Heresy or Innovation? Transforming culture and service for impact

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Abstract

The ERA2010 exercise changed the landscape of research and publication management at the University of Wollongong (UOW), pushing the research agenda into the spotlight across the University. The Library, always alert to its value to the University, quickly understood that it could play an integral role in further supporting researchers through the development of its skill sets and services. The recognised need to re-balance its services to reflect the broad University goals, particularly the research agenda, resulted in the major review and realignment in 2011-2012 of the two large divisions in the UOW Library, Resources and Client Services.

The delivery of an integrated research support and publication management services model at UOW Library is now becoming established after a period of restructure, process review and rationalisation, and staff re-skilling. Closer connectivity between the Resources and Client Services Divisions in delivering these services ensures that stratified elements of the large and complex process of supporting research and publications are captured and handled effectively.

Restructuring the Client Services and Resources Divisions has enabled the Library to commit resources and build expertise in delivering specialised services to research staff, thus re-positioning the Library strategically in this space, and making it an essential piece in the complex research support puzzle.

Introduction

In several Commonwealth countries, accountability in the university sector is measured by means of a research assessment exercise. In the United Kingdom this is undertaken using the Research Excellence Framework, while New Zealand universities must meet the requirements of the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF). In Australia, the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative is designed to provide benchmarking data for Australian universities compared with international measures. As a relatively young institution, UOW has achieved a solid history of research excellence, having developed research priority areas and initiatives particularly in the areas of Health, Medicine and Engineering. The introduction of the ERA exercises (held in 2010, and 2012) placed an increased emphasis on UOW academics and faculties to deliver quality research outcomes. Underpinning the achievement of these outcomes are a range of organisational administrative, reporting and funding processes through which research activities can be undertaken, promoted, and their impact identified. These include:

- Research grant applications
- Publishing research in journals
- Reporting new publications to the University by inputting them into the Research Information System (RIS), an internal administrative database holding the research outputs of UOW
- Assessing publications for inclusion in government research assessment exercises, i.e. ERA and HERDC (Higher Education Research Data Collection)
- Inclusion of full text publications in the UOW institutional repository, Research Online.

With many Australian and international universities increasing their strategic focus on achieving research outcomes, new services to support research activities are emerging within libraries (Drummond & Wartho, 2009; Richardson et al., 2012). The UOW Library has long supported the needs of the University community, particularly in teaching and learning endeavours, through a range of services that provide resources and information literacy support across all levels of the academic experience for academics and students.

The Library, always alert to its value to the University, quickly understood that it could play an integral role in the research agenda through the development of its skill sets and services. To achieve this, the Library needed to rethink its structure, services, and strategic focus to build a balanced alignment with the goals of the University. To undertake this journey it needed to re-evaluate existing research services and identify service gaps. The recognised need to re-balance its services to reflect the broad university goals, particularly the research agenda, resulted in the major review and realignment in 2011-2012 of the two large divisions in the Library, Resources and Client Services.

A fast and flexible environment

At UOW, the ERA exercises influenced academics' perceptions of the management of their publications by the University. Academic engagement with ERA2010 and ERA2012 was strong, as the ability to demonstrate the strength of UOW research by discipline is key to ERA (Australian Research Council, 2012). Engagement by academics, faculties and units towards optimising the submission for relevant fields of research, particularly in research intensive areas, was high due to the assessment of quality over quantity.

The question of how ERA will impact on scholarly publishing over time is of interest, with predictions in the literature that "Australian academics will participate less in smaller and new journals" (Lamp, 2009). This impact may not affect quality, but it may result in changed publishing behaviour of researchers (De Lange, O'Connell, Matthews & Sangster, 2010). The cultural effect of ERA within the leadership of UOW was notable: the inclusion of journal ranking schema for ERA2010 and the continuing focus on journal quality for ERA2012, resulted in changed attitudes to publishing within faculties, with new messages emerging, such as conveying the importance of publishing in high quality journals and reducing the amount of publishing in conferences. The pressure on researchers to perform is increasing due to exercises such as ERA, and the rise in the number of researchers named in papers, as well as the numbers of publications output each year globally (Bauerlain, Blanke, Flanders, Hedges & O'Steen, 2010; Dodson, 2010). Attendant with the emphasis on publishing in high quality journals has been an increased focus on providing accountability for research outputs, using bibliometric tools and systems. The summation of these demands for accountability results in a need for universities "to modify their systems and processes in the research area to best position them for the ERA and to maintain their legitimacy with a key stakeholder, the government" (De Lange, O'Connell, Matthews & Sangster, 2010).

