



Electronic Resources Australia

What next for ERA?

On July 10th, members of Electronic Resources Australia (ERA) will be meeting at the State Library of New South Wales to have their say on its strategic direction. This is the next stage of a review of ERA's operations and vision that has been occurring over recent months.

ERA is a national initiative working towards national licences to a core set of online information resources that will provide Australians with easy access to information they need to pursue further learning and leisure activities. It aims to make purchasing of electronic resources simpler and more affordable for Australian libraries by enhancing purchasing power through negotiating collaboratively and harnessing the collective experience of libraries on electronic resource licensing.

Established with representatives nominated from within each of the library sectors, the Review Committee sought input from libraries and vendors through a call for submission process. The Review Committee considered these submissions, as well as their own experience within their sectors, in developing the recommendations in a report released in March 2012. era.nla.gov.au/for_libraries/ERAReview.html.

The review found that libraries want an expansion of the subject coverage and range of e-resources offered through ERA, including consideration of other product formats such as e-books) and sector-specific deals. It also found that members wanted continued lobbying of governments to establish and fund a core set of e-resources for all sectors. There was also a call for greater flexibility in licence conditions and the selection of products.

ERA will respond to the recommendations resulting from the review and conduct a survey to identify priority products for national and sectoral licences. It will facilitate and coordinate lobbying for funding of national and sectoral licences including conducting a forum with representatives from peak bodies. ERA will also review its business model and process for selecting products including considering expanding the format of products offered through ERA.


Chair of the ERA Executive, Roxanne Missingham, said the ERA is essentially a service for, and managed by, Australian libraries and the ERA Executive is committed to implementing the key findings of the review.

"This review has reinforced ERA's focus on national licencing and the need for a stronger co-ordinated approach to lobbying that harnesses the expertise within the sectors," she said.

"The ERA Executive will continue to give priority to those products that may be candidates for national licences as these provide the widest benefit to Australian libraries, however we will also consider sectoral deals as resourcing permits. ERA is looking to expand its product panel in 2012 and will do so according to any changes to the selection process implemented as a result of the review."

More information and access to the papers and presentations from previous Membership Forums can be found on the ERA website at era.nla.gov.au/governance/ElectronicResourcesAustralia-GovernanceMembershipForum.html.

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