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1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 **Terms of Reference for the 2013 Review of the Department of Modern History, Politics and International Relations**

1. **Governance, Leadership and Management**
   Review the effectiveness of Department of Modern History, Politics and International Relations planning, leadership and management structure, processes and resources in responding to Faculty and University strategic planning directions.

2. **Academic Program**
   Review the appropriateness of the degrees, programs and units offered by Department of Modern History, Politics and International Relations relative to Faculty and University priorities, employer and professional community demands.

3. **Research**
   Review current research outputs, activity, and capability relative to Faculty and University objectives including opportunities for developing research and knowledge leadership.

4. **Research Training**
   Review the HDR program, including admission standards, methodology and skills training, completion times and drop-out rates, supervision and reporting standards.

5. **Staff and Student Profile**
   Review the alignment of academic, professional, and student profile relative to current and future objectives and plans.

6. **Community Engagement**
   Review the scale, scope, and quality of community/industry engagement, including external/professional contribution to and referencing of, curriculum and research development.

7. **Future Directions**
   Recommend future development opportunities for Department of Modern History, Politics and International Relations in terms of its resources, research, teaching and community/industry engagement activity.
1.2 Review Team

**Chair:** Frank Bongiorno, Associate Professor, School of History, and Deputy Director (Education), Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University

**Members:**

Katie Holmes, Professor, Department of History, La Trobe University

Meredith Martinelli, Manager, Library Planning and Development, Macquarie University

Marc Williams, Professor, School of Social Sciences, University of New South Wales.

**Secretary:** Dr Maryam Khalid, Faculty of Arts, Macquarie University
### 1.3 Review Program

#### Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Speaker/Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 – 9:30 am</td>
<td>John Simons (Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30 – 10:00 am</td>
<td>Robert Reynolds (Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:30 am</td>
<td>Catriona McKenzie (Associate Dean, Research)</td>
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<td>10:30 – 11:00 am</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 – 11:30 am</td>
<td>Joanne Page (General Manager, Faculty of Arts)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30 – 12:00 pm</td>
<td>Sherman Young (Associate Dean, Learning and Teaching)</td>
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<td>12:00 – 1:00 pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 – 1:30 pm</td>
<td>Geoffrey Hawker (Head of Department of Modern History, Politics and International Relations)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30 – 2:00 pm</td>
<td>Murray Goot (CORE coordinator, Cultural, Social and Political Change, senior researcher and PIR level E)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00 – 2:30 pm</td>
<td>Hsu-Ming Teo (Head of Discipline MH and Deputy Head of Department)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:30 – 3:00 pm</td>
<td>Ian Tregenza (PIR Level B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00 – 3:30 pm</td>
<td>Kate Fullagar (MH Level C, and MH HDR coordinator)</td>
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<td>3:30 – 4:00 pm</td>
<td>Tea break</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00 – 4:30 pm</td>
<td>Morris Morley (PIR Level D and Head of Discipline - PIR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30 – 5:00 pm</td>
<td>Lloyd Cox (MIR convenor)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00 – 5:30 pm</td>
<td>Steve Wood (HDR PIR coordinator)</td>
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#### Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 – 9:30 am</td>
<td>Kelli-Lee Drake and Jackie Anker (Departmental Administrators for PIR and MH respectively)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30 – 10:00 am</td>
<td>Noah Bassil and Leigh Boucher (MRes coordinators)</td>
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<td>10:00 – 10:30 am</td>
<td>Tracy Sullivan (Director, Australian History Museum)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 – 11:30 am</td>
<td>PG CW students: Raphael Geraghty, MIR and Judith Chapple, MA in MH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 – 12:00 pm</td>
<td>UG students: Emma Bingham (MH) by phone and Mark Abdel Sayed, PIR</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 – 1:00 pm</td>
<td>Follow-up interview with Hsu-Ming Teo/Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 – 1:30 pm</td>
<td>MRes students: Jennifer McLaren (MH) and Mohammed Sulemana (PIR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30 – 2:00 pm</td>
<td>HDR students: Chelsea Barnett (MH) and Conor Keane (PIR)</td>
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<td>2:00 – 2:30 pm</td>
<td>Stephanie Lawson (Professor of IR)</td>
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<td>2:30 – 3:00 pm</td>
<td>Diana Perche (MPP)</td>
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<td>3:00 – 3:30 pm</td>
<td>Jon Symons (OUA coordinator for PIR)</td>
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<td>Tea break</td>
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<td>4:00 – 4:30 pm</td>
<td>Noah Bassil follow-up interview</td>
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<td>4:30 – 5:00 pm</td>
<td>Bernie Howitt (President of History Teachers’ Association of NSW)</td>
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#### Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 – 1:30 pm</td>
<td>Panel discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30 – 2:00 pm</td>
<td>Andrew McKenna (Head of Partnerships)</td>
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<td>2:00 – 2:30 pm</td>
<td>General Session for staff (group)</td>
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<td>4:30 – 5:00 pm</td>
<td>General Session for staff (individual)</td>
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2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This review of the Department of Modern History, Politics and International Relations has been undertaken at a time when its leadership, staff and the Faculty of Arts are considering how they might build on the achievements since the formation of the Department in 2009. The review committee, while noting the efforts of recent years to produce a cohesive department over the last four years, have made recommendations in the areas identified in the review terms of reference which will better equip the Department to meet present and future challenges.

