

Submission to the joint review of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC) by the Australian Women's History Network

The Australian Women's History Network (AWHN) is the peak national body for promoting research and writing in all fields of women's history. This encompasses the history of gender and sexuality, as well as history written by women. Formed in 1987, the AWHN is affiliated with the International Federation of Research in Women's History, and is a member of the Australian Historical Association. With more than 300 members, the AWHN brings together scholars across all levels of academic appointment, as well as students, independent scholars and others working in women's and gender history to exchange ideas, information, support and resources. We host an annual symposium, and we publish the peer-reviewed journal *Lilith: A Feminist History Journal*.

The key Field of Research (FoR) codes used by AWHN members are within the 2-digit code 21 History and Archaeology, with the majority of research being in 2103 Historical Studies and the six codes under Historical Studies. As the 6-digit codes are currently organised primarily by geographical area rather than methodology, gender historians use other codes such as those in Division 16 (Studies in Human Society) and in particular 1699 Other Studies in Human Society (the current classification for research focussed on gender, i.e. Gender Studies) in an attempt to adequately indicate their research methodology.

We support the submission made by the Australian Historical Association (AHA), which advocates for the introduction of a range of research classifications for History. The AHA proposes a research classification in Gender History, arguing that such a classification is long overdue, and in any event satisfies the criterion *for research activity according to the methodology used in the research, rather than the activity of the unit performing the research or the purpose of the research*. We agree with this proposal and, as specialists in Gender History, we are well-positioned to elaborate on the reasons why the establishment of this research classification is vital.

1. Gender History is a well-established methodology

While AWHN members produce historical scholarship that ranges widely across time and place, we collectively share a methodological commitment to Gender History. This commitment is typically stronger than or at least equal to the commitment to research classification by area (such as, for example, Australian history). Gender History includes the study of women's history, the history of masculinity and the history of sexuality. What distinguishes Gender History as a methodology is that it takes gender as a primary category of historical analysis (Scott 1986), and established and shared methods for conducting archival research focussed on gender.

2. Gender History has distinctive publication practices

While gender historians publish in a wide range of journals and with a wide range of publishers, there are key journals and publishers widely recognised as the most prestigious and influential in the field. These include the international journals *Gender and History*; *Women's Historical Review* and the *Journal of Women's History*, all of which are highly-ranked, and regularly feature contributions made by historians from Australia and New Zealand. Under the current research classification, however, the significance of these publications is not always fully recognised by university or grant assessors, including in terms of track record and intended publications. A research classification in Gender History would ensure research proposed under its terms would be

directed to the most suitable assessors, cognisant of the publication practices of gender historians.

3. Current research classifications are often inadequate for Gender Historians

Many AWHN members who have submitted grant applications to the Australian Research Council or otherwise sought to categorise their research have divided their research across at least two categories – one in an area code of historical studies, and another in Division 16 (Studies in Human Society) and in particular 1699 Other Studies in Human Society (which represents the current classification for research focussed on gender, i.e. Gender Studies). Yet Division 16 encompasses research that is primarily sociological, rather than historical – and as a consequence Gender History research can be assessed according to methodology common to sociology, rather than history. This is often not appropriate, and can lead to negative outcomes for gender historians whose methodology is based within the History discipline. Alternatively, gender historians find themselves resorting to the category of ‘Other Historical Studies,’ which is again a compromise. Again, a Gender History classification would ensure that proposed research in this category will be directed to the most suitable assessors.

4. A new research classification in Gender History is consistent with the principles guiding this review

As an internationally recognised field of history with a distinct and well-established historical methodology, a research classification of Gender History is fit for purpose as a 6-digit FoR code.

5. Gender History is a strong and productive research discipline which is ‘likely to generate significant volumes of research activity over the next ten years’ and beyond

Australian gender historians constitute an internationally recognised, established research community, with strong links to global academic networks. These historians publish across all geographical areas that are currently included in the 6-digit 2103 codes, and share a common set of methodological principles. Historians who use gender as their primary methodology produce research at all major universities in Australia and New Zealand, and this category is certain to generate significant volumes of research into the future.

Finally, we wish to respond to one of the key questions raised in the review documentation as to *what criteria, in your view, should be used to determine the classification of research?* As gender historians, we believe that the key criteria for a new research classification are: research methodology; publication practices; and the inadequacy of current classification options for historians of gender. A new research classification in Gender History would be consistent with the principles of this review and, while Gender History is not a ‘new and emerging research discipline,’ it is undoubtedly a strong and productive discipline that is ‘likely to generate significant volumes of research activity over the next ten years’ and indeed beyond.