In December 2011 Professor Paul Wellings was appointed as Vice Chancellor at UOW. Professor Wellings commenced his appointment with a call to action in stating that the university would aim to move to within the top 1 per cent of universities in the world, according to university ranking systems, by continuing its marked focus on research and students. He particularly emphasised recognising and developing research of high quality and impact. Following on from this, the UOW executive communicated an institutional goal whereby 60 per cent of UOW research outputs would be held within the institutional repository, Research Online, within twelve months.

The strong focus on the research agenda has impacted on the UOW research community and the UOW Library alike. Just as with faculties and researchers, the Library is accountable to the University. Cultural change within libraries is a well-documented area as libraries can maintain quite traditional service models, notwithstanding the changing needs and practices of clients and parent institutions (Arndt, 2010; Housewright, 2009; Howard and Wiebrands, 2011; Neal, 2011; Weiner, 2003). A search of the literature on the changing roles of academic libraries reveals that the areas most often challenged by change are teaching and learning, and the implications of increased digital resources on preliminary research information seeking. A search of the term 'research support' and 'libraries' across a number of scholarly databases held by UOW Library, retrieves journal articles related to the support academics receive by a number of services traditionally provided by librarians, including: reference support, workshops and education, literature searching and collection relevance (Bradigan & Cheek, 2010; Jia & Evans, 2011). In Australia in particular, recent articles include reference to e-research (otherwise known as research data), an area demonstrating increasing importance in universities (Thomas, 2011), and a wealth of literature on the support, population of, and client engagement with, institutional repositories (Creaser, 2010). The use of web technologies in supporting research is an issue that persists in library literature, though this deals

with how technology can facilitate delivery of services, rather than the development of non-traditional services for supporting academics (Kwanya, Stilwell & Underwood, 2012).

There is a dearth of literature on the changing role of academic libraries in supporting academics in their administrative processes, publishing endeavours and assessment activities. This is not to say it is not happening (see Sparks et al., 2013), but it is early days for determining best practice. Currently it is evident from browsing Australian university library websites that research support services are emerging and information on bibliometrics, publishing and managing publications, and government assessment exercises (HERDC and ERA), is being provided by Australian university libraries.

The model of the corporate library may best reflect the situation in which academic libraries now operate in this era of accountability. Housewright (2009) has described how traditional roles and services are reconfigured in corporate libraries where the accountability of the library in supporting the needs of the organisation is the deciding factor in changes to library service and roles, through initiatives such as relegating work to non-professionals, outsourcing processes, and reducing face-to-face services due to the self-help style of discovery platforms and other online tools. Corporate libraries have focused "on high visibility and high value tasks that took advantage of their information expertise" (Housewright, 2009; p. 260), an approach academic libraries will need to adopt in the current research focused environment if they wish to remain relevant to the organisation. In terms of non-traditional library services, Housewright identifies "next-generation challenges" (p. 267), such as e-research, publishing initiatives for priority research areas, and taking a different approach to communicating with clients by focusing on delivering services in response to the needs of the academic community, rather than selling services for which there is little demand.

The new environment in which researchers (and the UOW Library) now find themselves, relies on knowledge of organisational expectations regarding publishing, manoeuvring around university administrative processes and systems, and awareness of one's performance in contributing towards the University's accountability in producing high quality research. It is within this environment that the UOW Library has negotiated its position based on the needs of academics and the strategic priorities of the University – at times a balancing act. As institutional processes shift and change to accommodate the new requirements for demonstrating research performance, the UOW Library is contributing towards building new services that support researchers in achieving the outcomes expected by the University.

The Library that was

Of the four divisions comprising UOW Library, Client Services and Resources Divisions are the largest in terms of staff and services offered. The suite of services provided by Client Services is 'front facing', involving instruction, faculty and academic liaison, and management of service points. The Resources Division also delivers services to the UOW community, such as eReadings, resource sharing, management of UOW publications for ERA and HERDC, and acquisitions. Although there is considerable academic liaison within the Resources Division, the principle differentiation from Client Services is based on the provision and management of scholarly content. Although this paper will deal primarily with the changes manifested in the Resources Division, a review of the Liaison Services team within the Client Services Division, undertaken simultaneously, will also be discussed.