In particular, the governance, leadership and management structure of the Department should be reformed in order to produce better communication, consistency and cohesion across the disciplines represented in it, and to allow the Department to respond effectively to Faculty, University and sector-wide changes.

In light of enrolment trends, the Department is facing a period of decline under a relative funding model and the committee has suggested the development of a departmental learning and teaching plan, closer monitoring of changing patterns of student demand and attention to curriculum reform. It is suggested that there should be closer cooperation between the disciplines learning and teaching matters, a relationship that might include some joint appointments and units being cross-listed in different majors.

A more coherent approach to research planning and mentoring is needed across the Department, and the move towards research clusters should form an integral part of such an effort. The Department as a whole needs to consider how it will handle leadership succession in the context of the departure or retirement of senior staff.

In relation to research training, there should be a movement towards common procedures and practices that will achieve a high quality of support for students across the Department, irrespective of discipline. The Department needs to improve its recruitment of HDR students; the new Master of Research is an innovative University-wide experiment that might provide opportunities in this respect.

MHPIR should also continue to build on its strong performance in community outreach. The Department has a distinguished record across the main areas of academic activity and continues to achieve at a high level. This review, however, suggests ways in which Modern History, Politics and International Relations can improve its performance in an increasingly competitive environment.
3. LIST OF COMMENDATIONS

6.1 GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Commendation 1:** The Department has a consultative and collegial internal governance structure that supports its academic activities while preserving the identity and vitality of individual disciplines. Members of each of the discipline areas have an identifiable leader, and neither of the main disciplinary areas appears to feel that as a discipline, it is excluded to its detriment from the Department’s overall decision-making processes.

6.2 ACADEMIC PROGRAM

**Commendation 2:** In general, the Department has responded effectively to various contexts and challenges in the learning and teaching field. Successful and well-designed capstone units have been developed in the two majors in accordance with university policy. People and PACE units have been offered or are in prospect. An examination of a sample of Unit Guides undertaken by the panel would indicate that there is a clear delineation of learning objectives and a constructive alignment of these with assessment. There is an awareness in the Department of the need to assist in AQF compliance, to renew curriculum in the MIR, and to consider carefully the future of Big History in the context of both Department and University.

