

Journal editors in Australia unite to campaign for recognition and support for reviewing and editing

Concerns have been expressed recently by journal editors about the declining interest in reviewing and editing of manuscripts, while the submission of manuscripts continues to increase.

At recent meetings in Sydney and Melbourne with journal editors from Wiley-Blackwell, these concerns were raised and the implications for future sustainability in producing high quality journals from Australia were discussed.

Reasons for the declining interest in reviewing and editing were identified. A major contributing factor was identified as support and recognition in the workplace. In the university setting, workplace support is directed towards recognised research outputs such as study completions and publication of articles, while taking on the role of reviewer or editor is not acknowledged. In the clinical setting, each hospital has its own set of policies towards research output and the level of support varies.

Why do universities exclude reviewing and editing? In the higher education sector, the universities receive government funding based on their levels of performance in producing quality research. This assessment is called the Excellence in Research in Australia (ERA) and it was implemented in 2010 by the Australian Research Council (ARC) (www.arc.gov.au/era).

The recognised research output is to publish in peer-reviewed high impact factor journals. The quality of research output is measured by article citation; reviewing and editing are not included. For this reason, journal editors from Australia have written a letter expressing their concerns about the impact the ERA has on participation in reviewing and editing of submitted manuscripts. This letter can be viewed at the AIR website at <http://www.air.asn.au/jmrs.php>.

This letter was sent to a number of key individuals who are deemed to be in a position to influence changes to the ERA:

- Chair, Universities Australia
- Director of Australian Research Council (ARC)
- Director of National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)
- Presidents of the various academies
- Vice-Chancellors and Deputy Vice Chancellors of Research.

The AIR Board of Directors also has taken the initiative to support the distribution of this letter to relevant individuals within medical radiation sciences and to AIR panels.

I would highly encourage you to bring this letter to the attention of your colleagues, managers and relevant committees. There is a real danger that Australian-owned scientific journals will no longer be viable if editors and peer reviewers are not supported. What can you do to change this?

Cherry Agustin

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