Building distributed leadership for effective supervision of creative practice higher research degrees

Final Report 2013

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# List of Acronyms Used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALTC</td>
<td>Australian Learning and Teaching Council (now OLT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARC</td>
<td>Australian Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUT</td>
<td>Auckland University of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>COFA</td>
<td>College of Fine Arts</td>
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<td>DCA</td>
<td>Doctorate of Creative Arts</td>
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<td>DCI</td>
<td>Doctorate of Creative Industries</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEEWR</td>
<td>Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERA</td>
<td>Excellence in Research for Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>FOE</td>
<td>Field of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>HDR</td>
<td>Higher Degree Research, also Higher Research Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>OLT</td>
<td>Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching (formerly ALTC)</td>
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<td>PhD</td>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy</td>
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<td>QUT</td>
<td>Queensland University of Technology</td>
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<td>UWS</td>
<td>University of Western Sydney</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNSW</td>
<td>University of New South Wales</td>
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<tr>
<td>VCA</td>
<td>Victorian College of Art and Music</td>
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Executive Summary

Building distributed leadership for effective supervision of creative practice higher research degrees is an Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) funded project, conducted in partnership between Queensland University of Technology, The University of Melbourne, Auckland University of Technology, University of New South Wales and University of Western Sydney. The project was initiated to develop a cooperative approach to establishing an understanding of the contextual frameworks of the emergent field of creative practice higher degrees by research (HDRs); capturing early insights of administrators and supervisors; gathering exemplars of good practices; and establishing an in-common understanding of effective approaches to supervision. To this end, the project has produced:

- A literature review, to provide a research foundation for creative practice higher research degree supervision (Chapter 3).
- A contextual review of disciplinary frameworks for HDR programs, produced through surveys of postgraduate research administrators (Section 4.1), and an analysis of institutional materials and academic development programs for supervisors (Section 4.2).
- A National Symposium, Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research Degrees (ESCARD), at QUT in Brisbane in February 2013, with 62 delegates from 20 Australasian Universities, at which project findings were disseminated, and delegates presented case studies and position papers, and participated in discussions on key issues for supervisors (Appendix 1).
- Resources, including a booklet for supervisors: 12 Principles for the Effective Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Research Degrees, which encapsulates attitudes, insights and good practices of experienced and new supervisors. It was produced through a content analysis of interviews with twenty-five supervisors in creative disciplines (visual and performing arts, music, new media, creative writing and design) (Printed booklet, PDF, Appendix 3).
- A project website to disseminate project outcomes <http://supervisioncreativeartsphd.net>, which holds project findings, relevant references, and a repository of case studies and position papers by supervisors and program administrators.
- A community of supervisory practice initiated through project partnerships, a national symposium where supervisors from across Australasia met in dialogue for the first time, resource sharing, and joint publishing opportunities.
- A set of recommendations for supervision capacity building and academic development, produced through the triangulation of literature and contextual reviews, analysis of institutional frameworks, interviews with supervisors and national dialogues.

It is anticipated that the project’s outcomes will support experienced and new supervisors in this emergent field, and so benefit HDR students, and will enable creative disciplines to build supervision capacity, and so to accommodate growth in postgraduate enrolments.
Funded as a pilot project, the project set out to establish a robust research base to provide a foundation for future work involving sharing good practices, resource building, and designing effective approaches to academic development for supervisors. Recommendations that were produced out of this project include the need to extend beyond generic, formal training for supervisors to academic development that harnesses and extends distributed leadership; focuses on local, disciplinary contexts; has a strong emphasis on case studies; provides diverse resources; and facilitates dialogue between supervisors. Recommendations also include developing frameworks for mentoring new supervisors and building a national network to facilitate cross-institutional discourse, disseminate good practices, and share insights into the management of risk factors, ethical issues, and preparing candidates for examination.

As a pilot investigation, the outcomes of this project lay the ground for this future work.
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CHAPTER 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND APPROACH

1.1 Background to the Project

Since the Strand Report initiated the inclusion of creative practice as a field of postgraduate research in 1998, over 30 Australasian universities have embarked upon what are variously called ‘creative practice’, ‘practice-led’, and ‘practice-based’ higher degrees by research (HDRs) in disciplines such as visual arts, performing arts, music and sound, design, creative writing, film and new media. A ten-fold increase in enrolments has occurred over the past decade (DEEWR figures cited in Baker & Buckley, 2009). It has been fuelled by the recognition of creative outcomes within the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) reporting framework by the Australian Research Council (ARC) in 2003, and the increasing recognition of the value of the Creative Industries to the economic and cultural fabric (Higgs et al., 2007). By embracing this significant change in HDR culture, and accommodating rapid growth in postgraduate enrolments, creative disciplines have not only recognised the opportunities that creative practice research offers; they have demonstrated a willingness to meet the challenges of a new, uncharted area of learning and teaching.

However, in a recent ALTC funded scoping exercise, Creative Arts PhD: Future-proofing the creative arts in higher education, Baker & Buckley (2009) identified an urgent need to develop a sector-wide understanding; a coherent approach to the form of the creative practice thesis (the written component often referred to as an exegesis); common guidelines for examination; and new approaches to supervision in this emergent field. An ARC-funded project has since focussed on the ‘practice-based thesis’ (Writing in the academy: The practice-based thesis as an evolving genre, Paltridge, Starfield & Ravelli, 2011) and two ALTC/OLT funded projects have focussed on examination (Webb, Brien & Burr, 2010 and Petkovic, Lang & Berkley, 2009). Until now, however, there has been little focussed research on the key learning and teaching aspect of creative practice HDRs: supervision. Creative disciplines across the sector have approached understanding this new field of supervision, as well as supervision capacity building, in an ad hoc way.

The practices of HDR supervision in longer-established disciplinary traditions, such as Law; Information Technology; Humanities; and Science, are not entirely transferable to Creative Practice HDRs, which differ markedly because they involve the production and presentation of creative practice ‘artefacts’ (creative works, products, events, or techniques) in conjunction with a written thesis for examination. This combination means that they diverge in terms of research intent; the types of research questions asked; the methodologies, practices, methods and processes of production employed; the types of new knowledge claims made; as well as ways of evidencing the value of the research (Hamilton & Jaaniste, 2009; Yeates & Carson, 2009). Given the unique framing contexts, processes and outcomes of creative practice PhDs, along with the experimentation that continues to occur in what is still an evolving field, the supervision of creative practice HDRs involves unique challenges.
The need to build learning and teaching leadership activities around supervision is not limited to the creative disciplines however. As Bruce and Stoodley (2013) have noted, there is a lack of definition, analysis, processes, and tools around HDR supervision more broadly. And, as Hammond J., & Ryland, K., & Tennant, M., & Boud, D. argue in a recent ALTC project report (2010), there is growing recognition that HDR supervision is a crucial aspect of learning and teaching given the growing pressure on universities, faculties, disciplines and supervisors to increase enrolments, diversify offerings and prioritise timely completion. They conclude that, “There is a need in many universities for greater emphasis on professional leadership in research education.” It is therefore our hope that, while the work of this project is intended to specifically address the needs of creative disciplines to effectively support unprecedented growth in HDR enrolments, it will be of benefit more broadly.

To enable leadership capacity building in research education we need to capture, articulate, and share the practices and effective strategies developed by supervisors and schools. As Hammond et al. argue in Building Research Supervision and Training across Australian Universities, “conversations [around supervision] need to go beyond issues of compliance to address quality of supervision and good supervisory practices.” They therefore recommend, “increasingly sophisticated and constructive conversations about supervision pedagogy that engage all supervisors, both new and more experienced” (2010: v). In line with this recommendation, this project has enacted a cooperative, cross-institutional and multidisciplinary strategy to capturing the insights and good practices of supervisors and HDR administrators from across the sector. From this primary research, it has set out to establish a shared understanding of HDR pedagogies in creative disciplines, initiate the building and dissemination of a set of resources, and establish key principles for the effective supervision of creative practice HDRs. At the same time, a distributed leadership approach has enabled the project to enhance the learning and teaching capacity and experiences of supervisors as the activities of the project have unfolded.

1.2 Project Aims

Through a co-operative partnership between five universities—Queensland University of Technology, The University of Melbourne, Auckland University of Technology, University of Western Sydney, and University of New South Wales, this project set out to gain an understanding of the contextual frameworks and administrative practices surrounding creative practice higher degrees by research. And, by capturing insights of supervisors and gathering exemplars of good practices, it set out to establish an in-common understanding of effective approaches to supervision. As a pilot project, its key aim was to develop a shared understanding of the field for the benefit supervisors and their students, and to enable creative disciplines to build further supervision capacity. It was also a primary goal of the project to provide a robust foundation for future work in resource building, sharing effective practices, and designing academic development for supervisors.
The project’s objectives included establishing a research foundation for the field by:

- producing a literature review of the aligned fields of HDR supervision and creative practice research;
- developing a contextual review of institutional and disciplinary frameworks by auditing policies and resources and capturing the processes and practices of HDR administrators;
- identifying institutional models for training HDR supervisors and candidates; and
- capturing the views, insights, strategies and good practices and practices of early adopter supervisors;

and building leadership at the level of disciplines and faculties by:

- analysing the data produced from the primary research (surveys and interviews) to establish institutional commonalities and differences, identify innovative and effective supervision practices, and synthesise a set of working principles for effective approaches to supervision;
- articulating a shared understanding of HDR pedagogies in the creative and performing arts, design, creative writing and media disciplines; and
- taking a co-operative, sector-wide approach to resource collection and sharing, open dialogue and the dissemination of findings.

1.3 Project Approach

The project design has encompassed a multi-tiered approach. Contextual factors were established through a literature review of adjacent fields (namely HDR supervision and creative practice research); a contextual review of published materials and resources provided by partner institutions to students and supervisors; and surveys of administrators of creative practice HDR programs. An understanding of effective supervision practices and strategies was gained through interviews with experienced and new supervisors at partner universities. Principles and exemplars of effective supervision have been drawn from these interviews and resources. And wider insights, exemplars and case studies have been captured through a national symposium entitled *Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research Degrees* (ESCARD) held at QUT in early 2013.

The dissemination strategy has also involved multiple, integrated strategies. The ESCARD symposium not only provided an avenue for expanding the capture of insights and exemplars sector-wide, it also created early awareness of the project and facilitated the dissemination of initial findings. A project website has been developed to provide a
dissemination portal for the project’s resources, good practice case studies, and conference presentations. And an extended dissemination strategy has been designed to facilitate the scholarly publication of findings by the project team, as well as others, through a forthcoming (2014) special edition of the journal ACCESS: Critical Perspectives on Communication, Cultural & Policy Studies, entitled ‘Supervising Practice: Perspectives on the Supervision of Creative Practice Research Higher Degrees’ (2014).

1.4 Distributed Leadership

The project design was underpinned by principles of distributed leadership. The rationale for this approach stemmed from two recent ALTC/OLT project reports on research supervision in Australasian universities. One recommends systemic change while cautioning that “mandated change can harm organizational cultures” (Bruce & Stoodley, 2013: 227) and the other concludes that the advancement of supervisory practices is more likely to occur at the level of disciplines and supervisors than in response to policy-driven governance and oversight of ‘quality assurance’ (Hammond et al., 2010). Distributed leadership provides a way forward. It allows us to move beyond ‘leadership’ as involving the top down implementation of policy towards a model that sees leadership as inclusive and generative.

Theories of distributed leadership envisage leadership as an attribute and capacity, which is not only invested in formal leadership roles but in ‘local’ innovators who operate as exemplars and sources of information to others. David Green refers to ‘leaderful communities’, as operating when people believe they have a contribution to make, take initiative, and have followers (Green in MacBeath, 2002). Rather than relying upon the leadership of individuals in designated roles, distributed leadership is a broad-based and networked model. Innovators and early adopters are pivotal because they share a wealth of tacit knowledge, and provide models, advice, and support to others within communities of practice. Because it is contingent upon the strength of relationships between people, it can be strengthened by facilitating interaction, building networks and stretching leadership across institutional levels. Indeed, Johnson, Lee and Green (2000) argue that strengthening co-operative relationships between people in this way improves individual performance in the self, as well as in colleagues and peers. Moreover, it is a sustainable and expansive approach to leadership capacity building.

1.5 Approaches to Distributed Leadership

In line with the overarching principles of distributed leadership, the project team recognised that to facilitate systemic change and increase supervision capacity, it is necessary to both acknowledge and build leadership at multiple levels of learning and teaching. We therefore developed a cooperative, cross-institutional, and multidisciplinary strategy to capture the insights and good practices of new and more experienced supervisors and HDR administrators. And we initiated conversations about supervision pedagogy that engaged
supervisors from across the sector. At the same time, we have recognised the contingencies of operating in diverse HDR environments, and therefore sought to identify a range of models and exemplars as case studies, which can be evaluated for contextual ‘fit’ and applied or adapted by new supervisors and disciplinary groups as appropriate.

The principles of distributed leadership were employed in various levels of the project design: to strengthen relationships between the multi-institutional project team members; canvass insights from multiple tiers of leadership (research degree leaders and administrators, experienced and new supervisors); build national networks by providing forums and scholarly opportunities for supervisors from across Australasian universities; and sustained dissemination of project outcomes to supervisors, universities and national scholarly networks.

Diagram 1: Distributed approach to expanding data collection and dissemination network

Central network: project team members
While the partner institutions are by no means the only universities in Australasia to offer creative practice PhD programs, each is home to experienced supervisors who have a demonstrated commitment to, and scholarly engagement with, practice-led research and creative practice HDRs, and there was already a deep engagement with the project aims by the project team members. A collaborative and co-operative approach was developed with these ‘local leaders’ of the project team. It involved a consultative approach to planning (project design, surveys and interview questions) and a collaborative approach to collecting information and good practices, with funds dispersed to partners for this purpose.
Expanded internal networks
The project team acted as conduits for disseminating information about the project through their established local networks, and they identified and recruited 25 early adopter and new supervisors within partner universities for interviews, as well as HDR administrators to complete surveys and to collate institutional resources.

Expansion into national network building
A decision to expand the leadership network beyond the project partners was taken, and the mid-term partner meeting in February 2013 was re-envisioned to become a national symposium. Invitations to attend and present case studies and position papers were circulated via project partners within their universities as well as via Deans and Assistant Deans of Creative Arts and Design Schools and faculties across all Australasian universities. In this way, formally designated ‘leaders’ within schools identified local ‘leader/innovators’ across the country, and they were brought into the network. They not only attended the symposium, many submitted a good practice case study or an abstract for a position paper. The accommodation costs of shortlisted presenters were funded through a reallocation of grant money. To encourage wider attendance, no registration fee was imposed. Over 60 delegates attended, including 18 presenters, representing 20 universities.

Continued expansion
This strategy for engaging multiple tiers of stakeholders across a wide spread of institutions was further expanded through a national and international call for papers for a special issue of a journal on the themes of the project and symposium.

A web portal was also developed to facilitate the dissemination of project outcomes, case studies and position papers that were generated by the project team and the expanded network. Traditional dissemination methods such as conference papers and publications by the project team were also included in the project plan.

Distributed leadership was not only the approach of the project; it was also its goal. As Johnson, Lee & Green (2000) have argued, building co-operative relationships between people and institutions promotes leadership capacity both in the self and in peers across the network. By employing strategies of distributed leadership, the project set out to recognise and acknowledge the broad-based leadership capacity that has begun to arise in the area of creative practice research supervision across the sector, as it gathered diverse, early models and resources of local innovators. By providing a model of co-operative research and resource building and sharing, it set out to strengthen internal discipline networks and to establish new, cross-institutional networks and ‘leaderful communities’. And, by inviting early adopter/innovator supervisors and administrators to articulate their tacit knowledge in surveys and interviews, then offering them the opportunity to expand their good practices into conference presentations, and then write up formal journal papers, the project has
incrementally extended ‘local’ leadership capacity (in which innovators have operated as exemplars and sources of information to others in their local networks) into scholarly, national leadership.

1.6 Methods

1.6.1. Literature review:
While little research has been conducted into the specific topic of supervision of creative practice HDRs, a scholarly foundation for the project was developed through a literature review of research and projects from the adjacent fields of HDR supervision and practice-led research. This Literature review appears in Chapter 3 of this report.

1.6.2. Contextual review:
The contextual review involved a multi-pronged approach to data collection. Mindful of the increasingly complex educational environments in which co-operation, as well as tensions, exist between the ‘local’ and the ‘centre’ (that is, between the university, faculty and disciplines), the project team sought insights from multiple tiers of leadership to form a contextual understanding of the field. This included document collection (the formal, published policy documents of partner universities); surveying administrative research program managers; interviewing both experienced and new supervisors, and case study collection more broadly.

Data collection and document sampling: To develop a snapshot of partner institutions’ contextual frameworks, university and discipline level document sampling was conducted. This included reviewing publicly accessible (web and printed) documents, and well as internally circulated materials on postgraduate supervision, postgraduate study, and training (for students and supervisors).

Surveys: To complement these secondary sources, primary research was conducted. Surveys were distributed to research higher degree administrators/postgraduate research convenors at research student centers in the partner institutions. Appropriate respondents were identified by project team members. Quantitative and qualitative (open-ended) survey questions related to HDR structures, supervision loads, candidature duration and milestones, supervisor training and academic development. The survey form and questions were approved by QUT Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number 1200000625).

