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OPEN SCHOLARSHIP POLICY OBSERVATORY



Joint CAUL-AOASG Election Statement

by Caroline Winter | 4 October 2019 | English, Observations | 0 comments



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This observation was written by Caroline Winter, with thanks to Jonathan Bengtson for his feedback and contributions.

At a glance:

Title	Joint CAUL-AOASG Election Statement
Creator	The Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) and the Australasian Open Access Strategy Group (AOASG)
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What is the Joint CAUL-AOASG Election Statement?

On May 14, 2019, the [Council of Australian University Librarians \(CAUL\)](#) and [Australasian Open Access Strategy Group \(AOASG\)](#) issued a joint statement in advance of the Australian federal election, “[Developing a Strategic Approach to Open Scholarship in Australia.](#)”

In the statement, CAUL and AOASG call for a “national strategy for open scholarship,” claiming that the international momentum behind [Plan S](#) offers an opportunity for Australia to reclaim its status as a leader in the Open Access (OA) movement, and points out that other countries—France and Sweden—already

have national OA strategies in place (2019).

AOASG advocates for research that is open and **FAIR**: findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable. Its members include 19 universities in Australia and 8 in New Zealand through **CONZUL** as well as affiliate members **Creative Commons Australia** and **Tohatoha**, a New Zealand-based organization focused on equitable knowledge sharing, formerly Creative Commons Aotearoa (“About the AOASG” 2019). CAUL’s members include university librarians at 39 universities in Australia and 8 in New Zealand through **CONZUL**, the Council of New Zealand University Librarians (“About CAUL” 2019).

The INKE Partnership Connection

The INKE Partnership is collaborating with representatives from AOASG and CAUL through

CAPOS, the Canadian-Australian Partnership for Open Scholarship. CAPOS brings together Australian and Canadian researchers, research groups, libraries, post-secondary institutions, computing organizations, and policy makers with shared interests in open, digital scholarship. “INKE has been an important voice in Canada in highlighting the deep advantages of OA, not only for researchers, but for all of society,” says Jonathan Bengtson, President of the Canadian Association of Research Libraries. “The development of CAPOS,” he continues, “is an excellent step in the type of global collaboration that is required to realize the full potential of open scholarship in the digital world.” Of note, supporters of the AOASG’s IOI project include INKE Partnership members **Érudit** and the **Public Knowledge Project**.

OA in Australia and Canada

Australia’s two major research funding organizations, the Australian Research Council (ARC) and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), have OA policies, as do many Australian universities. The situation in Canada is similar: the **Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications** applies to our three national funding agencies (see “**Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications**”), and many institutions have their own OA policies. As in Australia, there is increasing interest in Canada for the development of a national OA strategy.

According to the CAUL–AOASG statement’s background briefing, the Australian government accepted a recommendation from its Productivity Commission about the need to develop such a strategy in 2017, but that policy has not yet been developed (CAUL and AOASG 2019).

OA as an Election Issue

By foregrounding open scholarship as an election issue, CAUL and AOASG’s statement emphasizes the need for policy at the national level to resolve what it calls the “stalemate” between “research institutions, which want to disseminate their research outputs as widely as possible, and commercial publishers... who primarily serve the needs of their shareholders” (2019).

Referring to the then-upcoming Australian federal election held on May 18, 2019, the CAUL–AOASG statement notes that achieving the level of OA made possible by a national strategy “would be a realistic and significant accomplishment for a new or re-appointed Minister after the election, and a priority for government” (CAUL and AOASG 2019). Specifically, it calls for a strategy that re-examines funding infrastructures as well as policy related to higher education to be developed within three years.

In a piece in *The Sunday Times Sri Lanka*, reprinted from the *Times Higher Education Supplement*, John Ross emphasizes the political undertones of the statement, which “chides” the Coalition government for not acting upon the Productivity Commission’s recommendations and makes a “nod” to election promises by the Labor party to conduct a review of post-secondary education (Ross 2019).

Less than a week after the statement’s release, the information commissioner of New South Wales, Elizabeth Tydd, similarly called on government to adopt a “culture of openness,” and announced the launch of **online tools** to help government agencies evaluate their compliance with privacy and

information access regulations (Easton 2019).