....Within Client Services Division

In 2010, a decision was made to change the name of the Information and Research Services team to Liaison Services. The newly named Liaison Services team comprised 20 staff, with all but two dedicated to teaching and learning support, in line with the historical strategic priorities of the Library. The imperative to realign the core business of this large team was in response to key institutional priorities (particularly in the area of research). Commitment to the existing teaching and learning support services within the team was strong, and the considerable skill base of staff had been developed over many years towards delivering information literacy support. Two non-teaching positions were included in the team: Research Training Librarian, and Learning Support Librarian. The Research Training Librarian provided support for EndNote (Referencing Tool), Higher Degree Research Student theses, information on journal impact measures, bibliometrics, and publishing. One staff member out of 20 providing research support to

the University community; 19 staff members providing teaching and learning support - a need to shift the balance was evident.

....Within Resources Division

Within the Resources Division, existing support services for research publications through the collection, assessment and verification of publications for HERDC and ERA, was undertaken by the Access Services team, also responsible for unrelated services such as eReadings, cataloguing, and managing digital theses. The Library assumed responsibility for support of HERDC in 2003, and since that time this service had been shifted between teams as efforts were made to determine its best fit with existing services. Within the Access Services team, cataloguing activities focused on describing non-UOW content, such as journal subscriptions and other external publications acquired for the collection. A gap was identified in the application of metadata standards and practices to the description and promotion of UOW research publications. Where projects were identified regarding description of UOW content, such as the creation of authority data for UOW corporate authors and creation of metadata for digitised UOW archival content, the priority to process external content meant that UOW projects were subject to significant delays in their completion.

The UOW institutional repository, Research Online (RO), housed the ERA collection, as well as UOW publications received from academics, UOW journals, and some other types of publications. The management and support of RO was the responsibility of one staff member, Manager Repository Services, who was not located within the team structures. Although the Manager had built strong relationships with many academics to improve the portfolio of Research Online since its inception in 2006, he had little time for entering publications into the system, and institutional support for the repository was needed to widen its reach and engagement of the university community. Tools had been put in place to transfer publications from the University's internal Research Information System (RIS, used to capture publications and data for HERDC purposes) into Research Online, yet staff resources were unavailable to undertake this work.

Achenbrenner et al. (2008) argue that academics are principally interested in the preservation aspect of repositories, rather than for visibility and accessibility, which academics perceive as handled well by the journal publishing system. Among the UOW academic community, cultural practices around the management of publications were identified, such as the common perception that placing full text publications into the repository might contravene copyright laws, reduce citations of the published version or deplete relationships with publishers, and the general belief that academics should determine where and how a publication is made available by the University. The premise argued by Achenbrenner may account for the general lack of engagement among academics with the repository as they see their work already receiving sufficient distribution without requiring more effort from the academics themselves in depositing publications in the repository.

Generally, strong commitment to supporting research publications and the RO repository exists among staff in the Resources Division, though several existing structural, cultural and administrative influences, both in the Library and at UOW generally, had limited the capacity of the Library to respond to divergent issues in the management of publications at UOW, such as:
- Multiple unrelated priorities in the Library's Access Services team
- Continuing low engagement with RO by academics
- Lack of resources to support activities within RO
- Undefined responsibility for reporting of publication activity in RO and HERDC outcomes to stakeholders
- Vagaries in the management of publications across faculties and units
- Clarity around roles and responsibilities of publications management by academics, faculty administrative staff, the Library and the Research Services Office
- Resourcing support for the capture and assessment of publications not processed as part of the annual HERDC return, e.g. management of historical publication lists for new staff
- Transferring suitable research papers into RO
- Misalignment between the holdings in RO and the internal system, RIS, due to a lack of clarity regarding the strategic purpose of RO.

Under review

In early 2011, UOW's University Librarian, Margie Jantti, communicated a commitment towards rebalancing the Library's services to align with the research, teaching and learning goals of the University, and respond to the Vice Chancellor's call to increase the visibility of publications in the institutional repository to support the advancement of the international ranking of the University. In line with these goals, significant reviews of the Resources Division, and the Liaison Services team within the Client Services Division were undertaken in 2011.

The aim of both reviews was to rebalance the focus on research, teaching and learning support:

Liaison Services

The rebalancing of Library support to UOW research activities within Liaison Services required a reconfiguration of services and redirection of staff expertise through formation of:

- An Academic Outreach team focused on liaison with academics in order to systematically discover the needs of the Library's client base, and use this information to transform services across the Library to align with organisational needs.
- A Learning and Research Services team to support learning, teaching and research through the delivery of a range of professional services and by contributing to the appropriate development of the Library collection.
An Educational Technology team responsible for the creation, coordination and development of a range of the Library's online products that contribute to the learning and research experience at UOW.