Interviews: Evidence-based, qualitative research was conducted through semi-structured interviews with 25 supervisors from five partner universities. Project team members nominated interviewees from their local networks. They included ‘experienced’ supervisors (with three or more completions) and ‘new’ supervisors, and spanned a broad range of creative disciplines including visual and performing arts, music and sound, new media,
creative writing, fashion, graphic design, interaction design and interior design. The interview questions were approved by the QUT Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number 1200000625).

Interviews were recorded and transcribed by hand. All transcripts are contained in a secure location, in confidential documents. All interviewees were asked for consent to be named in the research data. Although most gave this consent, individual statements have been de-identified in this report and in the project outcome: 12 Principles for the Effective Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Research Degrees booklet.

1.6.3. An open call for contributions, dialogue and feedback:

A two-day National Symposium, Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research Degrees (ESCARD) was held at QUT in Brisbane in February 2013. 62 delegates from 20 Australasian Universities attended. Held half way through the project timeline, it provided a point of dissemination for preliminary findings, and an opportunity to seek formative feedback on the project ideas as they were developing. It also extended the data collection, as it provided the opportunity for a wider, national network of supervisors and HDR administrators to contribute to the case studies and outcomes of the project. It provided a forum to debate ideas, share insights, and further concepts with a broad spectrum of interested scholars and practitioners. And it assisted in building leadership networks across institutions. Outcomes were captured and, in turn, disseminated via the project web site.

1.6.4. Textual and content analysis:

The project employed textual analysis and content analysis to identify patterns across sets of resources and materials. An established research tool, content analysis is commonly used for the quantitative and qualitative evaluation of written and visual texts, and it can similarly be used for the analysis of interviews. It involves the identification of patterns, through the observation of recurrent themes and categories (Stemler 2001). Holsti describes it as, “[a] technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages” (1969: 14).

Content analysis was employed to identify primary concerns and response patterns, as well as recurring themes in creative practice HDR environments, and to establish a holistic picture of the practices and innovations of partner institutions and early adopter supervisors. The transcriptions of interviews with supervisors were subjected to a thematic content analysis in two phases. First, the transcripts were collated into a matrix to capture and sort quantitative and qualitative data into recurring themes and to categorise it according to institutional contexts and experience levels of supervisors (for the purposes of comparison). In turn, this synthesis led to a set of working principles, illustrated by quotes and exemplars of best practice.
This method resulted in an expanded matrix of themes, categorised according to institutional contexts and the experience level of supervisors. Its synthesis of recurring themes and position statements, underpins key project outcomes: a booklet for supervisors entitled *12 Principles for the Effective Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Research Degrees*, as well as the project’s recommendations.

**1.7 Project Phases**

*Phase 1: Project set up and background research (June 2012–November 2012)*  
The first phase of the project saw the appointment of a project manager and research assistant and established communications between project partners. Interview and survey questions were designed and an ethical clearance application was submitted. The literature review and collection of institutional resources and policy documents commenced.

*Phase 2: Data collection (November 2012–March 2013)*  
Interviews with supervisors took place between November 2012 and February 2013. Surveys were also distributed to administrative centres with briefings provided by project team members. The review of institutional resources began. The organization of the ESCARD Symposium was a key focus of this phase. Besides logistical organisation, a template for the submission of case studies was produced and disseminated to over 30 Australasian Universities. Submissions were shortlisted. A partner meeting and the ESCARD Symposium were held.

*Phase 3: Collation and analysis (February 2013- April 2013)*  
The focus of the third phase was collation of materials and content analysis of surveys and interview transcripts. A preliminary analysis was conducted and a set of principles for effective supervision were extracted and shared with the project team for discussion and comment. The literature review and annotated bibliography were drafted.

*Phase 4: Evaluation and dissemination: (April 2013-July 2013)*  
A project website was designed and content for it was collated. An evaluation of the project and a compilation of findings were drafted. Recommendations for new resources and approaches to academic development were derived. A project report was prepared and circulated to partner institutions before submission. The project leaders were invited to prepare a 2014 special edition of ACCESS Journal based on the ESCARD conference themes. A call for papers was circulated and abstracts received. The preparation of scholarly conference papers and publications to facilitate broad dissemination began.

**1.8 Project Logic**

Diagram 2 illustrates the flow of project aims to methods, activities, and outcomes/outputs.
CHAPTER 2: PROJECT OUTCOMES

A multi-modal set of project outcomes were developed, including a scholarly foundation for the field in the form of a literature review of aligned fields, and a contextual review of creative practice HDRs produced through an analysis of institutional documents, and surveys of HDR administrators. Other concrete outcomes include a set of principles for effective supervision of creative practice HDRs, which were deduced through a content analysis of
interviews with supervisors at partner universities; a repository of supervisory case studies captured at a national symposium; and a series of scholarly papers gathered through calls for papers for a national symposium and a special edition of an international journal. In addition, outcomes of this pilot project include a series of recommendations on administrative processes, support, and approaches to the design of academic development for supervisors in this relatively new field. As a pilot project, the research outcomes of this project provide the foundation for this future work.

Dissemination outcomes include print/PDF materials (a booklet for supervisors and a project report), a national symposium, a project website, conference presentations and a special issue of an international A ranked journal (for 2014).

Less tangible, but nonetheless very important, outcomes of the project include the leadership capacity that has been extended as supervisors became ‘informants’ on effective supervision and, through the confidence this gave them, then went on to become presenters of scholarly presentation papers, and contributors to a national network of supervisors and universities involved in sharing insights and ongoing dialogue. The strengthening of institutional communities of practice, and the emergence of national disciplinary networks, are also outcomes of the distributed leadership approach. These outcomes are detailed below.

2.1 A Scholarly Understanding of the Field: Contextual Factors

1. Literature review: A scholarly research base
Because little literature has been produced so far on the specific topic of creative practice HDR supervision, our review of the literature, which forms Chapter 3 of this report, includes a survey of the broad field of HDR supervision and the field of creative practice research (also known as practice-led and practice-based research). In combination, this serves to establish a foundation for a field that sits at their intersection. It primarily focuses on ALTC and OLT funded project reports, resources and publications, but also encompasses other key literature.

The literature review is not only a project outcome in its own right, it has helped to ground this project on existing research; it provides the basis for comparisons with other fields; it has helped to identify the unique attributes and considerations of creative practice HDR supervision; and it has informed the recommendations of the project.

2. Contextual review: A snapshot of institutional frameworks, processes and resources
From the analysis of publically accessible, as well as internally circulated, materials on postgraduate supervision and primary research conducted through surveys designed to elicit quantitative and qualitative information from HDR administrators in partner institutions, a
snapshot of HDR structures, supervision loads, candidature duration and milestones, and supervisor support and training was produced. This contextual review, which appears in Chapter 4 of this report, establishes an understanding of varied institutional practices, frameworks and management of creative practice research higher degrees.

The institutional snapshot that has been produced is not only a project outcome in its own right, it helped to identify the unique attributes and considerations of creative practice HDR supervision; it enabled us to frame, develop and interpret the supervisor interviews; and it informs our recommendations for institutional support frameworks and academic development for supervisors.

3. Collation of resources
A review of partner institutions’ websites and print materials identified resources provided to supervisors within partner institutions. The resources, which range from broad and generic, institution-wide resources to discipline specific and supervisor generated resources, were collated, categorised and analysed.

This analysis of existing resources has provided a framing context for interpreting interviews with supervisors and for understanding institutional approaches to academic development.

2.2 Practices and Principles of Effective Supervision

4. Interviews with supervisors: Insights into effective supervision practices
Semi-structured interviews with twenty-five experienced and new supervisors of creative practice higher research degrees, conducted across the project’s five partner universities captured rich and diverse insights into this emergent field of postgraduate supervision. Some of those interviewed were among the first to supervise and complete practice-led and practice-based PhDs, some have advocated for and defined the field, and some belong to the new/second generation of supervisors. And they represent a broad range of disciplines (including visual art, performing art, music, new media, creative writing, fashion, graphic design, interaction design and interior design).

The interviews provided understandings of supervisory contexts, experiences, attitudes, good practices, and strategies for effective supervision. They elicited supervisors’ advice for new supervisors and they also captured perceptions of support needs and recommendations for academic development.

Outcomes of the interviews include:
- 33 hours of tape-recorded interview materials;
- transcriptions of the tape-recorded interviews.

The interviews are not only a project outcome in their own right, they have helped to
identify the unique attributes and considerations of creative practice HDR supervision; provided the foundation for establishing principles for effective supervision.

5. Content analysis of key themes and principles
Transcription of the above-mentioned interviews with supervisors and the collation of transcripts into a thematic matrix of topics, institutional contexts and experience levels of supervisors enabled a process of content analysis, which served to capture and sort quantitative and qualitative data. This analysis subsequently led to the identification of response patterns, comparisons and divergences, as well as a holistic picture of the practices, innovations and primary concerns of partner institutions and early adopter supervisors, complete with sets of relevant quotes. In turn, this synthesis led to a set of working principles, illustrated by quotes and exemplars of best practice.

The primary outcomes of the content analysis of supervisor interviews include

- an extensive matrix of supervisor responses sorted into themed categories, with attendant collated quotes,
- a set of principles for effective supervision (Section 4.3 and as a booklet reproduced in Appendix 3),
- a data source for conference presentations (Outcome 10 below).

This matrix and set of principles are not only outcomes in their own right, they have informed the project findings and conclusions around institutional frameworks, support and academic development for supervisors, effective practices and experiences of supervisors and, and they have underpinned our recommendations for future work, institutional support frameworks and academic development for supervisors (Chapter 4).

5. A National Symposium: Collection of exemplars, case studies, presentation and dialogue
A national symposium was held in February 2013 at QUT, with 18 institutional case studies and position papers presented to 62 delegates from twenty universities, along with facilitated forums. It provided an opportunity to capture a wider range of good practices and insights of supervisors and HDR administrators and enabled delegates to share experiences and issues through focused forums around the themes of academic writing and quality of practice. Case studies and dialogues were captured in a range of mediums including text, slides, video and social media.

Primary outcomes include:

- a two day event, entitled Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research Degrees (ESCARD) held at QUT in Brisbane on the 7th, 8th February 2013 (Appendix 1 provides a schedule);
- submitted abstracts for case studies and position papers produced by attendees were collected into a program distributed to attendees at the symposium (and on the project website);
• presentations, captured as PDFs and/or audio and video (available on the project website);
• video-taped, facilitated conversations on the topics: ‘Quality of Practice’ and ‘A conversation about Writing’ (available on project website).

Besides a tangible outcome in its own right, the ESCARD Symposium served to capture a national collection of case studies, as well as reflections on supervision, which provide resources and scholarly reflections for supervisors; and it informed the unfolding project outcomes including the findings, principles of effective supervision practice, and recommendations.

2.3 Dissemination of Project Outcomes

Early and continuous dissemination of the cross-institutional research and collection of resources and case studies was a project priority. It involved a multi-faceted strategy, which ran in tandem with the data collection processes, and has produced both anticipated and unanticipated outcomes.

6. A National Symposium: Dissemination of early findings

Besides providing a vehicle for capturing good practice case studies and position papers, and providing those in attendance with access to a community of supervisory practice, the Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research Degrees symposium provided an avenue for early dissemination of project outcomes (mid way through the project), the opportunity for feedback, and a consultative approach to the unfolding project findings at a point when attendees still had the capacity to influence the project outcomes and conclusions.

Outcomes of the symposium as a dissemination vehicle include:
• awareness of the project through the distribution of the nomination form and project information to Assistant Deans and Heads of Schools;
• presentation of early project findings by project team members in presentations including:
  o Supervision, Practice and the Space Between: Literature in the Field,
  o Views from the Frontier: Insights of Supervisors of Creative Practice HDRs;
• a conference booklet distributed to attendees containing presenters’ abstracts.

The symposium led to further dissemination opportunities, including an invitation to edit a special issue of an international journal (detailed below in Outcome 11).

7. A booklet for supervisors:
A booklet entitled, 12 Principles for the Effective Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Research Degrees, was derived from the content analysis of interviews with supervisors. It encapsulates and shares reflections of supervisors and insights they have gained by over the past decade. It identifies recurring themes from the interviews, and summarises them into a background statement and advice for supervisors. It includes representative quotes that
encapsulate reflections and examples of good practices.

The booklet is available as a printed copy (700 copies were produced) and as a PDF on the project website. It is summarised in Section 4.3 of this report and reproduced in full as Appendix 3. It is intended for supervisors’ academic development. It is important to note, as we state in the introduction to the booklet, that the principles are not presented as rules but as advice, because one thing that the supervisors were unanimous about is the need to avoid prescriptive models and frameworks, and to foster creativity and innovation in what is still an emergent field of postgraduate supervision. The tone is therefore one of dialogue that is advisory, rather than one of authority that is prescriptive/proscriptive.

8. Project website: A dissemination portal for a repository of resources

A project website <http://supervisioncreativeartsphd.net> provides access to the sharable resources, findings and outcomes of the project. The website contains:

- project information including a project summary, its aims and objectives, and sections of this report;
- a collection of literature from the field (with links and PDF resources);
- a snapshot of institutional frameworks including an analysis of the management of HDR creative practice projects and supervision issues (forthcoming);
- a program from the ESCARD symposium including abstracts;
- multi-institutional good practice exemplars, case studies and position papers;
- a booklet for supervisors entitled *12 Principles for the Effective Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Research Degrees* as a downloadable PDF;
- scholarly, peer reviewed papers as they emerge from the project;
- recommendations for future planning, academic development and resource development; and
- updated news relating to the project and continuing outcomes, including calls for papers.

9. Project report: summary of project approach, findings, outcomes and recommendations

This project report provides a summary of the project’s aims and objectives; a description of the project outcomes, findings and impact; a literature and contextual review, strategies for dissemination, factors that impacted upon the success of the project and recommendations for future work. This report is disseminated to partner institutions, the OLT, and to the wider academic community via the OLT website.

10. Phased dissemination plan: Scholarly outcomes

A phased schedule has been designed for the dissemination of project outcomes and findings through conference papers and journal articles. This includes:

- 6 papers presented by project team members at the ESCARD symposium, 7th February, 2013, QUT;
• a presentation on the project by the project leaders entitled ‘Sharing effective supervision practices’ at QUT’s CIF supervisor retreat: Sharing best practice in doctoral supervision (4th December 2012);
• a presentation entitled ‘Practice-led research in Australia’ at an international seminar on supervision in practice-led research for Bath Spa University, UK (January 2013); and
• discussion and sharing of project outcomes at Critiquing the North American Design PhD: A symposium exploring the institutional frameworks for practice- transforming design research, October 5, 2013, School of Design, Carnegie Mellon University, USA.

Abstracts have been produced for forthcoming conference presentations including:
• ‘Relational practices in the supervision of creative research higher degrees’, Quality in Postgraduate Research QPR Conference 2014, April 9-11, Adelaide;
• Accidental academic development: The power of dialogue for supervisors in an emergent field (abstract to be submitted);
• The Supervision Moment: A Snapshot of procedural issues in the supervision of creative practice higher research degrees (abstract to be submitted).

Other papers in preparation by project team members address a range of topics including:
• research ethics for postgraduate candidates;
• the form of the exegesis;
  writing the exegesis, and
• managing risk in candidature.

These scholarly outcomes contribute research findings on the pedagogies of postgraduate supervision to the field. They are intended to assist supervisors and schools, help to ensure the maturation of this emerging field and position supervision as a high order of teaching practice.

11. Journal special issue: Facilitating scholarly outcomes from the field
A special issue of the journal ACCESS: Critical perspectives on communication, cultural & policy studies, entitled ‘Supervising practice: Perspectives on the supervision of creative practice research higher degrees’ (Vol. 33, No. 2, 2014) is being edited by the project team leaders. ACCESS journal was ranked A Quality in the ERA Rankings. Key themes in the call for papers align with those identified through the project, namely:
• Assisting students in developing the relationship between theory and practice in the structure and/or form of the thesis/exegesis/dissertation;
• Solving challenges encountered in the supervision of creative arts research degrees;
• Designing strategies, tools, and resources to facilitate smooth student progress in creative arts higher research degrees;
• Supporting the academic/professional development of PhD students;
• Academic development for supervisors of creative arts research degrees.
Building on the ESCARD symposium, participants have been invited to write up their presentations for submission to the journal. The call for papers has also been distributed more widely through national and international networks. Papers will be subjected to international blind review. The special issue will be edited by the project leaders. Abstracts have been received, with full paper submissions due in January 2014.

This call for papers extends the capture of supervisor perspectives and case studies, and expands dialogue on the subject of effective supervision of creative practice HDRs. It ensures further dissemination of project outcomes in a scholarly form, builds the research leadership capacity of supervisors, and contributes to the scholarship of postgraduate supervision.

2.4 Recommendations and Other Outcomes

Along with the above-mentioned concrete project outcomes, recommendations have been made and other, unanticipated, outcomes have emerged.

