

This file combines two documents. Page 1 reproduces the email message used to submit an electronic copy of the "one pager" tendered by Roger Atkinson to Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig, Cabinet Secretary and Special Minister of State, at the Australian Government's Community Cabinet Meeting, Como Secondary College, Como WA, on Wednesday 9 June 2010. Page 2 contains the "one pager", *Concerns about the ARC's implementation of "Ranked outlets"*, as tabled (original filename 9jun10-onepage-c-cabinet-RA.pdf). URL for this file: <http://www.roger-atkinson.id.au/comm-cabinet-2010/9jun10-onepage-c-cab-RA.pdf>

Date: Thu, 10 Jun 2010 02:53:16 +0800

To: John.Byron@innovation.gov.au, Aban.Contractor@innovation.gov.au, Anne.Byrne@innovation.gov.au

From: Roger Atkinson <rjatkinson@bigpond.com>

Subject: Community Cabinet Meeting, 9 June 2010 - meeting with Roger Atkinson

Cc: Catherine.McLoughlin@acu.edu.au, "Michael Keppell" <mkeppell@csu.edu.au>

Hi all,

Thank you very much for the attention given to the concerns that I raised during our meeting. Attached, a PDF copy of the "one pager" that I tabled. Much of this "one pager" will appear in the next available editorial of AJET, Editorial 26(5) (late June to early July; Editorial 26 (Special issue, 4) has been filled already). In particular, the "requests to the Australian Research Council" (perhaps toned down to "invitations to the ARC" :-)) will appear again.

I was very surprised (though pleased) to find senior Departmental officials in attendance, and I thank you for "being there" and for "caring". The ARC's implementation of "Ranked outlets" is only one small part of its ERA agenda, and the fortunes of one journal may seem inconsequential when your list amounts to about 20,712 journals. Nevertheless, the ARC should not place itself at risk of being seen as indifferent towards legitimate concerns about the extent to which their policies are evidence based and open to scrutiny by rank and file academics in the "research trenches", and the impact these policies are likely to have upon Australian journals and conferences.

In view of your responses (thank you!), I'm hopeful that we can move towards more meaningful, better researched, more evidence based, sounder explanations of the "Tiers", and some improved recognition of the role of journals and their editors. More meaningful than the *PowerPoints* listed under http://www.arc.gov.au/media/ARC_Presentations.htm. After all, we editors are the coal face persons who, by means of the peer review processes that we organise, provide the ARC with one metric, albeit a crude metric, for assessing research excellence. Editors are the persons who perhaps are better placed than others to be sources of evidence on the goodness of correlations between "tier rank of research outlet", "esteem" as estimated by citation counts, or various other metrics, and the merit of the research that is recorded in a publication in a "ranked outlet".

My special thanks to Senator Joe Ludwig as Chair, and his judicial curbing of my personal hyperactivity on this issue, one which perhaps was at the periphery of his portfolio.

Many thanks!

Roger Atkinson

For AJET

Please view the disclaimer at <http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/about/about.html#disclaimer>

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Concerns about the ARC's implementation of "Ranked outlets"

The Australian Research Council's implementation of "Ranked outlets" [1] has caused great concern to many professional society members engaged in journal publication and conference organisation for their societies. The new system of "Tiers for the Australian Ranking of Journals" 2010 version [2] is downgrading Australian based, open access, online only journals relative to their major competitors, which are mostly USA and Europe based multinational publishers, offering subscription access only.

To illustrate, as the executive editor for *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* [3] for 13 years I have striven to expand the journal, differentiating it from our major competitors, the UK-based *British Journal of Educational Technology* [Taylor & Francis, 4] and European-based *Computers & Education* [Elsevier, 5] by emphasising open access and building up our 'Australasian' regional support. In 2008 AJET was ranked 'Tier A', then in 2010 AJET was demoted to 'Tier B', whilst BJET and C&E retained 'Tier A' rankings [6]. This is a serious setback for AJET, because we expect that Australian authors who normally would have supported AJET will now turn to journals such as BJET and C&E, owing to institutional pressures to submit their research papers only to 'A' ranked journals.

AJET's publisher, Ascilite (Australian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education) is concerned that its annual Conference [7] will be weakened by the new system of Tiers for conference proceedings publications [8].

We seek the Minister's support and assistance in directing two requests to the Australian Research Council, giving them an importance similar to a Parliamentary Question:

- i. Provide a research paper (prepared to research journal standards) that explains the purposes, derivations and research based validations of the "Tiers for the Australian Ranking of Journals", and explains the evidence upon which the 2010 rankings are based.
- ii. Provide a review of the impact of "Tiers" upon Australian based journals, relative to their major competitors, which are nearly all owned by European and American multinational publishers, with particular reference to professional society, open access, not for profit, online only journals. Explain the rationale for imposing a downgrading upon Australian journals (such as AJET) and professional society conferences (such as ascilite) and give evidence that the presumed benefits will outweigh the disadvantageous impacts.

References

1. ARC (2010). Ranked Outlets. http://www.arc.gov.au/era/era_journal_list.htm
2. ARC (2010). Tiers for the Australian Ranking of Journals. http://www.arc.gov.au/era/tiers_ranking.htm
3. Australasian Journal of Educational Technology (AJET). <http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/>
4. British Journal of Educational Technology (BJET). <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/117984068/home>
5. Computers & Education (C&E). <http://www.elsevier.com/locate/issn/03601315>
6. AJET (2010). Editorial 26(1): AJET demoted. <http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet26/editorial26-1.html>
7. Ascilite (2010). ascilite Conferences. <http://www.ascilite.org.au/index.php?p=conference>
8. AJET Editorial 26(3) (2010). The ranking of refereed conference publications: Matters arising. <http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet26/editorial26-3.html>

Other recent references

- AJET Editorial 25(5) (2009). Revisiting *Questions about the ranking of refereed conference publications*. <http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet25/editorial25-5.html>
- AJET Editorial 25(4) (2009). Questions about the ranking of refereed conference publications <http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet25/editorial25-4.html>
- AJET Editorial 26(2) (2010). Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. <http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet26/editorial26-2.html>
- Atkinson, R. J. (2010). Bibliometrics out, journalmetrics in! *HERDSA News*, 32(1). <http://www.roger-atkinson.id.au/pubs/herdsa-news/32-1.html>

Notes prepared for the Australian Government's Community Cabinet Meeting, Como Secondary College, Como WA, on Wednesday 9 June 2010, for presentation to Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig, Cabinet Secretary and Special Minister of State, by

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