

Summary of General Discussions

Author: Olivia Shanahan

Context of engagement

The morning session of ARDC statewide consultations provided an opportunity for all audience members to provide input into the ARDCs longer term planning.

The sessions were facilitated using the following discussion prompts:

- What should ARDC do more of/new?
- What should ARDC do less of/end?
- What should ARDC do differently

Themes arising

In general, completely opposing views were often heard, eg can we invest in a few major things, vs invest in smaller, faster, high impact projects.

What should ARDC do more of/new?

- Lobby the big players and work as an advocate for the research infrastructure community and to promote the value of research infrastructure.
- Enable greater support for skills and training of researchers and research administrators.
- Facilitate partnerships with institutions for joint infrastructure investments.
- Build a picture of the government funders, relationships and opportunities for research organisations and research infrastructure providers.
- Undertake an environmental scan.
- Increase demonstration of the impact of eInfrastructure.
- More coordination and lobbying on a higher level with services and coordination with ARC and NHMRC.
- Support recognition by academics that the development of research infrastructure is a key part of research.
- Ensure sustainability in services and programs, and by building capacity.
- More focus on how ARDC can advocate for HASS .
- Develop communities of practice.
- Act as a broker for infrastructure services (particularly where nodes cannot i.e. eResearch SA)
- Commercial partnering opportunities around infrastructure.
- Focus on sustainability
- Better data curation discussions
- Make platforms easier to operate, better training

What should ARDC do less of/end?

- Don't keep doing what can be done elsewhere.
- Stop splintering funding into small pots of money. Concentrate on fewer, higher impact projects. Consult with the communities about how to do this.
- Don't fund 'core business' - focus on higher value, new horizon activities.
- Stop getting unis to build infrastructure that doesn't meet the needs of users and could be done better elsewhere.
- Give careful thought to the true gaps it can fill versus what institutions could or should be doing, or where the market fails.
- Stop activities that are not sustainable.

What should ARDC do differently?

- What is the next transformative thing? ARDC should be researching this, so as to stay on top of the game. Can do this in collaboration with Australian research groups.
- Survey international initiatives and adopt in ARDC as needed. Benchmark internationally.
- Assist institutions with governance models and policy as well as technical skills. This would assist institutions to develop their own sustainability framework.
- Facilitate translation and coordination of policy across institutions. ARDC may not lead such an activity, but might support it.
- Enable debate on ARDC funding for policy and skills as NCRIS is intended to fund infrastructure (hard investment) rather than policy and skills (soft investment).
- Make more existing national collections more FAIR.
- Ensure sustainability of nationally significant datasets. Lobby government to develop a framework for sustaining nationally significant reference collections. This could be done at institutional level (eg CSIRO national collections) or national level.
- Deal with exponential growth in data production. Maturity to dispose of data.
- Develop guidance frameworks for dealing with legacy soft and hard data. Provide recommendations for incentivizing this and describing best practice.
- Facilitate solutions around sensitive data.
- Better national coordination over platforms.
- Engage with peak professional associations – to serve as a spokes organisation (or works with others to provide a leadership group) to promote software as a legitimate research output.
- Support sustainability by providing advice on measuring value / impact; provide services to assist with these impact measurements (eg citation for services).
- Engage with science organisations who sit a little outside Department of Education funding but are logical partners (ABS, GA etc.). Opportunities to push organisations to be the long term home of significant datasets (e.g. BOM). Organisations producing data of value to research, but not funded to support research. Bring together these organisations, for sustainability.
- National role for coordination of infrastructure. E.g RDS infrastructure is done differently in each state.

- Develop team of consultant experts to work in organisations on short term assignments to provide help.
- Ensure there is a matrix that allows institutions and domains to communicate and engage.
- Medical data federation - ARDC could be conduit between data and infrastructure providers to ensure privacy and security of data.