12. Recommendations for change and new approaches
A series of recommendations around institutional change, approaches to supporting supervisors, training and academic development have been made through the triangulation of findings from the literature review, analysis of institutional frameworks, interviews with supervisors, and forums and dialogue at the ESCARD symposium. They include a descriptive list of potential approaches that institutions might take to supporting supervisors, academic development, and other avenues for capacity building.

The recommendations are summarised in Section 4.4. Their purpose is to instigate systemic change in institutional approaches to supervision management, practices, and academic development.

13. Recommendations for future work
A one-year seed project, the outcomes of this project have established a robust foundation for future work around new models for supervisor academic development that focus on local disciplinary contexts, emphasise a case studies approach, provide diverse resources for supervisors, and facilitate dialogue between supervisors at local and national levels.

Future work is also proposed to build a national network to share good practices and provide further insights into the management of risk factors, ethical issues, and preparing candidates for examination. A descriptive list of recommendations for future work appears in Section 4.5.

14. A community of supervisory practice
By employing the principles of distributed leadership at the heart of the project, a
cooperative, dialogic approach was sustained throughout the project. A fledgling community of practice emerged and networks have been established between supervisors and schools. This is described in detail by attendees at the ESCARD symposium in evaluation responses (Section 6.3). It evidences the momentum that has been initiated by the project across the sector. Besides the robust research foundation that has been established, and the recommendations that have been made, this momentum provides an important foundation for future work. As a project outcome, it has established a precedent and good will for future co-operation and sharing of good practices.
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

To date, there has been little discussion in the literature, or in strategic ALTC/OLT projects, on the supervision of creative practice Higher Degrees by Research (HDRs). However, as this topic sits at the intersection of two established fields—namely the emergent field of creative practice research (also referred to as practice-led and practice-based research) and the pedagogy of research supervision more broadly—a foundational understanding can be developed from a review of the literature that spans these two domains. This literature review therefore includes an overview of how the emergent field of creative practice research has come to be defined and pursued, as well as what Australasian universities and supervisors consider important aspects of postgraduate research supervision across disciplinary fields. A number of Office of Learning and Teaching projects and fellowships have been conducted in both of these domains over the past decade, and literature has been developed more broadly on both topics.

3.1 The Emergent Field of Creative Practice/Practice-led/Practice-based Research

History and current contexts
Higher research degrees in creative practice—in fields such as visual and performing arts, music, design, creative writing, film and media—represent a relatively new area of postgraduate study in Australasian universities. In a comprehensive scoping study entitled Creative Arts PhD: Future-proofing the creative arts in higher education, Baker and Buckley (2009) chart its history, noting that the first creative arts professional doctorate was offered in 1984 at the University of Wollongong. However, it was not until the Strand Report’s formal recognition of practice-led research in 1998 that a wide range of creative disciplines began to support HDR students to submit creative works with an accompanying written document or ‘exegesis’ for examination. Baker and Buckley (2009) track a ten-fold increase in enrolments in creative disciplines over the next decade, growth which has also been documented by Evans, T., & Macauley, P., & Pearson, M., & Tregenza, K., (2003) and Brien, D.L., & Burr, S., & Webb, J., (2010).

This rapid, unprecedented growth has been fuelled by a combination of factors. Firstly, creative practice doctorates provide a new form of accreditation for creative practitioner-academics, which allows them to meet increasing expectations of a PhD as an entrance level requirement for academic roles. Secondly, in 2003, creative outcomes came to be recognised within the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) framework, which established the legitimacy of practice-led and practice-based research. Thirdly, the value of
the Creative Industries and its research modes to the economic and cultural fabric has been emphasised in recent years (Higgs, Peter L.; Cunningham, S., & Pagan, J. D., 2007)¹. And finally, an increasingly competitive funding environment has led to increased HDR enrolment targets across the board. With 30 Australasian universities now offering creative practice higher research degrees, creative practice has come to be widely recognised as a legitimate methodological choice for students engaging in higher degrees by research.

**Definitions**

Despite its rapid and widespread uptake, creative practice remains an emergent field of postgraduate study, and its definitions and approaches are yet to stabilise. There is broad agreement around a base definition: HDRs in creative practice combine the production of creative artefacts (for example art or design objects or processes, creative writing, film, new media, performance, or a combination of such mediums) with a written, theoretical component. And, as Dally, K., & Holbrook, A., & Lawry, M., & Graham, A. (2004) note, there is increasing recognition that, while the practice may speak for itself (within the context of an exhibition for example), as a research endeavour, both the exhibition/outcomes/products and the written thesis must speak to each other. There is consensus that, “The mere presence of art [is] not indicative of a novel paradigm called artistic research” (Biggs, M.A.R., & Büchler, D., 2009: 9). That is, creative practice undertaken as a research endeavour must be framed as such within a written explication, which explains how it is situated within its field, how it is underpinned by a methodology, and how it contributes to the formation of ‘new knowledge’.

However, there remains a lack of consensus around key terminology, and much debate around what the paradigm of ‘artistic research’ entails. During the past decade, various defining terms, models, methodologies and research paradigms have been proposed in academic papers, as well as in university guidelines. The terms ‘creative practice as research’, ‘practice-led research’ and ‘practice-based research’ are variously employed (sometimes for different types of projects and at other times interchangeably). Postgraduate degree titles and forms (at doctoral level alone) range from PhD, to Professional Doctorate, to Doctorate of Visual Arts and Doctorate of Creative Industries. And the written component is variously referred to as a thesis and an exegesis. Moreover, the evolution and contestation of the field continues to play out on the ground, as students and their supervisors experiment with what is possible in terms of the form, content and structure of both the practice and the written document.

Much of the definitional work that has occurred around creative practice research has been a result of efforts to establish its legitimacy and value, and to differentiate it from other

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¹ See also [www.unctad.org/en/docs/ditc20082cer_en.pdf](http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/ditc20082cer_en.pdf) and
fields of research or, as Estelle Barrett puts it, to establish, “an identifiable location within the broader arena made up of more clearly defined disciplines or domains of knowledge” (2006: 7). It is widely agreed by advocates of creative practice as research that there are significant conceptual and methodological differences between scientific and creative research. For example, citing Eisner’s (1995) definition of research, Dally et al. write that, “scientific methods, such as formulating hypotheses, pursuing solutions and reaching conclusions may be incompatible with artistic practice” (2004, para 3). Biggs and Buechler go on to suggest that the key to effectively supervising PhDs in creative practice is in understanding the distinctions of this alternate paradigm. They write, supervision of the PhD in areas of creative practice is perceived as complex only when it attempts to produce research that imitates received paradigms rather than being in accordance with its own worldview. (2009: 12)

A number of authors have set out to identify, or perhaps to establish, what the distinctions are. Darren Newbury’s early positioning report for the United Kingdom Council of Graduate Education pragmatically identified the types of new knowledge contribution that creative practice research might make (1997: 3). They include innovations in design, aesthetic development, methods and methodologies for art and design, new understandings, models and theories of art/design, as well as empirical novelty. Other writers have offered relatively open definitions. For example, Dally et al. (2004) argue that the key factor of artistic research in advancing understanding is in “recontextualizing the familiar and awakening viewers to new ways of seeing, thinking and knowing” (para 4). Biggs and Buechler suggest that while traditional research involves a question and an answer, and a method that meaningfully connects the answers to the questions order to produce ‘knowledge’; the ‘alternative paradigm’ of creative arts research revolves around the artefact, rhetoric, and personal experience. Creative production may generate the question, be instrumental in the response to the question, or form an integral part of the communication of the outcome (2009: 8-9).

The practice

Many authors argue that the creative practice occupies a central position within, and plays an integral role in, the research process. For example, Hamilton and Jaaniste (2009) argue, Practice-led research is a unique research paradigm because it situates creative practice as both an outcome and driver of the research process and positions the researcher in a unique relationship with the subject of the research.

And, in defining what it means to conduct higher degree research in/through, creative practice, Brien et al. suggest that "outcomes typically encompass research products that make an original contribution to knowledge in the field, and creative products that satisfy relevant aesthetic standards" (2010: 2). Understanding what constitutes the latter, somewhat esoteric, part of this definition provided the impetus for their current OLT funded project, Examination of doctoral degrees in creative arts: process, practice and standards (2010). It responds to criticism around the quality of creative practice HDR outputs (in terms
of content, rigour and assessment standards) and sets out to establish a consistent understanding of high-level creative aptitude.

Methodologies
The methodologies of creative practice research are emergent and, as yet, are unsettled. There has been increasing discussion since Carol Gray first argued that “‘practice-led’ research [is] initiated in practice, where questions, problems, challenges are identified and formed by the needs of practice and practitioners” (1996: 3) and, borrowing from Donald Schön, suggested that this involves practitioners researching through ‘action’, and ‘reflecting in and on action’. Haseman (2006) and Bolt (2008) have since developed the concept of practice-led performative research, which challenges the binaries of qualitative and quantitative data collection. Barrett (2005) describes the research process as experimental and speculative; involving a dynamic interplay of understandings gained from theory, practice and the researcher’s situated knowledges.

Recently, Hamilton and Jaaniste (2009) have argued that distinctions exist between creative fields due to differing forming contexts, research goals, intentions invested in the ‘artefacts’ (creative works, products, events), and knowledge claims made for the research outcomes; which all give rise to a plurality of methodological approaches and ways of evidencing and reporting new knowledge. Gray also described a ‘pluralist approach’ and the use of a multi-method technique or ‘expansive synthesis’, in which a range of approaches and interpretive paradigms may be employed. That is, there is no single methodology for creative practice research, but different creative fields may adopt, adapt, and recombine a range of methodologies from other fields and, indeed, establish new ones.

The exegesis
Besides the quality and role of the practice, the written component is also of particular interest to supervisors. Some scholars in the field have differentiated the emerging genre of the exegesis from the dissertations or theses of other academic fields. Indeed, this is part of the scope of the TEXT journal in Australia and the Writing PAD project in the UK. A number of writers have explored the role of the exegesis in the creative practice PhD, including Bourke, N., & Nielsen, P., 2004; Hamilton, J. & Jaaniste, L., (2010); Ings, W. (2013); Dally, K., & Holbrook, A., & Lawry, M., & Graham, A., (2004). It has variously been described as an explication of the practice, a framing document, and a thesis; and various models have been proposed in the literature as well as in university guidelines. Milech, B.H., & Schilo, A. (2004) describe what they call the ‘context’ model, in which the exegesis explains the theoretical and philosophical frameworks, historical precedents, or conditions of practice. They also describe a seemingly opposite approach, which they call the ‘commentary’ model, in which the exegesis acts as an 'explanatory annotation’ to the creative work and focuses on reflections on the creative process, the works, and/or their reception. Hamilton and Jaaniste (2010) describe a ‘connective’ model of exegesis, which combines these approaches into an integrated thesis. However, the function, form, and even the name of the written
component remains contested. Indeed this subject is currently being addressed in a large, ARC funded project entitled *Writing in the Academy: the Practice-based Thesis as an Evolving Genre* (Paltridge, B., Starfield, S. and Ravelli, L., 2011).

**Standards**

Highlighting the diversity of definitions, frameworks, methodologies, guidelines and models in the field of creative practice research, the OLT (formerly ALTC) scoping project, *Creative Arts PhD: Future-proofing the creative arts in higher education*, recommends that we must resolve the confusion of terminology across the sector along with other anomalies, such as inconsistent admission processes and examination procedures (Baker and Buckley, 2009: 12). Indeed, a key aim of this project was to, “provide an overview of current practices, which in turn could then provide the basis for the discussion of best practice and movement towards consideration by the sector of benchmark standards” (Baker and Buckley, 2009: 12). Similarly, in the project report for the OLT/ALTC project, *Learning and Teaching Academic Standards Statement: Creative and Performing Arts*, Holmes (2010) argues for the need to establish a clarifying statement on higher degrees and the creative arts. He proposes convening a network of Deans to help manage standards and address the variations in HRDs offered and maintained in Australian institutions.

On the other hand, while flagging the lack of consensus around terminology and institutional structures, and the wide variation in examination guidelines provided by Australian institutions, Dally et al. (2004) report a surprising level of consistency between the Visual Arts examiners they interviewed. Despite being drawn from a range of backgrounds—including curators, art historians, art practitioners and academics from across institutions; what these examiners/informants considered to be doctoral standard—both in terms of artistic merit and exegetical standard—was in almost absolute agreement. While a small study (N=15), this research emphasises the need to focus on academic attributes, such as what constitutes new knowledge in the creative arts, and the standard of the examinable components, above consensus on functional aspects and terminology. It suggests that a shared, tacit understanding of ‘quality’ may already serve to provide an unstated, yet nonetheless, consistently applied ‘standard’.

**Supervision**

While there has been little investigation into supervision practices in the field of creative practice research, some OLT projects on creative arts higher research degrees have raised issues relating to it within their recommendations. In *Creative Arts PhD: Future-proofing the Creative Arts in Higher Education*, Baker and Buckley draw conclusions based on interviews with postgraduate coordinators. The final report notes that “supervision was seen as a critical factor in the success or otherwise of the student’s experience and the quality of the submission” (2009: 77). Hence, a key recommendation of this project was that,

> Further examination of patterns of supervision could assist in establishing some best practice models to assist in creative-arts-specific research supervision training
programs (2009: 97).

The *Creative Arts PhD* project also identified issues around the (limited) number of academic staff in creative fields with doctoral qualifications (and so the number of registered supervisors), as well as the number of students that supervisors are allowed to supervise (which varies institution by institution), which have led to pressures on intake capacity. It also raised issues around consistency, noting that some universities accept a doctoral qualification or equivalence as the capacity to supervise. It pointed out that this can lead to generational differences, given the growing expectation for newly employed staff to have a PhD (2009: 89-90). And, while contextual factors, such as the backgrounds of supervisors, have led to supervisors sometimes supervising different `parts’ of the PhD (i.e. the exegetical component or the creative component), the report identified a gradual shift to supervisors overseeing the entire thesis, as more supervisors become able to do so. This process aligns with the increasing recognition that these components are integral to each other. The report concludes that rigorous and fine-grained data collection would be useful in identifying issues such as overloading of supervisors and managing candidate demand (: 91).

The OLT supported project, *Australian Writing Programs Network (AWPN)* by Webb, J., Brien, D. L., Bruns, A., Battye, G., Williams, J., Bolland, C., and Smith (2008) has similarly identified issues that have arisen out of the rapid growth of creative writing programs in Australian universities. They span from inconsistencies in policy frameworks and variations in supervisor experience and expertise. On the latter, they write,

... teaching staff come from highly diverse academic and professional backgrounds...many have little research training, or knowledge of what is involved in preparing a candidate to complete a doctoral program. Other supervisors are experienced researchers in cognate fields but have limited background in creative practice. (: 7)

Both project reports note differences between institutions in terms of training, and the *Creative Arts PhD* project recommends establishing national training and ‘best practice’ standards for academic development for supervisors. On the other hand, the AWPN report recommends developing and promoting “knowledge building about supervisory best practice”, based on network building and encouraging a community of postgraduate writers and supervisors across universities (: 6). Through a series of workshops in 2008 (which covered the selection of candidates; research ethics; coursework for HRDs; methodologies; practices; examination practices; personal/professional issues in relation to supervision; and informal and formal student cohorts) the project modelled the approach it recommended, with an emphasis on information provision, knowledge transfer, networking and community building.

**3.2 HDR Supervision**

The supervision of HDR students is a significant learning and teaching activity in Australasian
universities, which has been subject to significant changes in recent years. Firstly, there has been a substantial increase in the intake of candidates into postgraduate research programs as a whole since 2000 (a 28.6% increase from 43,433 to 55,869; with the largest relative increase (nearly 50%) being in the area of PhDs (DIICCSRTE, 2013)). This growth is due to higher intakes of both domestic and international enrolments, as well as an expansion of postgraduate research degrees into new and emergent fields. At the same time, relatively static funding allocations have resulted in increased pressures on completion rates and limits to duration of candidature. As noted in a recent discussion paper, The changing PhD (Group of Eight, 2013), “An overriding challenge for universities is to increase the number and quality of graduates without corresponding increases in funding” (: 5). Secondly, the past decade has seen significant changes in the nature of postgraduate research, driven by an increased diversity of students, research areas, and what constitutes HDR outputs and the examinable thesis (Hammond et al., 2010). This diversification has increased the complexities of supervision processes and the approaches of supervisors who, at the same time, also face increasing pressure to balance their own academic and research responsibilities.

Given this combination of change factors and pressures, there has been considerable discussion around the inclusion of coursework (particularly around academic literacy), as well as calls for clearer management structures for dealing with ‘risk’. However, it is the role and capacity of supervisors that has been the most prominent area of scrutiny for, as the recent Group of Eight discussion paper (2013) concludes, “It is difficult to underestimate the importance of supervision and the quality of supervision in creating the PhD experience and in ensuring the completion of a PhD.” (: 13).

The OLT and its predecessor bodies have funded a number of learning and teaching projects and fellowships on postgraduate research degree supervision. They span a range of discipline areas and diverse topics from graduate entry to research skills training and coursework in PhD programs, supporting international and indigenous students, scoping studies of established and emergent HDR fields (such as law, business, information technology, creative arts, and trans-disciplinary studies), as well as examination and effective supervision. It is the resulting outcomes, particularly the project reports and scholarly publications, that focus on the latter, which are of particular importance here.

