



24 August 2006

Committee Secretary
Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Email: eet.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Madam/Sir:

Re: Inquiry into the Higher Education Endowment Fund Bill 2007 and the Higher Education Endowment Fund (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2007

The Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the inquiry into the provisions of the Higher Education Endowment Fund Bill 2007.

CAUL supports the Bill to establish a perpetual endowment fund to generate earnings for capital expenditure and research facilities in higher education. As university libraries are actively engaged in providing essential resources, services and facilities to support research we hope that the endowment guidelines will provide funding for the construction of new library buildings and the refurbishment of existing library buildings.

Since the mid-1990s, more than 390 academic institutions in the United States have constructed new libraries or have expanded, renovated or reconfigured an existing library. An American study of 90 academic libraries where these projects were completed between 1995 and 2002, found that 80% of the libraries reported increased use of library facilities based on exit gate counts post-project.¹ Another study by the association of Higher Education Facilities Officers in the United States and Canada shows that library facilities are very important, second only to facilities for majors when students are selecting a university and that some will reject a university if the facilities are unavailable or if buildings are poorly maintained.² Both studies demonstrate that social and educational capital is being created in new and redeveloped library buildings.

¹ Harold Shill and Shawn Tonner, "Does the Building Still Matter? Usage patterns in New, Expanded and Renovated Libraries, 1995-2002," *College & Research Libraries*, March 2004, pp.123-150

<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlpubs/crljournal/crl2004/crlmarch04/shill.pdf>

² David Cain and Gary Reynolds, "The Impact of Facilities on Recruitment and Retention of Students," *Facilities Manager*, March/April 2006, pp. 54-60.

<http://www.appa.org/FacilitiesManager/article.cfm?ItemNumber=2567&parentid=2542>

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For researchers in the arts and humanities, libraries are often considered to be the equivalent of research laboratories for the sciences. For all disciplines, in this increasingly complex and often chaotic information age, having access to a library that has the infrastructure and facilities to support the use of current and emerging technologies that enable the learning and research experience for students and academic staff is universally understood and accepted.

In regional Australia, university libraries are often the sole source of scientific and other research resources and provide the information and communication technologies (ICT) infrastructure and equipment to make use of these resources.

Academic libraries are the cornerstone of academic and research endeavour and provide an invaluable resource to collaborative efforts, specific interest groups and the general community. As such the need to continually invest in the ICT infrastructure through the provision of wireless access, computers, multimedia and presentation equipment to improve the quality of educational delivery and access to research publications via open access repositories is increasing. A recent UK study by the Research Information Network and the Consortium of Research Libraries, highlights the challenges that the rise of e-research, interdisciplinary work, cross-institutional collaborations, and digital research publications are having on researcher behaviour and library support in the research process. While the role of the library as place is changing for researchers, the survey demonstrates that researchers still value five key physical attributes including: convenient location, convenient opening hours, a place to browse printed publications, a place for quiet individual study, and provision of modern IT equipment to access digital resources.³

There are many competing demands for a University's capital budget and this endowment fund will assist to build first class 21st century libraries for the Australian higher education sector.

Please contact me for further information as required.

Yours sincerely



Eve Woodberry
President, CAUL

³ Researchers' Use of Academic Libraries and Their Services: A Report Commissioned by the Research Information Network and the Consortium of Research Libraries. April 2007, pp 1-74.

<http://www.rin.ac.uk/files/libraries-report-2007.pdf>

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