The Academic Outreach team was formed before the review process proper commenced as the imperative for this service was recognised. The team initially comprised four staff including a team leader (the team leader role being assumed by the former Research Training Librarian), each with strong interpersonal skills. Academic Outreach staff were permanently released from their teaching responsibilities to take on the role of coordinating liaison activities with all UOW academics to determine the needs of this client base. Comments and feedback brought back to the Library from these activities fed into the review and implementation of the restructured Resources Division.

Resources Division

Key to the support of research activities was the development of value-added access and preservation models for internal UOW research content enabled by:

- Identifying, sourcing, describing, digitising and increasing visibility of UOW research content
- UOW research publication verification processes
- Compiling and building collections of UOW material
- Creating and managing sustainable preservation and discovery systems and processes
- Providing recognisable value to the university community
- Building staff knowledge and understanding of purpose to enable a support role in providing services and processes – both UOW and non-UOW
- Identifying staff expertise and applying this expertise to key services to optimise both service and staff input, e.g. client liaison, metadata management, presentation skills, research processes, technical skills.

As the review progressed, these principles underpinned the ongoing communication with staff in order to embed the message that change was necessary as part of the restructure process, as it is the pathway to continuing relevance.

The review group included the Associate Librarian for the Resources Division, Divisional managers and team leaders, and the Manager Workforce Planning and Development. Over a period of 8 months, staff forums and feedback exercises were held, where appropriate, to solicit staff involvement in the formation

of the new structure, determine linked services, identify gap areas, and to reiterate the vision for change. The review group advised staff that the structure would be in place by April 2012. In January 2012, the review group proposed a draft structure to the University Librarian. Simultaneously, staff input was sought into their preferred areas of work in existing services to inform resourcing of the future structure. This latter activity was integral in engaging staff in the change process. Upon approval of the final structure, it was released to staff for feedback, including in which teams staff were to be placed. The final step in the process was conducted by the Manager Workforce Planning and Development, who coordinated the self-assessment of all Library staff against the skills and services within the proposed new teams.

Publication Management @ UOW and Repurposing Research Online

Simultaneous with the Resources Division review, the Library coordinated the review of services for the institutional repository and for publication management at UOW more generally. The assessment of the management of UOW publications and reporting was conducted collaboratively between the Research Services Office (RSO) and the Library. Subsequently, a report was prepared jointly by the Library and RSO for review by the directors of these units and the Deputy-Vice Chancellor Research. The report identified issues and recommendations for the improvement of publication management at UOW. A working group comprised of Library (Chair), Research Services Office, and Faculty administrative staff, was formed in early 2012 to coordinate the implementation of recommendations from the report, including:

- Centralise data entry of publications: the Library to assume responsibility for the complete collection of UOW publications within university systems, including the collection of historical publication lists (CVs) of academics new to UOW.
- Reduce classification complexity: Simplification of the internal classification scheme used to categorise publications for the purposes of HERDC and ERA.
- Improve reporting: The systematic distribution of publication activity reports to faculties and academics.
- Recognise data owners: Publication metadata to be the responsibility of the Library. Internal information relating to publications (e.g. FOR codes, faculty affiliation, etc.) to be the responsibility of the Research Services Office.
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities for the RSO, Library, faculty administrative staff, Faculty Managers and academics.

From January to September 2012, the working group prepared the groundwork for implementing the review recommendations. From April, the Library representative on the working group worked closely with the Scholarly Content team to provide guidance in establishing the new Library services.

The review of the institutional repository was a more direct exercise, and occurred in response to the University Executive's objective for UOW to hold 60% of its research content within the repository. The University Librarian provided the Executive with a proposal to repurpose the repository, RO, as the platform for making all UOW research publications available worldwide. To achieve this, and reach 60% of UOW research in RO, the Library requested additional resources to manage the sourcing and import into RO of legacy material from 2005 onwards. The UOW Executive supported the proposal, and recruitment for three support staff was initiated.

Putting it into practice

The publication management review, the review of the purpose of the repository, and the establishment of the Scholarly Content team, must be viewed in tandem as the outcomes of all the reviews were heavily directed towards the Library assuming significantly increased responsibility for managing publications at UOW; responsibilities closely aligned with the purpose of the Scholarly Content team.