A recent project by Hammond et al., Building Research Supervision and Training across Australian Universities (2010) provided a detailed exploration of cross-disciplinary supervision. The project’s methods—a symposium, surveys (with 1884 responses), interviews, and dissemination—generated many new insights into the role and practices of supervision in Australasian universities. It provides insights into the implications of the professionalisation and formalisation of higher degree research education for supervisors. Central to this change, they argue, is quality assurance and the increased scrutiny of supervision practices that this quality assurance has driven. They write, “Supervision no
longer occurs just in the private space between supervisor and student” (2010: 7). However, they go on to argue that it is necessary to look beyond compliance drives, and to engage in discussions around supervision pedagogies. A key recommendation of this project is the theorization of what it means to be a supervisor, and what constitutes effective practices of supervision. The project report pays particular attention to changes in supervision practices. Importantly, it notes that there is a “decreasing relevance of supervisors own supervisory experiences for supervision in the twenty first century university, and hence the need for supervisors to develop new supervisory practices” (: 12).

This agility in supervision expertise is especially pertinent to the creative arts—not only because it is a relatively new area of postgraduate supervision, which means that first generation of supervisors must necessarily supervise PhD projects that are fundamentally different to their own, but because experienced, as well as second generation supervisors, continue to face shifts in what is still an emergent field. Moreover, there are many varieties of PhD outcomes that constitute viable and valuable contributions to the field, and interdisciplinary projects are commonplace. For these reasons, it is likely that a supervisor may be supervising students who are working outside of their own principal research domain, are practicing in different mediums, and are following methodologies and conventions that are fundamentally different to those in the PhDs they undertook themselves. Hammond et al. take up the implications of the changes in HDR cultures and institutional and sector expectations of supervisors. They argue that academic development for supervisors must involve more than opportunities to ‘top-up’ supervision skills; it must “address the increasingly complex nature of supervision” (2010: 14). The report recommends that training should include “reactive, pre-emptive and proactive dimensions” (: 15, original emphasis). However, noting concerns voiced by supervisors that universities value compliance over quality, the report cautions against tying academic development to quality assurance processes. Furthermore, it cautions against the efficiencies of centralised generic training, noting that,

there is considerable resistance from supervisors to compulsory, centralised and formal training programs. There is also considerable cynicism about the value of such programs (: 15).

By contrast, the report notes a continued interest in decentralised training. What is highlighted by this project is the need for local, discipline level exploration of supervisory practices and processes. This potentially includes the development of contextually targeted exemplars of good practice for supervisors and informal mechanisms for supervisor training, such as peer mentoring.

One of the most significant discipline-based studies on postgraduate supervision was produced by Christine Bruce’s 2009 ALTC (now Office of Learning and Teaching) fellowship, entitled, *Towards a pedagogy of supervision in the technology disciplines*, which focussed on
Bruce’s field of expertise: science and technology. The findings of her fellowship fall into three categories: the perspective and assumed roles of supervisors, approaches to supervision, and specific supervision strategies.

First, from questions about how supervisors perceive their practice, the project situates postgraduate research supervision in a unique place within universities—within the “teaching-research nexus”. Bruce concludes that,

In practice, while many universities position research higher degree supervision at least in some respect as a teaching and learning practice, typically supervisors largely consider supervision as part of their research endeavor rather than as part of their teaching endeavour. (: 9)

Bruce’s final report goes on to identify three primary supervisory roles that are adopted as required throughout a student’s candidature. They include directing roles, collaborative roles, and responsive roles. Within these roles, the report identifies three defining approaches to supervision namely: a direction setting approach, a scaffolding approach, and a relationship approach. Drilling down further into the detail of these approaches, the report extends to identify key strategies for effective supervision. In summary form, the strategies can be described as follows: negotiating expectations; creating a structure; generating outputs; focusing on the big picture; creating space and creating groups. Bruce concludes by discussing the potential of adapting this pedagogical framework to other disciplines, and it is worth considering whether these ideas provide a potential framework for creative practice supervision. Such a framework could provide an interesting trigger for dialogue amongst creative practice supervisors in a forum to assess its relative merits for the field and what adaptation may be required.

Besides the findings and outcomes of Bruce’s fellowship, what is particularly interesting for this project is her research methods, which included interviews and small group discussions with supervisors to provide initial methods of data collection. Then, through the process of qualitative analysis, a propositional ‘best practice’ framework (a pedagogy of supervision) was developed and presented to supervisors for comment and discussion. This participatory and dialogic approach has elements of distributed leadership embedded within it.

Moreover, the impact of Bruce’s dialogic research methods provides a useful precedent. Of particular interest in the report is the description of the way in which the interviews and small group discussions produced benefits for the respondents themselves. Bruce writes,

Individual interviews enabled supervisors to become aware of their own, previously implicit, thinking. Supervisors’ new self-awareness was commented on explicitly in their evaluation comments. (: 24)

It also produced benefits for the group as a whole, as Bruce goes on to explain:
Holding conversations with supervisors in small group and workshop contexts raised awareness of each other’s approaches. Interest in adopting the approaches of colleagues was explicitly commented on in evaluation responses. (4: 24)

That is dissemination took place through the conduct of the research. This provided insights into the benefits of early dissemination to this project. Notably, as we discuss in the outcomes section of this report, we encountered a similar response from those participating in our interviews and the ESCARD symposium we held, which allowed supervisors to reflect and to share stories and experiences with colleagues.

Bruce concludes that conversations around supervision as a teaching and learning practice are crucial. Indeed, she argues that the key to effective academic development for supervisors is to encourage dialogue, with self-reflection providing a tool through which personal preferences and insights can be articulated. To further extend this dialogic process, Bruce goes on to recommend a mentoring scheme for less experienced supervisors. Such a recommendation aligns with the recommendations of earlier reports (including the FIRST project), albeit for different reasons. And, finally, to enable regeneration of supervision pedagogy in the future, the report recommends increased support for supervisors and postgraduate student researchers, as well as the introduction of faculty level awards as a form of recognition of good practices. These insights and recommendations can be aligned with Hammond et al.’s (2010) recommendation for contextually targeted exemplars of best practice and informal, personalised approaches to supervisor training. They provide a useful foundation for this project’s questions around appropriate forms of academic development for new and established supervisors of creative practice higher research degrees.

Online Supervision Resources
Besides formal publications and project reports, three main forms of online resources have been developed for supervisors through funded research projects. They include websites, for example FIRST (for Improving Research Supervision and Training) <www.first.edu.au>. FIRST provides a comprehensive collection of supervision resources, guidelines, and supervision practices. It includes references, workshop suggestions, and questionnaires. Moderated and structured by a steering committee, it has been established as a long-term, updating resource.

Online repositories of books/PDF resources for supervisors are also available. Examples include Christine Bruce’s Resource for Supervisors, <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/28592/> an output from her ALTC fellowship. A large, linear document, it offers strategic information, comments, and suggestions for supervisors from a wide variety of backgrounds and it includes an extensive bibliography.

Blogs include the Supervisor’s Friend, produced by Geof Hill, which offers informal, personal discussions on the role of the supervisor. Another is The Doctoral Writing SIG, which raises questions and poses potential solutions through informal discussion. Other blogs primarily
targeting research students rather than supervisors, including Inger Mewburn’s *The Thesis Whisperer* and the *Research Whisperer*. Contemporary and multimodal in form (including Twitter feeds, tagging and archiving), such blogs assume an informal, personal tone, and foster dialogue around topics of interest to the research student community.

An expanded summary analysis of online resources is provided on the project website. However, it is important to note that, like those mentioned here, all of these resources are generic and cross-disciplinary, and make no specific mention of the creative arts or creative practice HRDs.

**Conclusion**

While little literature exists on the supervision of creative practice HDRs specifically, crystallising the contexts, issues, and key concepts of the fields of creative practice research and HDR supervision more broadly was crucial in establishing our project approach, developing questions for our surveys and interviews, and informing our recommendations. In particular, understanding what is considered important to effective supervision more broadly provided an important foundation for probing the practices of supervisors of creative practice.

Nonetheless, analysing responses to the interview questions we asked has provided illuminating perspectives on what supervisors of creative practice PhDs consider creative practice research to be. And, analysing interview responses in light of this background has resulted in establishing striking similarities to, as well as differences from, other more established fields.
CHAPTER 4: CONTEXTUAL REVIEW: PROJECT FINDINGS

Alongside the broad contextual framing of postgraduate supervision of creative practice projects outlined in the literature review in Chapter 3, local factors such as the processes and practices of schools, HDR administration, supervisors, and HDR students impact on postgraduate supervision in all fields, including creative practice. This contextual review presents the project’s findings, which are primarily derived from focal research conducted at the five partner universities in this project: Queensland University of Technology, The University of Melbourne, Auckland University of Technology University, University of New South Wales, and University of Western Sydney.

This collection of universities represents a range of diverse contexts, from ‘sandstone’ to ‘technology’ to ‘regional’ universities, with additional variations in both scale and relative ‘youth’. They have commonalities too, which are important considerations for this project. Each has been offering creative practice as research HDRs for a decade or more, and all are compliant with the AQF framework and guided by the DDOGS statement from 2008 (or New Zealand equivalent) regarding best practice for doctoral degrees. We might consider this sampling—in all of its diversity—to be representative of the diversity of creative practice programs across the sector.

The twenty-five supervisors recruited for interviews for this study are also diverse. They represent a range of disciplines, including visual arts, performing arts, music and sound, interior design, fashion, graphic design, design, creative writing, film and new media, and they reflect a range of experience levels from early advocates, architects and methodologists of creative practice research degrees—who by now have double figure completions—to very new supervisors, who have recently completed their own PhD in creative practice. Again, we might consider this broad sampling to represent the spectrum of creative practice supervisors.

Through surveys of creative practice HDR convenors and administrators across the partner universities in the project, we have gained insights into a wide range of contextual factors, process, and practices surrounding the supervision of creative practice postgraduate degrees. And our interviews with supervisors have provided rich perspectives on experiences, insights, challenges and exemplary practices. This chapter brings these two perspectives together. It presents a summary of findings from the surveys and interviews and makes comparisons with the literature and previous OLT/ALTC project findings and recommendations, before making recommendations that are specific to supervisory practices, academic development for supervisors, and support for supervisors at local levels.
4.1 A Snapshot of Procedural Issues in the Supervision of Creative Practice HDRs

Through the analysis of publicly accessible information (on websites, and in published materials), as well as survey responses received from HDR co-ordinators/administrators at the five partner universities, the following contextual factors were identified. Each is specific to postgraduate research in creative fields. The following themes highlight the unique issues and challenges of the field.

Access to data
It is important to note at the outset of this section that while all institutions in this study were able to provide figures on HDR supervision and candidature in creative arts disciplines overall, data around creative practice HDRs is not differentiated from traditional projects in creative disciplines. None of the institutions in the study report centrally on creative practice projects as a distinct field, and they therefore do not collect separate figures around admissions, completions, and attrition rates. As one informant advised,

we have no figures at all regarding creative practice PhDs ... we don't even really have precise numbers about how many there are... this kind of fine-grained detail is a complete mystery!

This lack of transparency around creative practice HDR numbers echoes the findings of Baker and Buckley in *Future-proofing the creative arts in higher education* project report (2009). Acknowledging that access to accurate data was a limitation of their study, the final report cautions, “[inconsistencies in data figures] along with difficulties encountered in distinguishing specific creative arts disciplines mean that the statistical data within the report should be considered as providing an informed impression.” (: 15) This problem can perhaps be attributed to a number of factors. Firstly, Fields of Education (FOE), defined by the Australian Government for reporting purposes, do not distinguish creative practice from other research approaches; secondly some schools/institutions are relatively new to creative practice higher degree research; and thirdly local contexts, histories and reporting structures make parity of reporting challenging (for example, faculties or schools that have recently been amalgamated into a university may be separately located, and have their own cultures, but may be clustered with other disciplines within an overarching administrative structure and regulatory environment.

Like Baker and Buckley, we would argue that supervisors and managers would benefit from more fine-grained data gathering, given that a PhD creative practice project requires a significant and unique type of commitment from both the supervisory team and the institution in terms of workload, resourcing and infrastructure provision.

**Supervisor profiles and completion rates**
Our surveys of administrators and course convenors have revealed that the number of candidates supervised by a principal supervisor differs widely across creative practice areas. However, on average, the number of candidates supervised by a principal supervisor at one time is between three and five. However, there are a small number of individual supervisors who are seen as ‘experts’ within a discipline and highly experienced supervisors, and they have a much longer supervision list.

The majority of principal supervisors in partner institutions are at the senior lecturer level (Level C). However, in at least one university, the majority of supervisors are in the A-B lecturer band, largely due to practitioners who have recently entered the university system as supervisors. The data reveals interesting information about the qualifications of supervisors. The majority of interviewees have a PhD (17 of the 25 interviewees), although the type of PhD varies, with the majority of the 17 (10) holding a ‘conventional’ PhD and seven holding a practice-led PhD. Others hold a Doctorate of Creative Arts, are still completing their PhD, or are accredited as supervisors on the basis of equivalence (their experience and reputation in the field). Some interviewees mentioned their supervisions of Masters projects as important aspects to their training and experience.

Irrespective of their qualifications or the form of their own PhD, most of the interviewees supervise across both creative and written aspects of a project. And they often supervise across different disciplines. Disciplines/faculties appear to have taken the pragmatic approach of combining supervisors with different backgrounds, disciplinary expertise, and experience levels on supervision teams until they have built supervisory capacity. However, interestingly, the interviews revealed that experienced supervisors do not consider supervising PhD projects that are different (in form or area of specialisation) to their own training, to be a particular challenge, nor an impediment to their capacity to supervise effectively.

This is borne out by data collected from schools that shows that experienced supervisors (based on three or more completions) complete around 50% of candidatures, while new supervisors (in the Lecturer A-B band) complete considerably less–20% of candidatures. This may be influenced by the attributes of ‘early adopter’ supervisors, who have evidenced considerable commitment to driving forward this new field, but it also appears to suggest that experience is of benefit to supervisors/supervisions/candidates. It also suggests that the insights gained by experienced supervisors may be of particular value to new supervisors in the form of mentoring, providing exemplars of good practice, or leading academic development.

Intake philosophy, enrolments, and admission structures
Decision-making around intake is influenced by a combination of the strategic demands of a university, availability of supervisors, and a discipline’s resourcing capacity. However, while there are growth targets for HDR enrolments across the board at some institutions, in
creative disciplines there appears to be a shift (reported in qualitative responses to surveys) to emphasising the importance of ‘quality candidates’, and an emphasis on standards of creative work over higher growth. What ‘quality candidates’ means varies between institutions however. There are differences in intake priorities, which relate to differing expectations around professional creative experience and the academic record of candidates. In one institution, successful candidates tend to have between 10 and 15 years experience in their field as professional practitioners, while in others, applicants tend to move from undergraduate to postgraduate study and grade point average (GPA) is a significant factor. This difference between the representative backgrounds of candidates, and the immediacy of their professional and academic experience, provides an important contextual factor for supervision, and this varies institution by institution.

The processes of admission are similar amongst the partner institutions. Supervisors or staff members in a school or discipline tend to be approached first by a candidate, and local information provision and discussion occurs prior to the formal submission of an application. Some institutions ask applicants to be interviewed by a local panel, while others rely on the prospective supervisor to assess the applicant (then a discussion between them and a head of discipline or school would usually take place). Given local intake philosophies, coupled with supervision capacity, the emphasis tends to be on ‘goodness of fit’.

After ‘local’ assessment, the application zigzags between distributed and centralized administration teams until an offer is made and accepted. The candidature journey therefore begins with a series of interactions with, and between, local and faculty level representatives before formal processes begin, and decisions around supervision are made locally. As one of our respondents comments,

The decision around who is best to supervise is made at the local department level and takes into account load, their practice, needs, and the topic area of the candidate.

There is a preference among supervisors and schools to maintain this localised process. Given the length and depth of supervisory relationships and resourcing and infrastructure requirements of an average four-year candidature, agency around decision-making on admissions is crucial.

The form of the creative practice PhD
While all of the universities that partnered in this project require the submission of a combination of practical and written (exegetical) components for examination, the proportion of practice to theoretical aspects varies between institutions, with some internal variation providing choice for candidates. One institution requires at least 30% of the assessment to be placed on the written/critical component and limits the creative practice to 70%; one sets the range between 66% and 33% for each component; another mandates a 50% split between the areas but states that the creative practice is primary; and another has no formal demarcation between components (examiners are advised to consider the
interdependency of the various aspects of the project and the importance of the practice). However, all of the partner institutions recommend that the ‘dissertation/exegesis’ component and the creative component be integrated and examined as one, conceptually coherent project.

For supervisors, this coherence presents one of the greatest challenges to candidates. Supervisors spoke of the difficulties of creating a project that not only demonstrates excellence in creative practice and written research outcomes, but also integrates them into a unified whole.

The extent to which innovation in the form and presentation of the exegesis varies, with a great deal of experimentation at AUT (where the medium of the practice tends to influence the approach to the exegesis), while at another university innovation is encouraged in the creative practice, but is discouraged in the exegesis. (The other three universities sit somewhere between these two poles.)