Following the federal election, in which the incumbent Coalition Government party led by Scott Morrison won 77 seats against the Bill Shorten's Labor party's 68 seats, AOASG reaffirmed its commitment to OA advocacy by announcing the launch of the **Invest in Open Infrastructure (IOI)** project, a global initiative for supporting OA infrastructure, will, they hope, "provide a further global push for open infrastructure" ("Global" 2019).

The statement's emphasis on the discrepancy between the amount of money Australian taxpayers spend on research and the small percentage they have access to emphasizes that OA is an issue relevant to all taxpayers, not just academics, a point at the core of the global OA and open scholarship movements as well.

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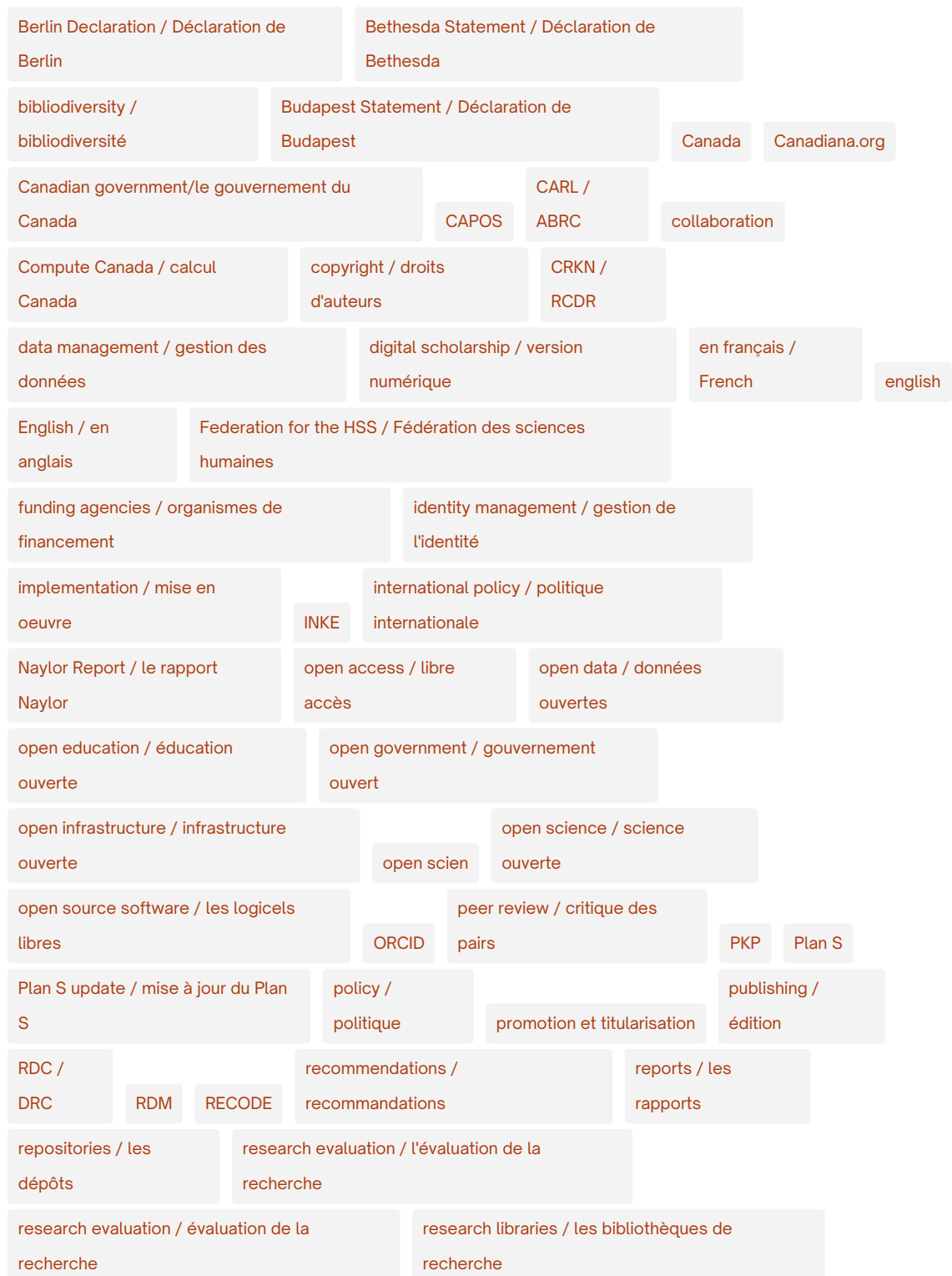
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