**Commendation 3:** MH has particular strengths in the teaching of Australian, European and World History, as well as the history of popular culture. There is strong evidence in the Self-Evaluation Review, as there was in our interviews with staff, of a commitment in Modern History to an innovative curriculum, regular review of offerings in light of changing contexts and patterns of student demand, and a generally reflective approach to learning and teaching. In 2013, they engaged in an exercise to ensure the systematic embedding of key skills at each level of the Modern History major. Staff in Modern History exercise leadership both within and outside the university with respect to learning and teaching, and they bring these insights to bear in their own practice.
**Commendation 4:** The panel was impressed by the breadth and quality of the undergraduate program in Politics and International Relations. The discipline has been conscientious in identifying and filling gaps in its program. We were provided with survey results that suggest satisfaction among students with the quality of courses and teaching, an impression confirmed in conversation with a third-year student and the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching).

**Commendation 5:** The OUA Program provides both Modern History and Politics and International Relations with a significant source of additional income. One of the major benefits of the activity for the Department is that because courses already being offered in the Department are also rebadged for the purposes of OUA, there is minimal investment in course development beyond that required for offer within Macquarie awards.

**Commendation 6:** Politics and International Relations has successful fee-paying Masters programs that attract significant income based on the quality of program: the Master of International Relations (MIR) and the Master of Public Policy (MPP). It is especially notable that one of these programs, the MPP, relies substantially on a domestic student base, and the other, the MIR, more on international students.

**Commendation 7:** The implementation of the Master of Research at the departmental and discipline level has not been without some teething problems but the two coordinators, Noah Bassil (PIR) and Leigh Boucher (MH), have worked well – and often together – in overseeing this transition. Despite strict, university-set timelines, their efforts have ensured a fairly smooth transition. The students to whom we spoke, while seeing some evidence of haste in implementation, have reported a generally positive experience of the program’s first year.

### 6.3 RESEARCH

**Commendation 8:** The glass cabinets full of research publications that the review panel passed each day during their visit to the Department in September 2013 served as a reminder of an impressive volume and variety of research activity across both areas over many years. In the most recent Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) round (2012), History at Macquarie (which includes Ancient History and Archaeology) achieved a 4 out of a possible 5 (above world standard) and Political Science was rated 3 (at world standard), up from 2 in the previous (2010) round (below world standard).
6.4 RESEARCH TRAINING

Commendation 9: HDR students in the Department seem on the whole to be well supported and there is evidence of a strong commitment to high-quality research training. The students to whom we spoke were satisfied with the quality of their learning experience. In the very week of our visit to the Department, there was a seminar organised by Dr Kate Fullagar, the HDR Director in Modern History, about non-academic post-PhD careers at which the Executive Officer of the Australian Academy of Humanities, Tina Parolin, was an invited speaker. The seminar was open to PhD students outside Modern History. PIR runs a regular Friday seminar for HDR students.

6.5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Commendation 10: The community engagement by members of the Department is exemplary.
4. LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Recommendation 1: That the Department work with the Faculty of Arts to assemble financial information to be communicated to members of the Department that will allow a clearer differentiation to be established between different revenue streams and provide the basis for more informed planning decisions.

Recommendation 2: The Department should establish a policy on tutorial sizes, for pedagogical reasons and to assist the Head of Department in managing resources and achieving workload equity. The Head of Department should carry out an audit of class sizes each semester at the end of the HECS census period to ensure that the departmental policy is being adhered to and determine whether resourcing adjustments are required.

Recommendation 3: The Department should review its existing workload formula and replace it with one that is simpler and more transparent.

Recommendation 4: Some academic leadership roles in the Department should be common to Modern History and Politics and International Relations rather than being exercised separately. Higher Degree Research coordination is one of these (See Recommendation 22). The Department might also consider a single research director (Recommendation 20), a single Open University Australia (OUA) convener (Recommendation 15) and, once the establishment phase of the new program is complete, a single Master of Research coordinator. It should look for similar opportunities for consolidation elsewhere in its governance structure.