**Milestones and examination processes**

Research managers increasingly see milestones as a critical aspect of HDR candidature and they have been embedded into most doctoral frameworks. Confirmation of candidature (referred to instead as a D9 at AUT University for local reasons) occurs after one year of full time study. Progress on the creative practice as well as the critical material tends to be reviewed at this point, through a confirmation document as well as an oral presentation. In one institution, the presentation emphasises the project design aspect of the project and its potential contribution, as the practice may be less developed as this stage. Another requires an examination of oral and written materials and a greater emphasis is placed on the practice. Again, this may vary between disciplines, projects, and candidates.

Some partner institutions also require a range of additional, internal milestones. However, the form and timing of them varies. One university sets a milestone after the first three-months, which requires setting out the scope of the project and its approach (an extended project proposal), which is assessed at multiple levels (supervisor, internal evaluator, faculty evaluator and graduate studies committee). Others incorporate an online annual progress review, which involves evaluation by the supervisor and HDR manager. At other institutions, candidates must appear in person before a review panel on an annual basis.

The universities in this project usually review the creative and written component around the end of candidature. At one university, creative production work and the written component are considered by a panel (comprised of the supervisors, two members of faculty, and a chair) three months prior to submission for examination, with feedback and advice offered from a range of perspectives. Another university holds a European-style Viva or ‘Defence’ at the point of examination, with the supervisors and examiners in attendance (examiners have already read the document and attended the exhibition of work in advance
Representatives at all partner institutions commented on the challenges involved in the examination of creative practice projects. The process was variously described as ‘lengthy’ and ‘complex.’ Supervisors often must negotiate layers of internal administration around the examination process. In one institution, for example, four levels of management oversee the examination of a creative practice project.

In addition, external examiners are considered vital to maintaining excellence in creative practice research. Due to the nature of creative work (its form, scale, and the importance of experiencing/interacting with it first hand), examiners may need to visit the host institution as part of the examination process, and this may be logistically difficult (as well as costly) to arrange. Moreover, because the field is in its formative stages, it is often difficult to source the required number (between 1 and 3) of appropriately qualified external examiners, who are available to travel at the time.

Given that the criteria for PhD examination varies between institutions, and that examiners may not have assessed projects at doctoral level before (given the newness of the field and the issues around securing examiners mentioned above), familiarity with local processes, conventions and expectations cannot be assumed. Faculties therefore tend to provide guidelines to examiners. In general, these include several common aspects—in particular examining the exegesis and creative component as one integrated project. However, the point of examination of the theoretical and practical components might not occur at the same time. For example, one institution allows three months between the examination of the creative component and the submission of a final document for examination (to allow time for reflection on the exhibition and reception of the work).

The preparation of candidates for milestones and examination and negotiating the processes of examination are clearly important issues for supervisors. However, given that an OLT project entitled Examination of Doctoral Degrees in Creative Arts (Webb, J., Lee Brien, D., and Burr, S.) is currently under way, this project has not set out to cover this ground in detail.

4.2 Supervisors’ attitudes, experiences and training

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In the formative years of creative practice higher degree programs, supervisors were required to be flexible, adaptable, and open to new and sometimes unanticipated challenges. Along with their students, supervisors have functioned in a changing environment that is increasingly subject to academic pressures relating to completion rates and questions of rigour, as well as public pressures relating to professional recognition in the creative arts.

Nonetheless, the most striking impression created by the interviews with supervisors was the level of commitment and enthusiasm they bring to this new area of learning and teaching. Far from being daunted by the challenges they encounter, supervisors find the potential for innovation, experimentation, and invention fulfilling and invigorating for both themselves and their disciplines. Many believe that creative practice research has breathed new life into higher degrees by research, as well as into their discipline’s course offerings. And there appears to be a genuine sense of pleasure involved in being at the forefront of a new and emergent field, and being involved in practices that sit at the nexus of teaching and research. Supervisors overwhelmingly welcome the opportunity to engage with a more diverse, cross-disciplinary higher degree research community—both within their institution and beyond it. And practitioner-supervisors often commented that the process of supervision strengthens their own practice, while theorists report gaining a deeper understanding of creative arts practice by supervising creative practice HDRs. All of the supervisors we interviewed take their role very seriously and report working hard with candidates to support and encourage them and to help them navigate the uncharted territories of this new field. They are personally committed to their candidates and their project outcomes.

The differences between management and leadership

The language that supervisors used in the interviews around management and leadership reveals firmly held attitudes to the role of supervision, to the field, and to institutional contexts. For example, supervisors do not tend to talk of ‘managing’ students, their projects, or their progress. The term ‘management’ tends to be reserved for discussions relating to the formal processes of candidature (admissions, milestones, formal processes, examination). Instead, they tend to speak of their supervisor-candidate engagement in terms of ‘student-colleague’ relationships. In addition, content analysis of the supervisor interviews revealed that the term ‘leadership’ is associated with ‘experienced supervisors’ or ‘disciplinary experts’, rather than managers/administrators of the HDR environment. There appears to be a chain of ‘advice’ from these local leaders, rather than a chain of ‘command’ in regard to procedural matters.

While most supervisors said there was no ‘consensus’ in their work area on approaches to creative practice supervision, a common mode of supervisory behaviour appears to be facilitated by the adoption of effective approaches. Supervisors tend to refer to colleagues when challenges arise and interviewees spoke readily of the informal networks that operate
in relation to discussions around supervision. This suggests that there is a form of distributed leadership that has arisen in local contexts, in which innovators and experienced practitioners advise and support their colleagues in informal networks. Recognising the importance of such local, informal relationships in the network of higher degree supervision and enabling them is pivotal to expanding and enhancing leadership capacity in postgraduate supervision.

It is also important to note the resistance that was voiced around the potential imposition of prescribed models, ‘standards’ and formats for creative practice research. As one experienced supervisor points out:

> What we need is new but not absolute models. New critical and insightful models ... They must remain flexible because the learning mode is discovery based. I think this is the flaw when people try to systematise models for creative practice PhD. They don’t understand the fundamental premise that it is discovery based.

That is, supervisors hold their relationships (with their students, peers and local networks) in higher regard than institutional ‘management’, and they hold the potential for innovation and experimentation as having higher value to them than systems, standardisation or prescriptive models.

**Training**

Supervisors also draw a distinction between training and academic development. Training is seen as institutionally imposed, generic, functional, and focussed on process. The term ‘model’ is also associated with institutional oversight, and the imposition of ‘standards’, rules, and limitations. The term academic development, on the other hand, is used in a more open (and welcome) way to refer to workshops, case studies, and mentoring.

Most institutions offer introductory supervisor training, and there is a move in some institutions to make it compulsory. In general, this training is generic and offered by a central division (such as graduate school or research students centre). The resources are well developed and are usually available, along with a variety of support materials, on universities’ websites. However, there appears to be no consensus around online training. Once again, each institution is subject to local conditions and histories.

In addition to university level training, three of the five partner universities are involved in a network of online supervision training called *fIRST* (for Improving Research Supervision and Training). It offers a range of accessible, well-developed resources (although there are no creative arts specific resources). Another university is a member of ‘Alliance,’ a group of universities offering online supervisor forums and workshops within the group.

At some universities, initial and/or ongoing accreditation, registration, or membership of a graduate supervisor register requires the completion of either an online or in-situ training
program (as well as the endorsement of the supervisors’ line manager). However, the level of development of accreditation programs appears to be influenced by the ‘newness’ of the faculty. Some making their registration lists (including renewal status) publicly available.

While most supervisor-respondents recognise the value of centrally offered supervisor training for understanding ‘process’, some are resistant to it, while others are ambivalent. Comments suggest that supervisors may not attend face-to-face courses or complete online modules, or even be aware of them. Some supervisors commented that although programs exist, attendance is not mandatory. Others believe that it is compulsory but not ‘policed’. As one respondent notes,

There is a ‘new supervisor’ training course that is compulsory, but many staff have not done it.

This is not unique to creative practice supervisors. Indeed, it echoes the conclusions of Hammond et al.’s broader 2010 study, *Building research supervision and training across Australian universities*, which concludes that, “there is considerable resistance from supervisors to compulsory, centralised and formal training programs. There is also considerable cynicism about the value of such programs” (: 15). Whether or not the supervisors in our study appreciated centrally offered face-to-face and online training modules, a clear aversion to ‘didactic’ delivery was voiced.

**Academic Development**

On the other hand, however, we found considerable interest in decentralized, contextually targeted academic development opportunities. There was much discussion in the interviews about the unique aspects of creative practice research, and the need for programs that are targeted, local and organic and address the particular frameworks and issues that supervisors of creative practice HDRs encounter. As one respondent proposed,

It would be great if there were [academic development] opportunities available to supervisors that focus on creative practice in particular. The university does not have the expertise in many ways to offer this [support]; however, we do have a few very good higher-level academics in our faculties who do support the more up and coming supervisors.

Many new supervisors commented upon the value of opportunities to learn from experienced peers, both formally or informally in local, discipline level workshops on supervisory practices and processes, peer-to peer dialogues, sharing contextually relevant exemplars of good practice, and other informal approaches. Working within a ‘small’ community to undertake academic development that includes opportunities to hear and voice practices and discuss in-common issues is preferred by the majority of supervisors we interviewed. Again, this echoes Hammond et al.’s (2010) findings across a broad range of disciplinary fields.

While none of the partner institutions currently offers systematic and regular discipline or faculty-specific supervision training, supervisors would clearly prefer such local programs.
Local leadership and mentoring
Supervisors frequently discussed mentoring as a positive experience—whether as mentors or mentees. They commonly reported seeking the advice of their immediate colleagues or a ‘recognised mentor’, who acts as a fulcrum and referral point in the discipline, before engaging with institutional processes at faculty or university level. Besides the influence of their own PhD supervisors (which was persistently mentioned), they commonly noted the influence of experienced colleagues, and reported that they value and ‘trust’ the advice and modelling they provide.

Many supervisors commented that mentoring provides an important part of training and provides an opportunity to learn effective strategies. As a new supervisor relayed,

It is useful to hear of other supervision methods. Such as the student making a record of the discussion and considering the recording and checking that material.

Moreover, pleasure and relief was conveyed regrading being able to talk about issues as they arise with peers who have more experience. Again, a conversational approach was identified as a preferred model for learning.

Mentors mentioned using supervision exemplars: often ones they have developed personally, along with previous examples of (successful) creative practice PhDs. As one mentor explained,

I use examples of exegeses with supervisors and colleagues, as they are tangible evidence when used in conjunction with the story. Back-story is important; [it might be] an example of risk taking, but in needs to be based on deep working knowledge and lived experience with the context [of the student].

When managed well, mentoring can be an integral and successful part of supervisor development. One emerging supervisor describes mentoring at her institution as “The strongest aspect of the program”. She elaborates,

I have had really good mentorship as a supervisor [in both] supervisor arrangements [and] leadership of the program. It is a strength of the school.

Some universities have developed a mentoring system that pairs experienced supervisors with emerging ones (with the experienced supervisor in an associate role—although in one university they assume the principal role). This co-supervision is seen as a form of ‘apprenticeship’, which allows the associate to ‘learn the ropes’ before taking on their own principal supervision. Of course, this approach can be, and often is, undertaken informally without formal endorsement of (or even knowledge of) the discipline, which makes it difficult to evaluate the extent of the practice. While there is not always a desire to formalise a mentoring relationship, emerging supervisors tend to prefer some level of formal arrangement and structure in the early stages of their supervision careers in all forms of training, including mentoring. As one emerging supervisor suggests,
I think a formalized relationship would be of great benefit rather than only informal: an acknowledgement of an apprenticeship of sorts, with conversations after [meetings], etc.

Clearly, local leadership by early innovator supervisors is present in the schools we visited, if not necessarily evident from other ‘tiers’ of leadership. Such approaches are clearly valuable in acknowledging and increasing leadership in this area of learning and teaching. It is therefore a recommendation of this project that such leadership be recognised, nurtured, and harnessed. Some universities provide recognition and reward for the leadership that experienced supervisors provide. For instance, one partner university has recently introduced a tiered accreditation system that recognises levels of experience through titles conferred (Level 1 New Supervisor, Level 2 Experienced Supervisor and Level 3 Mentoring Supervisor), and it recommends that workload be allocated for mentoring new supervisors in a formal arrangement. Two partner universities have an award for Postgraduate Research Supervision, with one offering a medallion and cash payment.

There may also be other ways to achieve these goals and, given the clear value that mentoring provides, this initial investigation into the potential, design and recognition of mentoring strategies for supervisors should be investigated further.

Resources such as case studies and exemplars
Some institutions offer links to external resources on aspects of supervision. For example, one partner is a member of the ATN (Australian Technology Network), which has online supervisor training course in Creative Arts, Media and Design and offers resources and ideas, as well as copies of regulations at other ATN universities. However, other than this, few resources exist for creative practice supervision.

Alongside mentoring, an overwhelming majority of supervisors in our study expressed interest in the idea of capturing and sharing case studies and access to other resources that are specifically designed for creative practice research. A number of interviewees called for increased access to creative practice supervision exemplars from ‘outside’ their own institution. In this regard, academic development in a ‘small community’ does not necessarily mean ‘local’; it can also mean a community of disciplinary colleagues who work in the same creative field.

A project to capture and circulate contextually relevant case studies and targeted resources is therefore a strong recommendation of this project, but these must be provided as a range of exemplars and good practices—as possibilities, which can be adapted to suit the supervisor’s own context and situation rather that as standard templates. For that reason they should include a ‘back-story’ and provide insights and potential strategies, rather than prescribed guidelines.
Communities of practice and dialogue
In the interviews, supervisors often stated a preference for informal and collegial support and conversation over formal supervision mechanisms. Supervising in a relatively new field can be an isolated experience in the absence of a community of supervisory practice. Due to local circumstances and accreditation requirements, some supervisors are the only ones in their discipline taking on a supervisory role. There was an often-stated desire to engage in conversations with others around new discoveries, experience, insights, and practices. Yet this is not often afforded. Opinions such as “we don’t get the chance to talk” and “a supervisor role is such a cloaked affair compared to other contexts” were frequently voiced.

Supervisors clearly recognize the value of reflection and they appreciated the opportunity to talk about their practices in the interviews. The opportunity to voice their hard-won tacit knowledge, when it had never been voiced before, often created powerful reactions. A key aspect of this was that the two project leaders—both experienced supervisors of creative practice themselves—conducted the interviews. This allowed for empathetic dialogue to develop on common ground.

That is, it is not just new and inexperienced supervisors that benefit from passing on insights that experienced supervisors have gained. It is mutually beneficial. As a supervisor noted, “The best academic development is talking things through,” and another said, “there’s a sense of peer sharing that works for me—a multiplicity of voices, keeping things open rather than closed.”

Again, the desire to belong to a community of supervisory practice does not necessarily mean a local, internal community of supervisors. It simply means a community in which supervisors working in a similar context (however that might be defined) can share issues, experiences, strategies, and practices in a supportive environment, with peers. For some this means peers in their faculty, for others in may mean that peers in their disciplinary field, who may not be co-located.

Therefore, new models for enabling connections and dialogue between supervisors within schools are needed and for connecting supervisors in similar fields across universities. This is a key recommendation of this project.

4.3 Insights from Supervisors: Principles for Effective Supervision

Interviews with twenty-five new and experienced supervisors from across the partner universities brought to light many other contextual factors and issues surrounding supervision in this relatively new field of postgraduate research. From a content analysis of these interviews, and the identification of persistent topics and themes, twelve key principles for the effective supervision of creative practice research were identified. Each
was presented with a contextual framework, the principle itself, and representative and illustrative quotes from supervisors. They were collected and developed into a resource for use by supervisors, which contains supervisor-to-supervisor advice illustrated by case studies and scenarios from their experience.

It was formatted as a booklet, *12 Principles for the Effective Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Research Degrees: Dispatches from the field*. It was printed in hardcopy (700 copies) for distribution to universities across Australia. It appears in Appendix 3 of this report, and it is also available as a PDF version on the project website: [www.supervisioncreativeartsphd.net](http://www.supervisioncreativeartsphd.net)

In summary, these principles are:

1. **Adopt a student-centred approach**
   A student-centred approach involves recognising each student’s unique attributes, needs and capacity. The lynchpin of this principle is support with respect— for the research student and their ideas and creative passion; for the integrity of their research question(s); for their chosen mediums of expression and how they approach their work; and for their capacity as practitioners and researchers. Supervisors emphasise the importance of providing space for questioning, and it is worth noting that many supervisors are reluctant to determine what a student’s thesis should look like in form.

2. **Embrace diverse projects, practices, and working methods**
   Agility in supervision expertise continues to be important in creative fields because of the many forms of PhD outcomes that constitute viable and valuable contributions, because interdisciplinary projects are commonplace, and because supervisors continue to face shifts in the field in terms of form and practices. While the core principles of research design are central to PhD supervision, it is also important to acknowledge the differences in methodologies and processes of different fields and not seek to impose familiar approaches across disciplines and projects.