The formation of four teams was proposed: Collection Development, Resource Sharing, Archives, and Scholarly Content. University Archives, a pre-existing team, was relocated from the Client Services Division into the Resources Division; a strong emphasis on Archives as a 'collection' had emerged, and

solid links were being cultivated with emerging digitisation practices in the Resources Division. For the purposes of this paper, the focus of discussion will be on the Scholarly Content team. This was a new concept team, dedicated to sourcing, preserving and providing access to UOW content. Key services of this team were defined: UOW Publication Management including HERDC, ERA and research repository, copyright and digitisation, UOW digital collections and theses, and metadata management of UOW content.

A new type of team structure was implemented in April 2012 to accommodate the reconfigured suite of services, which required varying levels of responsibility. Staffing of the team was based on existing roles, expertise and an acknowledged preference - identified during the review exercises - for working in the area of research support. The newly formed Scholarly Content team comprised:

- Scholarly Content Officers (6 x HEW 4)
- Metadata Officer (HEW 5) reporting to a team leader (HEW 6)
- Manager Repository Services (HEW 7)
- Copyright and Digitisation Officer (HEW 6)

The introduction of new services and multiple review outcomes into the Scholarly Content team was gradual and coordinated. Table 1 shows the stages of each review and their implementation timelines.

Implementation of new structure of Resources Division	
1. April – June 2012	• Establishment of the Scholarly Content team. • Assignment of faculty responsibility to individual Scholarly Content Officers in the processing of UOW publications for HERDC. • Metadata Officer in Scholarly Content assumes responsibility for metadata of UOW digital collections. • Introduction of a service email address: research-pubs@uow.edu.au • Team leader develops relationships with Manager Repository Services and Digitisation Officer to assign resources to work priorities. • Creation of a 2012 Digitisation Plan (in consultation with Archives staff). • Training and allocation of digitisation projects to Scholarly Content Officers, based on preferences and interests. • Implementation of a weekly import of UOW research publications from RIS into RO.

Once the bedrock of publication services was established, work towards the second tier of services linked to the new publication management @ UOW approach commenced. This approach focused on the Library assuming centralised responsibility for sourcing, describing and making UOW research publications available through University systems:

2. July – September 2012	• In collaboration with Academic Outreach staff, support material for Academic Outreach team members to use in promoting Library research services was created, including a set of postcards (Figure 1), and a website, Publication Management @ UOW http://www.library.uow.edu.au/publication-management/UOW132659.html. • The Chair of the working group and Scholarly Content Officers (with assistance from Academic Outreach staff) met with relevant faculty staff, including either the Dean or the Faculty Manager, to talk through the changes and determine faculty preferences for managing individual elements of the changes. Most faculties opted for the Library to assume all responsibility for publication management, such as liaison with academics in sourcing manuscripts for RO and CVs of staff new to UOW. • The research-pubs@uow.edu.au service address was advertised as the point of contact for academics to send their publications for HERDC purposes.

	• A new service was implemented for staff new to UOW. The service encourages researchers to submit their CV of publications to the Library for inclusion in RIS and RO The research-pubs@uow.edu.au services address was advertised as the key point of contact. • The Library commenced contacting academics of newly published material to seek final manuscripts for inclusion in RO. • The Library liaised closely with the RSO whilst they developed the prototypes for quarterly publication reports to be sent to individual academics and faculties. • On invitation, Library staff attended faculty committee meetings to communicate the changes and their value to academic staff, including the reduced administrative burden for academics on managing their publications in University systems. Postcards with the service email address were handed out to academics to place next to their computers.
	With the support from the Vice Chancellor for the repurposing of the repository towards advancing the international ranking of the University, a number of initiatives were rolled out within the Scholarly Content team:
2. July – December 2012	• In May, support was received from the Vice Chancellor for funding to resource the repurposing of the repository, RO. • Inclusion in RO of publication lists of all senior UOW academics and Executives, beginning with the Vice Chancellor Professor Paul Wellings. • In July, 7700 metadata records for UOW research publications were imported into RO. • In August, three staff were appointed to support RO. • In September, projects commenced with faculties to source final manuscripts for all legacy UOW publications 2005-2012 to increase full text holdings in RO. • Digitisation Project Plan was created for 2013. The first annual budget line was assigned to digitisation activities. • Data cleanup of all records in Research Online was underway, including DOI sourcing, data accuracy and completeness.