Recommendation 5: The Department should establish an executive that would meet regularly, and support and advise the Head of Department. It would include the two discipline heads and the staff carrying out major administrative and leadership roles. The formation of an executive would provide an avenue for formal consultation, reporting and Department-wide strategic planning across all areas of activity.

Recommendation 6: The Department should establish a clearer delineation of responsibilities, especially in Learning and Teaching matters, between the Head of Department, the Head of Discipline and the Learning and Teaching conveners.
6.2 ACADEMIC PROGRAM

**Recommendation 7:** That in cooperation with the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) the Department develop a learning and teaching plan that identifies areas of current strength and potential growth.

**Recommendation 8:** That following the precedent set by Modern History, the Department carry out regular (annual) surveys of students in order better to monitor changing patterns of student demand. The results of such enquiry should figure in the curriculum planning process.

**Recommendation 9:** The Department should consider the development of some courses to be cross-listed in the two majors represented in the Department.

**Recommendation 10:** That the Head of Department make a business case for either a lectureship in American history, or a shared MH/PIR appointment in American History and Politics.

**Recommendation 11:** That the new Head of Department forms a working party to make recommendations concerning how the relationship between the Big History Project and Modern History at Macquarie might be developed to their mutual benefit.

**Recommendation 12:** That the new Head of Department confer with Professor David Christian over the process of succession planning in relation to Big History. Such planning should consider the possibility of making a bid for a new appointment in the field of Big History as an element in this succession planning.

**Recommendation 13:** That PIR considers the feasibility of the development of a major in International Relations.

**Recommendation 14:** That in close consultation with the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) PIR undertakes a systematic review of its undergraduate curriculum in light of how the learning objectives of the major can best be achieved and the decline in its enrolments arrested.
Recommendation 15: That as part of its larger review of curriculum, the Politics and International Relations discipline review its Open University Australia offerings in light of the need to improve the consistency between on-campus and OUA offerings, achieve quality assurance, and arrest the decline in student numbers.

Recommendation 16: That the Department moves towards appointing a single OUA coordinator and adopting a single system for resourcing the teaching of OUA.

Recommendation 17: That in consultation with relevant bodies and stakeholders, the Department continues to explore opportunities for Graduate Certificates and Diplomas in the field of historical pedagogies in light of developments at the state and national level in the history curriculum.

Recommendation 18: That the report of the 2010 review of the MIR be re-examined, its key recommendations identified, and that they form the foundation for a process of curriculum renewal and resource planning that would recognise the MIR’s status as the ‘Faculty flagship’ identified in the 2010 review of the program.

Recommendation 19: That the Department move towards the appointment of one full-time continuing staff member who would be responsible for coordination, core teaching and promotion of the Master of Public Policy. That the Department also consider how best to support the MPP with other staffing allocations, which might include both PIR staff with continuing positions and some casual staff.

Recommendation 20: As the Department moves to the next stage of implementing the transition from Honours to M.Res., it should consider the feasibility of:
- shared units between MH and PIR;
- cross-Faculty and interdisciplinary units; and
- minimising co-badged units and maximising units designed specifically for the M.Res. that provide appropriate training in the theory and method of each of Politics, International Relations and History (as the three main fields represented in the Department).

6.3 RESEARCH

Recommendation 21: That the Department consider the feasibility of appointing a single research director for the Department, with an overall responsibility for overseeing research planning and mentoring. The position should normally be occupied by a Level D or E academic, and the first responsibility of the role should be to work with staff in developing a research strategy for the Department.
6.4 RESEARCH TRAINING

**Recommendation 22:** That a single HDR Director be established for both the MH and PIR programs.

**Recommendation 23:** That common review procedures are established and followed for all PhD candidates in the Department, and that the current standard in Modern History be treated as the appropriate benchmark. In the interim, and as a matter of urgency, the HDR Director in PIR should ensure that from early 2014 a cycle of 12-month reviews commences for current PhD candidates.