3. **Ensure your students believe in the validity of creative practice research and its experimental nature**
   While some supervisors are very confident in the validity of creative practice as research (indeed some of those we interviewed were fundamental in establishing and defining it), others raise concerns that differences between traditional frameworks and creative practice
as research may still be misunderstood and its value questioned by both universities and candidates. However, many supervisors argue that it has advantages for the discipline (and more broadly) because it allows for a different mode of answering the same question that a traditional research project might pursue and because it necessarily produces different outcomes—not just in form but also in new knowledge. While establishing rigor around methodologies, outcomes and new knowledge creation, supervisors need to be confident in the validity of creative practice research as well as comfortable with its undefined boundaries and continued experimentation.

4. The theory and practice need to speak to each other
Although naming conventions differ across institutions and local contexts, there is broad agreement amongst supervisors that the written component/exegesis/thesis/explication is an integral (if sometimes difficult) component of the higher degree by research. There is consensus that its role is to articulate the research problem and creative practice methodology and to contextualise the outcomes in relation to them. To this end, experienced supervisors advise that the exegetical/written work must engage with relevant theory as well as with the existing field (through a contextual and/or literature review). Some supervisors, though not all, argue for the inclusion of reflection on the practice. Supervisors agree that some form of interweaving or integration of the practice and the writing is necessary to best articulate the contribution of the research.

5. The theory and practice might not be done simultaneously, despite the need to work together in the completed work
Supervisors overwhelmingly agree that the theoretical and practical work must be of a similarly high standard and they recognize the importance of their integration. However, they also recognise the tension between theoretical and practice processes, and acknowledge that it is often difficult to work on them simultaneously. Some supervisors suggest that the practice should lead while others propose that theoretical and contextual research drives the practice (this depends largely on their discipline perspective). However, none suggest that continuously working on both simultaneously is crucial, and supervisors are often acutely aware of the difficulties of balancing creative and theoretical progress.

6. Balance the big picture and attention to the detail
With an eye on timely completion and the rhythms of candidature, supervisors emphasise the importance of a student-tailored approach that combines a sense of routine and regularity but also allows students who prefer to work independently to be able to do so
(within the constraints of the degree). To generate a routine for the student, most supervisors believe that regular meetings and shifting between the big picture and attention to detail are crucial. Besides helping to ensure relevance, ‘zooming in and zooming out’, as one supervisor describes it, helps to contain scope and maintain momentum. Some supervisors provide a roadmap for completion, with clear points of focus along the way, some keep an eye squarely on the central research goal and question, and others encourage a gradual ‘resolution’.

7. **Provide frequent, constructive feedback**
Concern about quality and integrity often prompts discussions on the role of academic writing in creative practice higher degrees by research. Supervisors – both new and experienced – acknowledge the importance of the written component in “helping the student do justice to the work they have done.” However, academic writing is an area in which support may be needed. It is sometimes necessary to provide a great deal of academic writing support and it is always necessary to interrogate the writing at a close level.

8. **A supervisor should also attend to the practice in the studio**
Some supervisors reflect that the focus of their attention can tend to be pulled towards the written work, particularly when candidates are established practitioners and are less familiar with academic writing requirements. It is important to remember however that, regardless of a student’s ease or enjoyment of it, the practice requires full attention. As an experienced supervisor advises, “Be very involved with the creative product as well as the exegesis”.

9. **Milestones are time consuming, but ultimately rewarding components of the journey**
While the terminology, processes and timing of PhD milestones are not consistent across the sector, their role is fundamentally similar – to ensure progress, rigour and timely completion. Some supervisors believe that milestones need to be carefully managed in order to be useful. Many others see them as fundamentally important to progress and an opportunity to pull together components of the research and practice. It is important to ensure that students understand the necessity of milestones in the institution, and for supervisors to assist them to utilise them in the most practical and meaningful way. One experienced supervisor for example uses them to help their students to “get into the academic space” and a fundamental part of strengthening the final product before examination.
10. Provide support while managing interpersonal relationships
As yet, there are few formal processes for managing creative practice higher degrees by research and the supervisory ‘relationship’ (unless there is an escalating problem). Some institutions have candidate-supervisor agreements, but some supervisors reject this ‘management’ because it is important to consider the candidate as a newcomer to the field with individual working styles, strengths, and support needs. Supervision necessarily involves a tailor-made approach to support, which is attuned to each candidate. Supervisors need to be aware that candidates are often balancing other stresses in their lives alongside (or exacerbated by) their degree. However, supporting a student through milestones and supporting them through their life are distinct concepts (though they may overlap). Support involves balancing ‘tea and sympathy’ with pragmatic support like frequent meetings, being attentive to the work, modelling rigour and honesty in feedback.

11. Don’t feel limited by boundaries as a supervisor, but be aware of regulations
Supervisors are conscious of formal institutional requirements and that the candidate’s work must conform with PhD regulatory frameworks in order to ensure smooth entry, milestones, and examination. As one experienced supervisor counsels, “With the shrinking timeframes, as supervisors we are more aware of our responsibilities to the candidate and the way we report it as research to our school.” On the other hand, supervisors emphasise that they enjoy their students having freedom to experiment and want them to be able to shape their projects according to their individual goals and contexts. Perhaps what is most important then is to assist candidates to navigate their way through process, while being open to experimentation; and to support them to reach a balance between allowing the work to find its own performativity and identity and conforming to the requirements of the degree.

12. Reflect, discuss and share your practices with colleagues
One of the most pronounced, yet unanticipated, outcomes of the interviews was the effect on supervisors who participated in the process. For some supervisors it had a profound impact in terms of confidence in their position, willingness to progress conversations with other supervisors in their school, and to present at conferences. The value to supervisors of all experience levels in articulating process and practices, concerns, experiences and strategies for success is clear. Reflective practice is of considerable value to supervisors and, given the broad resistance to ‘generic’ central training, participating in dialogue with other supervisors is an important component of supervisors’ professional development.

4.4 Recommendations
Through the triangulation of the literature review, contextual review, supervisor interviews, collected case studies, and open dialogue at the ESCARD symposium; and in light of the resulting analysis of institutional frameworks and principles for effective supervision, a series of recommendations have been formulated. They relate to institutional and national frameworks for managing of HDR candidature and supervision processes, approaches to academic development for supervisors in creative fields, and the production of new resources.

Institutional and national frameworks

1. Access to contextual Data
Data on aspects of candidature and supervision in creative practice HDRs is currently not distinguishable from overall HDR figures in schools/faculties. Supervisors and managers would benefit from more fine-grained data gathering on the numbers and profiles of candidates enrolled in creative practice research degrees, including length of candidature, completions, and active supervisors. This would facilitate informed decisions to be made on intake, availability of supervisory teams, workloads, resourcing and infrastructure provision.

2. Entry into programs
Entry into PhD programs currently tends to be managed at a local level at the first stages (prior to a formal application). There is a preference amongst supervisors and schools to retain this localized process. Given the length and depth of the supervisory relationship and the resourcing and infrastructure requirements of a four-year candidature, this agency around decision making on admissions is crucial.

3. The limitations of setting national benchmarks and standards
There is considerable diversity in the institutional/faculty/school contexts–each has its own history, culture, strategic priorities, practices, and profile and quantity of accredited supervisors. There is also great diversity in candidates – in terms of their background (eg. the longevity of their creative practice and the recency of their undergraduate studies) as well as in the types of research projects undertaken in terms of disciplinary/interdisciplinary approaches and mediums, proportion of the practice and critical component, the form of presentation, and the designated role of the creative artefact in the contribution to new knowledge.

In addition, experienced supervisors–who have often supervised across disciplinary boundaries, created new systems, helped candidates to negotiate a new genre of writing and to combine practice and theory into an integrated ‘thesis’ for the first time–argue that the innovation of the field has not yet been exhausted. Given that the full capacity of supervisors and candidates to shape the future of practice-led research is still to be realised, and that the potential of this new area of learning and teaching is yet to be fully explored, supervisors require the agency to continue to be agile, innovative, and open to new
possibilities. In light of this diversity, as well as the continued need to experiment with a variety of aspects of the emergent field, supervisors fear, and strongly caution against, a ‘top-down’ imposition of uniform standards, benchmarking, and prescriptive ‘one size fits all’ models.

Academic development and support for supervisors

4. The limitations of ‘training’ and the need for local academic development
While some supervisors appreciate the insights into university processes and guidelines that institution-wide training offers, many are ambivalent, and some are unaware of their existence. Often they see little bearing on the realities of supervising creative practice projects. There is a clear preference for localized training at faculty level, or perhaps even at the level of disciplines (with the proviso that many projects are interdisciplinary), which addresses the unique contexts, particularities, and complexities of supervising creative practice HDRs. The preference of supervisors is workshops with peers, which look beyond matters of process to consider a range of issues such as the complexities of supervision, the academic and intellectual relationship between supervisor and candidate, academic writing and the exegesis, ethical issues, and managing ‘risk’ for example.

5. Harnessing the expertise of experienced supervisors in workshops and mentoring programs
Because experienced supervisors have a relatively high rate of completion, and because their experience is seen by new supervisors to be of benefit to them and their candidates, it is important to recognise and acknowledge the insights, expertise and leadership that experienced supervisors bring. This leadership should be harnessed (where experienced supervisors are willing), in workshops and dialogues, as well in mentoring programs for new supervisors. Experienced supervisors often already provide advice and support at an informal level, however some new supervisors would like to see this formalised. Formalising mentoring relationships would also provide recognition to experienced supervisors. Awards and workload allocation are other forms of recognition for the service that local leaders provide to their peers, their school, and the field.

Developing resources and communities for supervisors

6. Increased access to a range of resources (case studies and exemplars of good practice)
While supervisors see singular and prescriptive models as inappropriate to an emergent and diverse field, they overwhelming see the potential benefit of increased access to a range of authentic resources, such as case studies and exemplars of good practices. Given the contextual variation of supervisions in the field, it is a recommendation of this project that resources are collected and disseminated that are multi-disciplinary, cross-institutional and varied in approach. However, instead of ‘models’ and ‘templates’ this extensive range of
exemplars and practices should be presented as a collection of possibilities, which may be adaptable to the supervisor’s own context and situation, at their own discretion.

7. Local community building and opportunities for dialogue
Because supervising in a relatively new field can be an isolated experience, the majority of supervisors appreciate opportunities to work within a ‘small’ community to build informal and collegial support, share practices, and discuss issues that arise. According to new supervisors, academic development within local communities of practice should provide the opportunity to learn from experienced peers, but it should also provide opportunities for supervisors of all experience levels to voice practices, share experiences and strategies and to discuss in-common issues in a supportive environment. Examples include supervisor dialogues to initiate conversations around an aspect of supervision, scenarios that provide a trigger to work through risk issues together, and supervisor-to-supervisor interviews. In this, we concur with Christine Bruce’s (2009) findings that facilitating conversations around supervision practice is crucial to the development of effective HDR pedagogies, and the academic development of supervisors.

8. National networking, community building and sharing frameworks
While supervisors express the desire to belong to a ‘small community’ of supervisory practice, this does not necessarily mean local or internal, it simply means a community in which other supervisors are working in a similar mode (however that might be defined). Because some supervisors may be the only academic in their discipline that supervises creative practice HDR projects, establishing national networks is particularly important for some disciplinary fields.

National network building is also important for another reason. Either through the literature or through their encounter with variant examination guidelines, supervisors across the universities in this study are quite aware of variations in the forms of the creative practice PhD, terminology, the length, and structure of the exegesis, and approaches to its relationship with the practice. However, this was not raised as an issue in need of urgent resolution by supervisors. Instead, they recognise a gradual emergence of common understandings of the past decade. This can be progressed by strengthening national networks of supervisors, for it is through dialogue that meaning, in-common understanding and shared language is negotiated. Such networks might also serve pragmatic purposes of course, such as facilitating the sourcing of appropriate examiners in the area of creative practice.

4.5 Future Work
The majority of the recommendations we have made are contingent upon facilitating distributed leadership. Besides establishing an important foundational understanding of the issues, challenges and roles of supervisors in creative practice HDRs, this project has
commenced work to respond to these recommendations. However, more work is needed to design and realise new, effective approaches to academic development at local levels; to build and formalize mentoring programs; to collect, produce and improve access to a range of resources (such as authentic case studies and exemplars of good practice); and develop models that facilitate local community building. And, while this project has taken the first steps in establishing national dialogue and networking (through a national symposium, an initial online repository of shared resources, and a collaborative approach to publishing case studies and position papers), more work is needed to establish enduring national networks, and sharing frameworks. That is, much work remains to be done on designing and implementing new, expanded models of distributed leadership.
CHAPTER 5: DISSEMINATION

5.1 Description of Sharing Framework

The principles of inclusion and distributed leadership have been central to this project, and this has distinguished its approach from a normative ‘top-down’ analysis resulting in a set of policy recommendations on higher degree research management, and standards. A simultaneous contribution and dissemination strategy has worked through a widening participation strategy, illustrated through the concentric circles in Diagram 1 (page 12). This network began with the small, multi-institutional project team and expanded, via the networks of project team members, to administrators and supervisors at partner institutions. Recognising the influence that multiple tiers of leadership (university, faculty, discipline, and supervisor) exert on a candidature, this project set out to capture a multi-perspectival understanding. The project design then expanded further to include participation by representatives of universities across Australia, who in turn have contributed to material and insights and taken back them into the local networks of their universities.

The first circle of this network involved the project partners, who were invited to join the project on the basis of their experience with creative practice research HDRs in Australasia, their recognition as leaders in the field, and the key network points they provide within their institutions. Besides gathering data and exemplars for sharing through the project, drawing upon their institutional networks to recruit interviewees, and providing feedback and input into aspects of the unfolding project, they also incrementally disseminated information about the project through their local networks. Materials disseminated to the project partners included project plans, ethical clearance, interview questions, an evolving literature review, symposium planning, and reporting documents—via a ‘live’ file sharing application (on Google docs). Project updates were also sent via email to project partners periodically with increased frequency, especially around with two key events: the ESCARD conference (February 2013) and the final project phase (July 2013). The material shared at these points includes: a Reference List (online); Web Resources (online); Case Studies collected at ESCARD (online); a recording of ESCARD presentations (online); and the draft booklet ‘12 Principles of Effective Supervision’ (via email).

The second circle of the participation and dissemination expanded across partner institutions. To gain a multi-perspectival picture, university regulations of each of the universities were reviewed and university administrators were invited to contribute their perspectives via a survey. At the same time, the project also focussed on the leadership qualities of experienced and emerging supervisors and captured their insights through interviews. Interview questions and ancillary conversations acknowledged the contributions the interviewees make to the field of creative practice as research in Australia. With the project leaders who conducted the interviews being experienced supervisors themselves,
the interviews were framed as a collegial ‘sharing’ of knowledge between skilled practitioner-supervisors, as well as between interviewer and interviewee. The reflective, dialogic approach of these interviews acted as a catalyst for change, prompting the emergence of supervisor forums in some of the partner universities. The summary principles derived from the interviews, once collated, were disseminated to the project partners for distribution to interviewees.

The interview process, which occurred very early in the project (November and December 2012) generated interest in a conference to share ideas. This laid the foundations for a plan to capture and share more case studies through the Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research Degrees (ESCARD) National symposium at the mid-point of the project. This led to a third circle sharing framework, and extended the leadership network nation-wide. Project team members recruited presenters/participants through their networks, and invitations were sent to all Australasian Universities (via Assistant Deans) to nominate local creative practice HDR leaders to submit case studies and position papers, to participate in dialogues, and to take insights back to their home institution.

An all-partner roundtable meeting preceded the symposium, and the spirit of co-operation, which had already been generated in this central network, set the tone of the following two days. 62 delegates from twenty universities attended. Alongside the presentation of papers and case studies by delegates and the open forums that were included in the order of proceedings, preliminary project findings were introduced to this national audience. Their feedback and discussions informed the shape of the project, as well as the project outcomes (for example, the 12 principles of Effective Supervision booklet). That is, the symposium provided the opportunity for information capture for the project, an avenue for sharing and disseminating resources, and early findings, and an opportunity for feedback and early evaluation of the project so far.

The success of the ESCARD symposium validated the collaborative and consultative approach of the project, and the design of the sharing framework as a two-way flow of information and resources. It deepened the project team’s appreciation of the work that has been undertaken to date in the field, at the same time as facilitating the sharing of progress to date, and it also motivating attendees and speakers to engage in future exchanges. As one ESCARD attendee noted in feedback,

How wonderful it is to talk to people about supervision, to test ideas, get a feel for the lie of the land, ask for advice–knowing there’s a potential community out there.

Attendees at the conference have acted as a point for further dissemination to their home universities, taking back what they have discovered and the networks they have made. As one delegate wrote in feedback:

[The symposium] furthered my knowledge about the different approaches taken by PhD supervisors and the challenges faced when supervising these kinds of research

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projects. This has assisted me as a PG supervisor and I will share the information with my creative arts colleagues at USQ.

The ESCARD achievements were reported widely in other ways (through for example, a review of the conference on the SIG Writing blog on doctoral writing <http://doctoralwriting.wordpress.com/>). In this way, the project has engaged with new audiences.