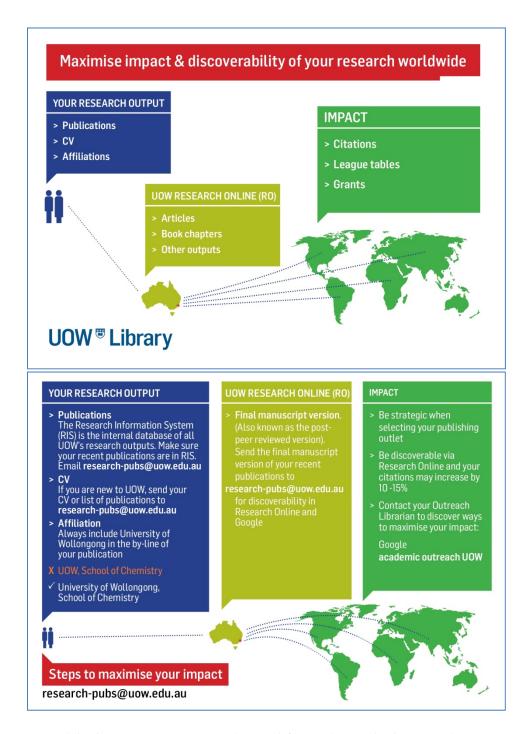Table 1. Implementation stages of new research support services in the Resources Division

Figure 1. A publication management postcard created for use by Academic Outreach to promote new services. Front and back of card is shown.

In April 2013, the new Divisional structures will have been in place for a year. The new services have been implemented throughout that period, somewhat seamlessly, but requiring constant refinement based on feedback received from academics, sometimes through the Academic Outreach process. Strong involvement by team members in the development and refinement of services has optimised staff engagement in the new structure and new services. Liaison and engagement with the academic community and faculty staff in the development of publication management and repository services were key to creating a spirit of collaboration in the achievement of improved methods of managing and promoting research at UOW to achieve impact. Strong engagement by faculties in populating the repository with final manuscripts is an early sign that the Library's new services support the Vice

Chancellor's vision for the University. The Academic Outreach team have been a key conduit of requests from academics to the Scholarly Content team, selling services that respond to the research needs of academic clients, and providing simple methods for helping them navigate the administrative processes required to show the impact of their research to the University. Table 2 shows the usage of services thus far (January 2013):

Service	to January 2012	to January 2013
Total UOW research outputs represented in the repository	10812	29274
CVs of staff new to UOW received	8	71
% of publications completed thus far for current collection year receiving a HERDC status	66%	74%
Total number of contact points by Academics to the Academic Outreach team (Contact points include emails, phone calls and face-to-face visits instigated by academics)	562 (previous six month period)	799 (previous twelve month period)

Table 2. Usage of research support services at UOW Library as at January 2012 and January 2013.

Conclusion

The Library responded strategically to a call to action by the Vice Chancellor at UOW by reconsidering its purpose and its alignment to institutional priorities and aspirations, and developing an organisational structure and services that support the heightened research agenda of the University. Reviews of the two largest Divisions – Client Services and Resources – were undertaken with an aim to rebalance the Library's services to support teaching, learning and research priorities of the University. Involving staff in the review processes resulted in teams comprised of staff with the expertise and work preference for the services delivered.

In tandem with the restructure of Library teams, reviews of the purpose of the repository and of the processes for managing publications at UOW were undertaken. Through engagement with the university community, the Library developed a suite of Publication Management @ UOW services that reduce the administrative burden on academics in managing their publications in University systems, allowing the Library to collect, source, describe and promote UOW research outputs through Research Online. Support from the University Executive to make the repository the definitive platform for making all UOW research outputs accessible and discoverable, and providing resources to do this, was the final factor in enabling the Library to provide a comprehensive and centralised suite of services that deliver simple and efficient ways for academics to engage with the University in managing their research. An early indicator of the success of this initiative has been the increase in the number of HERDC submissions in RIS as compared to the same period last year. Notably, a higher percentage was classified as HERDC eligible, demonstrating the improvement in the quality of the publications sourced by the Library.

Repositioning the Library in the research space by strategically developing and delivering services that have genuine impact and relevance for the academic community has enabled a deeper and nuanced understanding of the needs of its clients and stakeholders. The importance of demonstrating the impact of this alignment of services to both the community and to Library staff is vital to showing the full value of the services in supporting the research agenda at UOW.

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