

ANDS Capability and Interest Statement

University of Melbourne – 4 June 2007

Introduction: The University of Melbourne, through activities directly related to the development of eResearch capability, is interested in participating in the Australian National Data Service [ANDS] both from the perspective of a prospective user and as an organisation that is keen to participate in its establishment and the development of its services. The University has established infrastructure including: a recently appointed Director of eResearch (a computer scientist); the eScholarship Research Centre [ESRC] (which works directly with researchers and project teams on issues relating to the sustainability and interconnection of research data and records); a close working relationship with the Victorian eResearch Strategic Initiative [VeRSI]; direct engagement with large scale data intensive international science collaborations (eg ATLAS); and an integrated informatic framework that captures and web-publishes information about research active staff at Melbourne ('Find an Expert'). Furthermore Melbourne is well positioned through Information Services, which brings together library, information and IT professionals, and is actively participating in the Australian Partnership for Sustainable Repositories [APSR] projects that are setting the foundations for ANDS. Melbourne, as one Australia's most research active universities, covers a broad range of disciplines from creative arts to high energy physics, producing research data and records of enduring value. It is committed to helping build a national framework of services that will enable this material to be responsibly managed and meaningfully utilised through time.

Stewardship and Standards: Melbourne, through the ESRC and its predecessors has unmatched experience over two decades in managing the transition of data and records (of all sorts) from the active research environment into the long term preservation environment. Managing complex access conditions and requirements has been necessary component of this stewardship service, as has training and consultancy services for a wide range of clients. Melbourne supports the systematic development and deployment of informatic standards as a key functional requirement for ANDS. Melbourne staff have been actively engaged in standards development at the international level in this field over the last decade, especially in archival standards for interoperability and interconnection between repositories (e.g. International Council on Archives), utilisation of library authority files; and recordkeeping metadata (ISO 15489, one staff member has a recently completed PhD investigating the 'clever use of recordkeeping metadata'). Recent activities include membership of the Australian Standards IT-019 committee and the development of a close relationship with the University of Southern Queensland PILIN project to extend the development of standards for persistent identifiers.

Federated Services: Melbourne, through VeRSI and the collaborative arrangements with Monash University (soon to include Latrobe University and the Victorian Department of Primary Industry), has technical capabilities in federated data storage and experience in the application of Shibboleth. The ESRC, continuing internationally-based work in the archives of science, and the global utilisation of national registers (ICSU – World History of Science Online), offers capability and experience in national knowledge base creation and long-term management. Melbourne has worked with the National Library of Australia and the National Archives of Australia on the 'context' approach to managing information in networked environments and is continuing this work under the 'People Australia' project. Furthermore Melbourne has worked with both open source and proprietary digital data repository systems and has migrated data between systems. What Melbourne brings to this area that is special is direct experience in building open frameworks that create multiple pathways for discovery and access but more importantly provide the pathways to the contextual information that is necessary to understand any component part, especially data sets.

Outreach Services: Melbourne has been working with APSR, VeRSI, overseas universities, the cultural sector, and active research projects to ascertain the range of outreach service that are required in the contemporary volatile information environment. These services include: developing data portals for life sciences; developing interfaces with instrumentation; assisting with data analysis, and the analysis of storage requirements; collaborations with National Library (People Australia); managing the knowledge in the nuclear energy and research area; working with many Australian universities and Imperial College London on archival management programs; experience in running an open access repository; and the with APSR being an active participant in the 'Online Research Collections Australia (ORCA) support network. This experience ranges from strategic policy advice through to specific handling of data in a broad range of settings.

Governance: Melbourne has shown significant leadership in this area and the Vice Chancellor keenly supports our continuing participation. Given our extensive experience, Melbourne is prepared to be actively engaged in the ongoing ANDS process, including the hosting of the 'head-office'.