And finally, this early dissemination strategy involving the ESCARD symposium resulted in an opportunity to widen the circle of participation yet further. The editor of an A ranked international journal (Professor Elizabeth Grierson) invited the project leaders to propose a special edition of ACCESS journal on creative practice supervision to expand on the symposium themes. This will provide the ESCARD symposium presenters an opportunity to extend their presentations into scholarly papers, and it will provide a formal mechanism for disseminating knowledge gained through the project by the project team. But it will also expand the circle of awareness, participation and dissemination of the project outcomes to a fourth, international circle. A national and international call for papers has been issued (Appendix 3) and a strong level of interest has resulted in the submission of a large number of abstracts.

In all of these ways, the project team has modelled principles of distributed leadership in both the collection and sharing of materials throughout the term of the project. We have taken an inclusive, participatory approach, which has benefited both the project outcomes, and dissemination. For example, presentations by delegates and the discussion forums during the two day symposium were captured on video and permission was sought to upload the videos and/or the presenters’ PowerPoint slides to the project website. These are now available for public view, where permission was granted. Integral approaches to dissemination throughout the project are complemented by more traditional strategies to disseminate key project outcomes. This includes the circulation of print documents such as the ’12 Principles of Effective Supervision’ and a project website. The project team will continue to share project outcomes across the higher education sector nationally and internationally through conference papers and publications. As a result of this diverse, multi-tiered, and continuous approach to dissemination, the project has developed a strong identity, awareness is widespread, and considerable momentum has been developed across the sector.

5.2 Outcomes Available and Dissemination Mechanisms

Concrete outcomes of the project and the processes of their dissemination include:

- A presentation on the project by Project Leaders to QUT’s Supervisor Retreat, ‘Sharing Effective Supervision Practices’ on 4 December 2012 (4 months in to the project);
- Discussions held at each of the five partner institutions during the interview process
(November–December 2012);

• A presentation entitled ‘Practice-led Research in Australia’: an international seminar on supervision in practice-led research for Bath Spa University, UK in January 2013 (5 months in to the project);

• A National Symposium, *Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research PhDs*, with 62 delegates from 20 Australasian Universities, which disseminated initial project findings, gathered early feedback, and broadened the collection of case studies, scholarly work, and discussions on key issues for supervisors (Appendix 1; website), held at QUT in Brisbane, February 2013 (6 months into the project);

• Papers reporting early findings presented by the project team at the ESCARD symposium, February 2013:
  o ‘Creative Intersections: Supervision, Practice and the Space Between’ (Ellison);
  o Views from the Frontier: Emerging Approaches to Creative Practice HDR Supervision’ (Hamilton and Carson);
  o All of the project partners also presented their own case studies, delivered papers or hosted forums at the symposium.

• Online audio-visual records of the ESCARD presentations were provided to presenters;

• A Website <http://supervisioncreativeartsphd.net> was produced to house project outcomes including:
  o Project description and partner profiles;
  o Literature Review, and reference list with collected key readings (via links and PDFs);
  o Booklet for supervisors (see below);
  o Conference Program/Schedule of presenters, abstracts from the ESCARD symposium;
  o Presentation slides and video recordings of case studies, position paper and forums;
  o An initial repository of collated resources, case studies, and position papers produced by supervisors and program administrators.

• A booklet for supervisors: *12 Principles for the Effective Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Research Degrees*, which encapsulates attitudes, insights and good practices of supervisors was produced as a print booklet (700 copies) and sent to partner universities and those that participated in the ESCARD symposium. It is also available as a digital PDF on the project website, shared via SIGs;

• A forthcoming special issue of *ACCESS Journal: Critical Perspectives on Communication, Cultural & Policy Studies* (ERA A quality journal): ‘Supervising Practice: Perspectives on the Supervision of Creative Practice Research Higher Degrees’ (Vol. 33: 2, 2014: Routledge) will include the publication of approximately 10 scholarly papers in relation to the theme of the project;

• A forthcoming paper at the Quality in Postgraduate Supervision conference, Adelaide, 2014;

• A final report with literature review, analysis, bibliography, and project findings and outcomes, is provided to the OLT, and made available on the OLT website.
CHAPTER 6: PROJECT IMPACT

Given that this has been a seed project of one-year duration, at the time of reporting a number of concrete outcomes (the booklet for supervisors, publications, and project website) are currently being launched, and their impact is yet to be seen. However, what is already clear is the impact that the processes of the project design has had on participants. Partner discussions, interviewing supervisors, collecting case studies, and sharing practices and insights at the symposium have all had a positive impact because they have acknowledged and built participants’ expertise and local leadership; facilitated the sharing of effective strategies; and fostered new networks between, and within, universities.

6.1 Impact of Project Partnerships

The process of partner partnerships strengthened existing relationships and established new ones. It enabled the project partners to gain objective insights into commonalities and differences in HDR organizational structures at their university and to share effective strategies. For example, some organizational structures around milestones at other institutions have been suggested at a discipline/school level at QUT, and QUT’s processes are being considered at AUT. Other outcomes include opportunities to conduct research on the area together, and to share pragmatic information (such as openings for PhD graduates). In addition, by extending the partner networks into their own universities, the project has enhanced the leadership capacity of the project partners and extended their existing networks.

6.2 Impact of the Interviews on interviewees

Interviews with experienced and new supervisors concluded with an open-ended question: “Is there anything you would like to add?” Responses to this question very often revolved around the value of the process of being interviewed to the interviewees. Voicing their practices, reflecting on their tacit knowledge, having the opportunity to speak about the challenges and opportunities of supervising in a new field often had a profound effect on them. It was described by one respondent as “the best form of academic development”–not only for others, but also for the self. Example (de-identified) comments include:

I’ve found this process very useful. It allows us to learn. You’re responding to questions, words, phrases on the fly and it is very useful.

It is exciting to be part of such a rich area and it is gratifying to be part of a process of change. Exciting experience.

The project does something in professional development [as] we don’t get the chance to talk.
This impact is similar to that noticed by Bruce, who employed conversational frameworks in her project methods (2009). That is, self-reflection provides a tool through which supervisors can engage in effective personal academic development.

6.3 Impact of Symposium

The ESCARD symposium (with its 62 delegates from 20 universities) also provided an opportunity for dialogue—this time through the exchange of ideas in a combination of presentations, open forums and informal dialogue. The symposium was formally evaluated through a qualitative questionnaire. The overwhelmingly positive feedback spoke to the impact of the event on attendees: the insights they have gained, the benefits of dialogue and sharing practices, and the sense of community and networks that the Symposium generated. Answers to the questions: “What will you take away from this symposium?” and “Has/how has the symposium informed your supervision practice?” are recorded in Table 1 below. In many ways the responses show the power of the project approach in building distributed leadership and they illustrate the significance of this as a project outcome.

Table 1: Evaluation of the ESCARD Symposium—qualitative data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will you take away from this symposium?</th>
<th>Has/how has the symposium informed your supervision practice?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How wonderful it is to talk to people about supervision, to test ideas, get a feel for the lie of the land, ask for advice—and just knowing there’s a potential community out there...</td>
<td>Yes, absolutely—from the conceptual to the practical—do you want my whole list? Mainly, the inspiration and ideas I take away are in the area of creativity and examination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A clear understanding and awareness of the varied possibilities of presentation of the doctoral work, and a sense of adventure in the supervision process.</td>
<td>Opened my mind to ways my students can maintain their own voice with integrity and still fulfil requirements. Differentiating more clearly between the artwork and the work of art.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies. Shared knowledge. Energy/energised to take on supervision and research.</td>
<td>Writing strategies. Reinforced both instinct in supervision and the institution I am in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sense that we are all in the same boat as supervisors; that we care about our practice and the shaping of the practice-led space within academia; that it is important to know what other institutions are doing in this field.</td>
<td>Given me more ideas about the relationship between the exegesis and the creative artefact; prodded me to reflect on this and the threads that connect the student, the institution, the supervisor’s role, the examiners, the outcomes. Often there is a disconnect!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

62
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fabulous ideas about innovative approaches to supervision and to the design of research education programs.</th>
<th>Can’t tell yet. But I intend to talk to my colleagues about trialling some of the cohort approaches.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overview of current supervision practice/direction/thinking in a range of disciplines in creative arts. People to contact, invite as speakers/examiners.</td>
<td>Reminded me of some of the ‘nuts and bolts’. Opened up ideas and knowledge about the purpose and form of the exegesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel enriched by different perspectives—there is an ongoing community of practice.</td>
<td>Assisted me to focus on other strategies and implementing those.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A more informed understanding of supervision and the tension/demands on supervisors, challenges that seem to be faced by many academics from a variety of universities.</td>
<td>Has given greater insight into requirements for supervision—best practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A greater understanding of the breadth of supervision.</td>
<td>Given me more confidence in my own value and ability to facilitate the research of students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This symposium has revealed that there are many people concerned about similar issues and there is plenty to learn from one another.</td>
<td>Some useful techniques have been presented which I will continue to draw upon. Welby’s presentation on the multiple ways of communicating was truly inspiring! I will push this within my own research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So many new exciting ideas! Wonderful networking opportunity! Much better understanding of practice led research.</td>
<td>In many respects, it has given me confidence to keep doing what I do; because there are no right or wrong answers... every student/study is different and requires individual assessment/study design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A broader and deeper understanding of the significant developments that have taken place in creative practice supervision, and heartened by the collective knowledge so willingly and generously provided to assist the perplexed and confused.</td>
<td>Given me a whole lot more strategies both as a supervisor and mentor of supervisors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refreshed ideas on research/supervision Inspirational, encouraging.</td>
<td>Confirmed some existing strategies but opened up a range of new ideas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| A key point is the shared issues—so often you feel alone with a problem (dear Auntie!). Some great new ideas on how to move things along, especially with writing. | I note the issues discussed are also relevant for management of doc programmes, not just for supervision. This is important, supervisors need to know others (inc. management) have the same concerns, and management needs to recognise supervisors ‘at the coal face’.

A sense of optimism and a desire to read some of this material in more depth—conference proceedings. | It has made me think more about working collectively. |
6.4 Relationships

The cooperative and collaborative approach of the project has strengthened relationships between partner institutions. The ESCARD symposium attracted a high level of attendance and involvement and this, in turn, generated new networks and collegiate relationships between supervisors and institutions across Australasia. Importantly, the feedback from the symposium revealed a belief in the importance of the research and its outcomes, and a keen interest to further build the relationships between universities, disciplines and supervisors through Special Interest Groups, further symposiums, and further collaboration in further building resources and academic development programs to suit the contextual frameworks of creative practice HDR supervision. The invitation to produce a special issue of an international high quality journal around the project themes is also an example of relationship building, because of the symposium.

Besides building and deepening these relationships, new momentum was created across the sector, expressed through enthusiasm for further symposia, building online networks, and becoming involved in further scholarly work. In these regards, the relationship building of this project provides a foundation for the extension of the project in application, as well as a benchmark for other OLT projects. Indeed, it is the positivity and generosity of these multi-level relationships that has inspired the project team to develop an extended project submission.

6.5 Extensibility to a Variety of Locations

This project has recognised the contingencies of operating in diverse and evolving HDR environments. The project design has therefore focused on considering a variety of contextual frameworks by canvassing the views of various tiers of leadership within the diverse programs of the partner universities. It has sought to capture a wide range of views in interviews. Interviewees include experienced and new supervisors drawn from a broad cross-section of creative disciplines from visual and performing art to music, new media, creative writing, fashion, graphic design, interaction design, and interior design. And, through a concentric approach to data collection, insights, feedback, and exemplars have
been sought from beyond the project team and partner universities to encompass universities from across Australasia (as illustrated in Diagram 1 page 13).

This has resulted in the understanding of how diverse contexts have responded to the challenges of a new field, how a range of supervisors have responded to the challenges and opportunities they have faced, and the collection of a diverse range of good practice case studies. The findings and outcomes we have produced therefore represent a multi-perspectival view, and the resources we have produced take the form of a repository of ideas, which might be adapted by new supervisors and disciplinary groups to suit their own contexts and working methods.

Applying the principles of distributed leadership means that this repository and sharing framework has been, and can continue to be organically expanded through an extended network. This means that rather than providing definitive, closed models that may be inappropriate to some contexts, the outcomes of the project are presented as open possibilities for sharing and for learning from each other. This means that the project outcomes are adaptable, broad ranging and shareable across stakeholder institutions. The potential for the outcomes to be amenable to implementation in a variety of institutions or locations is therefore high.

6.6 Linkages with Priority Areas

The 2013 OLT Leadership for Excellence in Learning and Teaching Program Priority 2, Disciplinary and Cross-Disciplinary Leadership, focuses on projects that enhance learning and teaching through leadership capacity-building in discipline structures, communities of practice and cross-disciplinary networks. This project, Building distributed leadership for effective supervision of creative practice higher research degrees, fulfils the central goals of this priority area. In line with the concept of distributed leadership, the project has identified and recognised multiple levels of existing leadership in the field of creative practice HDR supervision within Australasian universities. They include HDR managers and administrators, scholars in the field, early adopter and experienced supervisors who act as local leaders, who provide support and advice and act as role models within their disciplines and faculties, and new supervisors who are preparing to lead the next wave of innovation. The learning and teaching practices, as well as the leadership capacity, of each tier of leaders has been strengthened by recognising, capturing, and disseminating their insights and knowledge.

Moreover, by seeing these local leaders as important nodes within their local discipline contexts, and activating their goodwill in the collection and dissemination of ideas and resources, the project has further strengthened local leadership and the relationships between people within their discipline structures. And, by initiating national network building (including cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional, networks and communities of
practice), we have fostered the strength of relationships between people. That is, by employing the principles of distributed leadership at the heart of the project, a cooperative and dialogic community of practice has emerged. The impact of this outcome is described in detail by attendees in evaluation responses in Table 1. And it is anticipated that this network will be sustained through the distributed and networked model that has begun to gain traction and spread.

On an individual level, it is useful to consider how the project design has facilitated the building of leadership capacity of individual supervisors. Often, the supervisors we interviewed have already developed rich and deep insights into effective practices of postgraduate supervision, but they had not before shared them. Through the reflective practice that occurred through the interview process, they realised the value of their experience to others. They were then able to publicly test their ideas and share them with others at the ESCARD symposium, and many are now writing them up for publication (subject to international peer review) in an A ranked international journal. This project then has facilitated leadership capacity building in supervision practices, and the scholarship of individuals, and it has also benefited the scholarship of teaching.

6.7 Links to Other Projects and Fellowships

This project is indebted to strong research of the ALTC supported project Creative Arts PhD: Future-proofing the creative arts in higher education (Baker et al. 2009), which identified the growth in creative practice research and provided insights into a range of contextual factors, which were important in the design interviews and surveys. It also flagged the need for a project on HDR supervision to consider practices, support and development. The 2010 OLT funded project, Examination of doctoral degrees in creative arts: process, practice and standards by Brien, Burr and Webb (report forthcoming) has also provided important contextual understandings, and has allowed us to limit the scope our study, leaving examination issues to their scholarly analysis.

In a process of cross-fertilisation of projects, the findings of the Examining Doctorates in the Creative Arts project were presented at the ESCARD symposium, and the project outcome Examining Doctorates in Creative Arts: A Guide was disseminated to participants. A presentation by former OLT/ALTC project member Associate Professor Cheryl Stock (Dancing Between Diversity and Consistency) was also given at the symposium. And the symposium was launched by Professor Rod Wissler, Executive Dean of the Creative Industries Faculty, QUT and author (with Jill Borthwick) of Postgraduate research students and generic capabilities, commissioned by the Department of Education, Science and Training under its Research Evaluation Programme.

This project applies strategies provided by Christine Bruce’s 2009 ALTC (now Office of Learning and Teaching) Fellowship, Towards a pedagogy of supervision in the technology
disciplines, which not only provided insights into a range of supervision factors, but also provided a precedent for a conversational framework in the project design. The current OLT Project, *Benchmarking Leadership and Advancement of Standards for Sessional Staff* by Harvey M., McCormack, C., Brown, N., McKenzie, J., Parker, N., Luzia, K., provided an effective model for the ESCARD symposium, and emulating the exemplary practices of that project in the collection of national case studies has helped to ensure our success.

CHAPTER 7: ANALYSIS OF CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

7.1 Factors that Contributed to Success

Fundamental to the success of this project has been its approach to recognising and building distributed leadership, which has driven the project design. Applying the principles of distributed leadership has meant acknowledging that leadership exists at all strata of the university (at the levels of institutions, research degree co-ordinators and administrators, and experienced supervisors who, as ‘local’ early adopters and innovators, operate as exemplars and sources of information to others). Seeing each of these tiers as stakeholders in the project outcomes has ensured that the relationships we developed were based on respect for their leadership capacities, and have affirmed and strengthened the inherent leadership roles of the various participant groups.

By capturing the views of each representative stakeholder group (through the combined methods of document sampling, surveys, interviews and case study collection) the project has developed a richer, multi-perspectival view of creative practice HDR supervision than it would have if it had focussed on any one of them. In addition, this approach instigated a collegiate, cooperative approach that proved to be invaluable. For example, the project team worked together to sharpen the questions prior to the interviews, ensuring that assumptions were minimised and that the questions could be more easily answered by respondents in different contexts. Another example involves the symposium, where the tone was set by the collaborative, mutually respectful and open approach modelled by the project team members during the introduction. Ideas were shared and debated in a collegiate and inquisitive way, rather than transmitted in the authoritative and competitive manner encountered at some conferences. In addition to strengthening the networks between project team members and the participants more broadly, it meant that we have already learnt much from each other.