6.5 STAFF AND STUDENT PROFILE

**Recommendation 24:** The Department should consider joint academic appointments in agreed areas. The most likely of these, in the near future, are in American and Asian Studies.

**Recommendation 25:** That every academic in the Department below Level D should be allocated to a mentor who will be a suitable person to guide their career development in terms of research, learning and teaching and service. That consideration be given to how the Performance, Development and Review (PDR) process can be better used within the Department in this context.

6.6 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**Recommendation 26:** That the Department continue to support the Australian History Museum and that consideration be given to how the value of the museum could be increased in the teaching of Australian politics. Such consideration might figure as part of the process of curriculum renewal in PIR.

**Recommendation 27:** That consideration be given to how the political scientists at Macquarie might be represented in discussion within the Australian Political Studies Association, and more generally in their profession, concerning learning and teaching in their discipline.
5. CONTEXT

At Macquarie University, ‘[r]eviews form part of the evaluation element of the University’s Quality Enhancement Framework’.

This particular review of the Department of Modern History, Politics and International Relations has sought to evaluate the unit concerned in the light of developments at Faculty, University and sector levels. The 2008 Macquarie University White Paper Review of Academic Programs provides a critical context for the Department’s learning and teaching effort, and the review team sought to assess how well the disciplines in the Department had responded to this major change. Changes in the means of evaluating research performance within the sector have also been brought to bear in the committee’s efforts. The Macquarie Academic Plan provides the broad University-level context for evaluating the Department’s strategic direction.

The Department, which was formed in 2009 from a merger of previously separate units and as part of a University restructure, has not previously been reviewed, so we were not in a position to assess progress since any earlier review. We did, however, consult the review of the Master of International Relations carried out in 2010.

MHPIR faces a number of challenges, including a falling off of student enrolments, the departure of a number of professors (especially in Modern History) and the likely retirement, in the next few years, of other senior staff. There is a broad need across the Department to deal with succession planning, to enhance research performance in a rapidly changing and competitive environment, and to freshen the curriculum in a manner that will respond to patterns of student demand and build on the Department’s existing strengths in learning and teaching.

The Department advertised internally for a new Head just before the review committee began its work at the University in September 2013. In the time since, a new (external) Head, Professor Sean Brawley, has been appointed, and we hope that this review will be of assistance to him and his new colleagues, as well as to the Dean, Professor John Simons, and the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Bruce Dowton, as they contemplate the Department’s future direction.
6. REPORT

6.1 GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The Department of Modern History, Politics and International Relations is broadly subject to Faculty procedures in relation to planning, finance, staffing and infrastructure. The Head of Department holds a financial delegation and is therefore responsible for expenditure, including casual staff budgets. The Faculty takes a 15% share of departmental allocations although 60% of this money is returned to departments (such as in the form of support for research). Departments receive from Faculty an up-date report each month on revenue and expenditure, and the settlement of each year’s budget occurs during the final months of the previous year.

The allocation of teaching funds is based on EFTSL, with a capitation formula applied across the Faculty and without any weighting to take account of the placement of disciplines in particular bands of federal government funding. Open University Australia (OUA) revenue is calculated separately and comes into the Department as direct income. Research allocations are weighted towards research outputs more heavily than in government funding to the university, and there has been a trend towards a Teaching/Research split in departmental budget allocations which gives greater weight to research (from 90/10 in 2010 to 83/17 in 2014). Modern History, in particular, has been able to increase its research pool substantially in recent years; it is now approaching a quarter of its overall allocation (again excluding OUA). The Department of MHPIR, however, is currently in deficit and has been so placed for about a year, a problem closely connected with a decline in student numbers (See Academic Program below).

