

## RESEARCH ASSESSMENT AND LEGAL SCHOLARSHIP

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On election, in 2008, the new Australian Government put a stop to the Research Quality Framework (RQF) which was gearing up for its first assessment round. Nonetheless, the Government has since announced that its place will be taken by a new research quality and evaluation system, the Excellence in Research for Australia initiative (ERA).<sup>1</sup> ERA will depart from the RQF in certain respects and some useful comparisons can be made. But the essential issue remains the nature of assessment and in particular the combination of publication metrics and peer review.

The aim of this article is to suggest how research assessment might have an effect on the intellectual approaches taken to legal scholarship in Australia. Part I notes the objectives of research assessment and situates them within the modern managerial approach to research. Part II sets out the RQF and ERA definition of research quality and considers how that definition might sit with the many different approaches to legal scholarship. Part III continues this theme, discussing in detail the selection of assessment measures and especially the design of metric measures such as research outlet rankings. Part IV finishes with some predictions regarding the advantages that might ensue to individuals and institutions from assessment.

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<sup>1</sup> Kim J Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Commonwealth Government, 'New ERA for Research Quality', Media Release, Senator Kim Carr, 26 February 2008, <http://www.minister.industry.gov.au/Carr/Pages/NEWERAFORRESEARCHQUALITY.aspx> (11 October 2008)