An unexpected success of the project was the impact of the interviews on supervisors. The ‘accidental academic development’ that this dialogic, reflexive tool produced was a benefit that the project team did not foresee. Having the two project leaders, who are both experienced supervisors of creative practice themselves, conduct the interviews facilitated an affirming process, which led to informative and considered dialogues, and elicited deeper responses. In addition, the open-ended questions allowed room for new ideas that had not necessarily been considered when preparing the questions.

Perhaps the most important factor that contributed to the success of the project however was learning the benefits of early dissemination at the OLT Project Managers’ Workshop early in the project’s timeline. This understanding changed the strategic approach of the project. Instead of pursuing a planned partner meeting to share our institutional strategies
and case studies, participation was broadened into the vehicle of a National symposium. By sending an invitation to Assistant Deans of Creative Arts and Design Faculties and heads of postgraduate research at all Australasian universities and inviting them to nominate ‘best practice’ exemplars to present at a national symposium, key change-makers in the field became aware of the project early on, and played a part in our dissemination network. The symposium not only provided the opportunity to share early outcomes of the project, it led to the opportunity to gain feedback from a national delegation of over 60 HDR managers, and supervisors at a point when modifications could still be made. Moreover, it broadened the catchment of exemplars of good practice, increasing the breadth of case studies and position papers. It gave a wider voice to supervisors from across the sector through opportunities to present; and it extended dialogue and sharing amongst delegates across 20 Australasian universities, who then went on to become part of our dissemination network. And finally, the call for case studies led directly to an invitation to produce a special issue of an A ranked journal to capture further insights and to disseminate project findings. In short, the early dissemination strategy set up a momentum that led to far greater outcomes than was anticipated in the project proposal.

### 7.2 Factors that Limited Success

Several minor challenges were encountered through the course of the project. Finalising Partner agreements and QUT’s Ethical Clearance process required more time than envisaged. The latter required multiple document versions and drafting and re-drafting the interview questions prior to submission. However, having the interview questions so thoroughly considered proved to be beneficial during the interviews and the rich interview data we gained is the result of the time and attention allocated to this process. The pragmatics of the interview process, especially in the case of the University of Western Sydney, which has dispersed locations, was a minor challenge. However, the support commitment of the project team in organising all of the local interviews was invaluable.

Organizing the ESCARD Symposium in to run only six months in to the project was logistically challenging. However, it was unavoidable given the project’s one-year timeframe and scheduling it within the non-teaching period to optimise attendance. Nonetheless, as explained above, it proved most productive to disseminate findings early and to gather a wide range of responses from stakeholders so the project outcomes are wider than they otherwise would have been. Moreover, it means that anticipation of the project outcomes has built, and that they will engage our colleagues as more than audiences, but as participants in the research process.

Other issues encountered involve negotiating the language of a relatively new field. For example, ‘creative practice research’ ‘practice-led research’ and ‘practice-based’ research have different meanings for different respondents. Gaining accurate data from institutions on the distinct field of creative practice HDRs was also challenging, as Universities do not
report on ‘creative practice research’ to the Australian Government as a separate category. Therefore, the accumulated ‘on-the-ground’ knowledge of higher degree research administrator/coordinators at each university was invaluable. And finally, the project report was more time consuming than expected, but enjoyable nonetheless.
CHAPTER 8: EVALUATION

The evaluation of the project has involved a combination of proactive strategies. They include formative feedback from project team members on the project design (event sequencing, methods of data collection and collation, analysis of materials and data, approaches to disseminating project outcomes, and so on); a self-evaluation of project outcomes against proposed goals and outcomes (Table 2); specific questions included in the interviews; and anonymous surveys completed at the ESCARD symposium (Table 1). Quantitative feedback has been captured at particular project points (e.g. the number of attendees at the symposium, and responses to the call for symposium presentations and journal articles). Web analytics will capture traffic to the project website.

8.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of formative feedback, which was sought throughout the project, was to strengthen the project design. Reflecting on incremental feedback from project team members, the project leaders made iterative changes to improve the efficacy of approaches to capturing resources and insights, improving project strategies, and disseminating outcomes. The purpose of the evaluation of project outcomes against stated project goals (in the project proposal) has provided a measure of achievements (Table 2). Interview questions on the effect of participation, as well as the qualitative surveys conducted at the symposium, were designed to formally capture feedback on the impact of the project design on participants. Counting respondents to the symposium and call for papers has served to gauge the impact of the distributed leadership approach and early interest by the sector. All of these evaluation approaches were conducted to learn about the strength of the approaches we were taking, as much as for reporting purposes.

8.2 Evaluation Strategies and Outcomes

Formative Feedback

The project team provided continuous formative feedback and advice to the project leaders. Each project phase was documented and updates were sent to the partners. All decisions and changes to the approach (e.g. adding the symposium to the project design) were shared with, and agreed upon, by all partners. Materials collected, such as the literature, institutional resources, and case studies through to project planning and fortnightly project team meetings were available to partners for comment throughout the course of the project by way of a shared Google Drive. Pivotal materials, such as draft project reports, interview and survey questions, calls for papers, the symposium rationale and schedule of presentations, and dissemination strategies were also circulated by email for comment. A project team meeting in February provided an opportunity for face to face consultation and feedback on the project approach midway through the project timeline.
The Ethical Clearance process at QUT provided formative feedback on the design of the survey and interview and questions. And feedback on early project findings and the project design was received from participants at the ESCARD symposium. In combination, this influenced decision-making and planning for each subsequent project phase.

Qualitative Feedback
Open-ended questions at the end of the interviews, which enabled participants to comment on any aspects of the project, were not designed to elicit responses about the benefits of participation. However, many of the responses provided this feedback (several examples are relayed in Section 6.2 above).

Other qualitative evaluation data was captured in surveys that were distributed to delegates at the conclusion of the two-day ESCARD symposium. They asked a limited number of open ended questions including, “What will you take away from this symposium?” and “Has/how has the symposium informed your supervision practice?” The (overwhelmingly positive) responses are tabulated in Section 6.3. They illustrate the considerable impact of the Symposium on the supervisors, HDR managers and Assistant Deans in attendance. Besides surveys, feedback was captured in email exchanges, Special Interest Group reviews, tweets, and posts to blogs.

Quantitative Data
Quantitative data has supplemented insights gained through qualitative feedback, including registrations for the ESCARD symposium (more than 60), submissions of case studies (18), and submission of abstracts for the journal special issue (16 to date). Quantitative data will
also be collected on visits to the project website (through web analytics).

**Evaluation of outcomes against stated goals**

An evaluation of outcomes achieved by the project team against the outcomes and stated project goals in the project proposal was produced through a tabular matrix, which appears below in Section 8.3.

### 8.3 Achievement of Project Goals and Realisation of Outcomes

**Table 2: Comparison of project objectives and proposed outcomes to realised outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project objective</th>
<th>Proposed outcome</th>
<th>Realised project outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Scholarly Understanding of the Field: Contextual factors</td>
<td>A literature review identifying supervision practices in other fields and creative practice HDRs.</td>
<td>Literature review, scholarly research base: • Annotated bibliography (available on project website); • Concise literature review (Chapter 3 of this report).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify institutional models for managing HDR candidature and academic development for supervisors. Identify principles that can be used by the sector for future planning and resource development.</td>
<td>A review of institutional HDR processes and frameworks.</td>
<td>Contextual review of institutional frameworks, processes and resources: • Institutional surveys and analysis; • A review of institutional documents for students and supervisors; • ‘A Snapshot of Procedural Issues in the Supervision of Creative Practice HDRs’ (Section 4.1, Paper abstract submitted); • Recommendations and new approaches (Section 4.4);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources, practices, and principles of effective supervision</td>
<td>A collection of resources in use by supervisors in partner institutions.</td>
<td>A repository of resources: • Summary of available resources and literature for supervisors (on project website); • Collection of exemplary resources (on project website); • Case studies captured at the National Symposium Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research PhDs (on project website);</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Interviewing supervisors to establish the practices of early adopters of practice-led research HDRs, through a case studies approach. | Interviews with supervisors. | Interviews with 25 supervisors  
• 33 hours of tape-recorded interview materials;  
• Transcriptions of the tape-recorded interviews |
|---|---|---|
| Analyse this collection to identify innovative practices, institutional commonalities and synthesise broad principles | An analysis of the literature, case studies and resources to identify commonalities and innovative practices. | Content Analysis  
• A matrix of categorised interview responses;  
• Synthesised set of principles for effective supervision (Section 4.3); |
| Articulate a shared understanding of HDR pedagogies in creative disciplines. | A set of working principles, derived from this analysis. | • A booklet: *12 Principles for the Effective Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Degrees by Research* including exemplars provided by supervisors (print resource; on project website); |

### Dissemination

| Take a co-operative approach to resource sharing, and dissemination of findings. | Institutional dissemination of project outcomes | • Presentation at a ‘Supervisor Retreat: Sharing Best Practice in Doctoral Supervision’ QUT;  
• Strengthened community of supervisory practice at each partner university  
• National ESCARD Symposium; |
|---|---|---|
| Broader dissemination of resources, exemplars and case studies through a web portal; | • Project Website  
<http://supervisioncreativeartsphd.net> |
| Scholarly, peer reviewed papers that the articulate shared understandings. | • Project report;  
• ACCESS Journal special issue;  
• Phased dissemination plan of scholarly outcomes. |

8.4 Variations to the Project

A variation to the project design occurred due to attendance at the OLT Project Management Workshop, where advice to begin dissemination early was received. This led to the decision to hold a national conference half way through the project, instead of at the end, as initially planned. This decision enabled key stakeholders and experts in the field to participate in the project outcomes, and many attendees have become part of an extended dissemination network.
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Doctoral Writing SIG <doctoralwriting.wordpress.com/home/>


fIRST: *For Improving Research Supervision and Training* <first.edu.au/>


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*The Research Supervisor’s Friend* &lt;supervisorsfriend.wordpress.com/&gt;

*The Research Whisperer* &lt;theresearchwhisperer.wordpress.com/&gt;

*The Thesis Whisperer* &lt;thesiswhisperer.com/&gt;


Appendix 1: National Symposium: Schedule

Effective Supervision of
Creative Arts Research Degrees

QUT Gardens Point Campus
P Block Kindler Theatre & P413A

Thursday, 7th February 2013
12:30pm - 1:00pm
Registration

1:00pm - 5:00pm
Welcome
Introduction and Overview of the Symposium
Presentations: Supervision and Scholarship
Afternoon Tea
Presentations: Supervisors and Expertise
Panel Discussions/Group Discussion
Drinks at Botanic Bar

Friday, 8th February 2013
9:00am - 4:30pm
Morning Announcements
Presentations: Approaching the PhD
Morning Tea
Presentations: Supporting Success
Group Discussion
Lunch
Presentations: Presentation, Examination
Presentations: Academic Development for Students and Supervisors
Afternoon tea
Panel tea
Conclusions
Schedule
Thursday, 7th February 2013

12:30pm  Registration

1:00pm  Welcome
Professor Rod Wissler, Executive Dean, Creative Industries Faculty, Queensland University of Technology

Introduction and Overview of the Symposium
Associate Professor Jillian Hamilton and Dr Sue Carson, Queensland University of Technology

1:20pm  Presentations: Supervision and Scholarship
Creative Intersections: Supervision, Practice and the Space Between
Dr Liz Ellison, Queensland University of Technology

Views from the Frontier: Insights of Supervisors of Creative Practice HDRs
Associate Professor Jillian Hamilton and Dr Sue Carson, Queensland University of Technology

The Artwork and The Work of Art: Beyond Solipsism
Associate Professor Barbara Bolt, University of Melbourne

2:45pm  Afternoon Tea

3:00pm  Presentations: Supervisors and Expertise
Creative Research: The Importance of ‘Know-How’ in Creative Arts Supervision
Professor Brad Haseman and Dr Dan Mata, Queensland University of Technology

The Ignorant Supervisor: About Common Worlds, Epistemological Modesty and Distributed Knowledge
Associate Professor Tina Engels Schwarzmaul, Auckland University of Technology

4:00pm  Panel Discussion/Group Discussion
Quality of Practice
Led by Professor Ross Harley, CoFA, University of New South Wales

5:00pm  Drinks at Botanic Bar
(Not included in registration)

6:30pm  Dinner Location TBA
(Not included in registration)
## Schedule

**Friday, 8th February 2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:15am</td>
<td><strong>Presentations: Approaching the PhD</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Boundary Riders: Artists in Academia/Artists and Academia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Associate Professor Brogan Bunt and Professor Sarah Miller, University of Wollongong</td>
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<td>Re-thinking Risky Business: The Management of Creative Practice HDR Projects</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dr Sue Carson, Queensland University of Technology</td>
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<td>The Thesis Statement and Research Questions as Headlights for Research</td>
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<td>Associate Professor Estelle Barrett, Independent Scholar</td>
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<td>Ethical Clearance Made Easy? Issues and Solutions for Creative Arts RHD Supervisors</td>
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<td>Dr Angela Romano, Queensland University of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00am</td>
<td>Morning Tea</td>
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<td>11:30am</td>
<td><strong>Presentations: Supporting Success</strong></td>
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<td>Systematic and Orchestrated Scaffolding to Facilitate Smooth Student Progress in Design</td>
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<td>Higher Research Degrees</td>
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<td>Associate Professor Deirdre Barron, Swinburne University of Technology</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>This is NOT a Seminar</em>: Creative Research Dialogues</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dr Lyndell Adams and Dr Renee Newman-Stoov, Edith Cowan University</td>
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<td>Other People’s Creative Methodologies: A 5-Minute Presentation</td>
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<td>Dr Ruth Watson, The University of Auckland</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shut Up and Write</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ms Lindy Osborne and Ms Glenda Caldwell, Queensland University of Technology</td>
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<td>Guerrilla Research Tactics</td>
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<td>Ms Glenda Caldwell and Ms Lindy Osborne, Queensland University of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:45pm</td>
<td><strong>Group Discussion</strong></td>
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<td>A Conversation About Writing</td>
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<td>Led by Dr Claire Ditchison, University of Western Sydney</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:15pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>Time</td>
<td>Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:45pm</td>
<td>Presentations: Presentation, Examination</td>
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<td>Architectures of Knowing: New Approaches to Exegesis Design in Creative Practice PhDs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Examining the Creative Arts Doctorate in Australia: Supervisors and Their Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:45pm</td>
<td>Afternoon Tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:15pm</td>
<td>Presentations: Academic Development for Students and Supervisors</td>
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<td>Beyond Supervision: Academic Development of Postgraduates during the PhD</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sharing Effective Practices in Doctoral Supervision in the Creative Industries</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:15pm</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support for this symposium is provided by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching. The views expressed in this symposium do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching.
Appendix 2: Call for Papers

ACCESS: Critical Perspectives on Communication, Cultural & Policy Studies
ERA Ranked A Quality Journal

CALL FOR PAPERS: SPECIAL ISSUE
Supervising Practice: Perspectives on the Supervision of Creative Practice Research Higher Degrees

Guest Editors: Associate Professor Jillian Hamilton and Dr Sue Carson

Executive Editor of ACCESS, Professor Elizabeth Grierson, is pleased to announce a call for papers for a Special Issue of ACCESS journal to build on the successful Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research Degrees (ESCARD) conference at Queensland University of Technology in 2013. Papers should engage with themes:

• Assisting students in developing the relationship between theory and practice in the structure and/or form of the thesis/exegesis/dissertation;
• Solving challenges encountered in the supervision of creative arts research degrees;
• Designing strategies, tools, resources to facilitate smooth student progress in creative arts higher research degrees;
• Supporting the academic/professional development of PhD students;
• Academic development for supervisors of creative arts research degrees.

About ACCESS Journal:
ACCESS Journal is ranked A in the ERA journal rankings due to its international standing. For 30 years this scholarly publication has advanced critical perspectives on communications, cultural practice and policy, issues in aesthetics, philosophy of education and knowledge politics. With Professor Elizabeth Grierson as Executive Editor, the journal will be published by Routledge and managed by PESA Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia (www.pesa.org.au) from 2014. Papers are subject to an international blind review process.

Submission of papers:
Papers must follow the attached style guide and include:

• Title and 200 words Abstract
• Number of images (B+W, up to 4 per paper)
• Keywords
• Text: Access Journal Papers are normally between 3000 and 6000 words.

Abstracts and papers should be deidentified for the purpose of peer review. In a separate document include:

• Author Name/s
• Bionote and full contact details
• University affiliation.

Abstracts should be sent by 5th August with full journal article submission by 30th October, 2013 to:
Associate Professor Jillian Hamilton jg.hamilton@gut.edu.au & Dr Sue Carson sj.carson@gut.edu.au
Project leaders: Building distributed leadership for effective supervision of creative practice HDRs: OLTL12-2264.
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Appendix 3: Booklet for Supervisors