The panel had some concerns about the transparency of the budget and, more particularly, the basis for its distribution within the Department. There seemed to be among members of the Department a low level of awareness concerning the various sources of revenue streams, a problem that might hinder informed planning decisions. It is important that within the Department’s governance and communications, there is a means by which clear and accurate budgetary information is disseminated as regularly to MHPIR staff as practical within the Faculty’s overall system for collating and distributing such data.
The Head of Department also manages workloads. The Head applies a multi-faceted formula based largely on hours of teaching (with eight hours per staff member the basic ‘rule’) with credit (usually of one hour per week) given for program leadership roles, for teaching large units involving the management of two or more tutors, and for teaching a new unit. Thesis supervision is counted in these calculations of teaching hours. While the panel learned that Associate Professor Hawker had effected improvements in the transparency of this process during his tenure, there also remain some staff concerns about this process, or at least about the equity of the outcomes which it produces. The panel, however, was not offered any clear alternative to the current workload model. It also considered that some staff did not understand the formula.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should establish a policy on tutorial sizes, for pedagogical reasons and to assist the Head of Department in managing resources and achieving workload equity. The Head of Department should carry out an audit of class sizes each semester at the end of the HECS census period to ensure that the departmental policy is being adhered to and determine whether resourcing adjustments are required.

**Recommendation 3:** The Department should review its existing workload formula and replace it with one that is simpler and more transparent.

Beyond the clear responsibility of the Head of Department to the Faculty in relation to institutional planning, the Department has a somewhat complex governance structure that to some extent reflects its character as a dual-disciplinary unit in which there has been a strong determination to preserve the identities of the main disciplines represented. The Head of Department comes from one or the other of the disciplines – it is currently Associate Professor Geoffrey Hawker from (PIR) while each is represented in the Department by a ‘Head of Discipline’. The head of the discipline not represented in the departmental headship is Deputy Head of Department. The Department as a whole meets to conduct business on a monthly basis but there are also meetings of the disciplines. In Modern History, this appears to be where most of the planning of learning and teaching matters is conducted. In Politics and International Relations, the discipline meeting seems to be a less significant forum for such planning.
The Department’s Self-Evaluation Review refers to a rather loosely constituted executive structure, which in its limited form includes the Head of Department plus the two discipline heads. In an expanded form, it includes ‘program leaders’. But it is also acknowledged that ‘the executives have not met since the Department was constituted’. It would appear that the discipline heads meet with the Head of Department on an informal and ad hoc basis in order to deal with particular issues as they arise.

Beyond the key leadership positions, the various governance, leadership and management roles in the department also reflect the dual-nature of the Department. There are separate ‘Modern History’ and ‘Politics and International Relations’ conveners for each of Learning and Teaching, Higher Degree Research, International, Research, Postgraduate Coursework and the Master of Research. The departmental administrators also work to the separate disciplines, with one supporting and reporting to the Head of Department and Politics/International Relations, the other supporting the Head of History. In general, apart from some aspects of the Head’s role (such as the financial) that are largely dictated by Faculty requirements, the Department functions in an administrative and academic sense as two separate entities.

**Commendation 1:** The Department has a consultative and collegial internal governance structure that supports its academic activities while preserving the identity and vitality of individual disciplines. Members of each of the discipline areas have an identifiable leader, and neither of the main disciplinary areas appears to feel that as a discipline, it is excluded to its detriment from the Department’s overall decision-making processes.

Yet there is also in these arrangements some confusion of responsibilities, in that the Head of Department, having recently been from the Politics/International Relations discipline, seems to perform some roles (especially in learning and teaching matters) in PIR that in the case of MH are performed by the Head of History and/or the Learning and Teaching coordinator. It is arguable that the roles played by the two discipline heads should, for the sake of clarity and efficiency, mirror one another irrespective of which discipline is represented in the departmental headship. There is also a lack of clarity in the division of responsibilities between the Learning and Teaching coordinators, the Heads of Discipline and the Head of Department. In at least one case, the lack of an adequate response by PIR to a major change of learning and teaching policy at university level – the initiation of the ‘People’ and ‘Planet’ units – might have resulted in a significant loss of student load at first-year level (See below under **Academic Program**). In general, it seems likely that greater efficiency
and stronger leadership across a range of areas of activity in the Department are likely to occur if a single individual were to assume responsibility for many of these roles, rather than the current separation of MH and PIR.

