be made available at a national level, rather than have individual research teams constantly reinventing the wheel and only benefitting the participants of a short-term grant. For example, a team of researchers at seven Australian universities in the TrISMA consortium, led by QUT and assisted by the National Library, have used an ARC LIEF project to develop a world-first infrastructure that comprehensively tracks social media activities by Australian users of leading platforms including Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. This infrastructure is now being put to use for research in fields as diverse as media and journalism studies, senior living, health and disability studies, anti-radicalisation, and traffic management.

The current draft Roadmap goes a long way in recognising the developments in humanities and social sciences research and its contribution to a national research and innovation agenda. However, DASSH urges the Expert Working Group to consider and incorporate infrastructure that facilitates:

- the relationship between social media analytics and behavioural research around predictive data analytics as a guide to public policy;
- the contribution that legal, cultural and social science researchers can make to advancing Australia's 'intangible innovation capabilities' in the digital economy context, where networked ecologies of innovation are increasingly central;
- the contributions of the GLAM sector.

Furthermore, DASSH supports the call from QUT's Digital Media Research Centre for the establishment of a National Real-time Online Data Service (NRODS) to be added to the list of initiatives currently proposed in the draft Roadmap. Such a service will not only provide the stable computation and network infrastructure that will allow for uninterrupted collection of online data and a centralized storage and access facility, but also constitute a substantial cost-saving to researchers compared to individual access arrangements by research projects, and therefore constitutes a net saving in research budgets.