**Recommendation 4:** Some academic leadership roles in the Department should be common to Modern History and Politics and International Relations rather than being exercised separately. Higher Degree Research coordination is one of these (See Recommendation 22). The Department might also consider a single research director (Recommendation 20), a single Open University Australia (OUA) convener (Recommendation 15) and, once the establishment phase of the new program is complete, a single Master of Research coordinator. It should look for similar opportunities for consolidation elsewhere in its governance structure.

**Recommendation 5:** The Department should establish an executive that would meet regularly, and support and advise the Head of Department. It would include the two discipline heads and the staff carrying out major administrative and leadership roles. The formation of an executive would provide an avenue for formal consultation, reporting and Department-wide strategic planning across all areas of activity.

**Recommendation 6:** The Department should establish a clearer delineation of responsibilities, especially in Learning and Teaching matters, between the Head of Department, the Head of Discipline and the Learning and Teaching conveners.

The Department had advertised internally for a new Head shortly before the Review Panel met. We understand that, since that time, the University has recruited an external Head, Professor Sean Brawley from the University of New South Wales. Although the review panel did not form a view on whether future heads would be better recruited internally or externally, they believe any new Head needs to provide academic and administrative leadership across both disciplines, articulate a clear vision and sense of direction, and build the sense of shared enterprise from which the Department would benefit. We also point out that the reforms to the arrangements for governance, leadership and management recommended in this report will provide opportunities for leadership experience and mentoring that will assist in the recruitment of a future Head from within MHPIR.

At the time the panel met in September 2013, there was a review in progress concerning professional positions within the Faculty that includes professional staff in MHPIR. The Self-Evaluation Review invited the panel members ‘to establish how any of its proposals might relate to the professional review with the Dean of the Faculty’. The review panel did seek information on this matter including in an interview with the two professional staff in MHPIR. In general, it found that the
division of responsibilities between the two professional staff largely mirrored the
dual-disciplinary character of governance more generally in the Department. The
panel did not consider that it should anticipate the recommendations of the
professional staff review by making any formal recommendations on this matter, but
it considers that a shift of focus away from supporting particular disciplines and
towards supporting departmental activities according to administrative function/task
would be consistent with many of the recommendations in this report, including in
this section.

6.2 ACADEMIC PROGRAM

General

Three major contexts are operating in relation to the Department’s academic
programs. The first, at the University level, concerns the changes resulting from the
review of academic programs undertaken in 2008. These included the establishment
of Capstone, People, Planet and Participation and Community Engagement (PACE)
units as well as a number of other reforms such as standards-based assessment, the
implementation of graduate capabilities, program-level learning objectives and the
development of constructive alignment between learning outcomes and assessment.
The second, at the national level, involves the challenges associated with the
implementation of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) as well as the
ongoing difficulties associated with inadequate base-funding, especially in the
humanities. Internationally, the Department’s highly successful Master of
International Relations (MIR) faces difficulties that, at least in part, seem to arise
from the reduction in competitiveness connected with a high Australian dollar. Yet at
the same time, the rising international reputation of Big History may well provide
international opportunities for the Department.

Commendation 2: In general, the Department has responded effectively to various
contexts and challenges in the learning and teaching field. Successful capstone units
have been developed in the two majors in accordance with University policy. People
and PACE units have been offered or are in prospect. An examination of a sample of
Unit Guides undertaken by the panel would indicate that there is a clear delineation
of learning objectives and a constructive alignment of these with assessment. There
is an awareness in the Department of the need to assist in AQF compliance, to renew
curriculum in the MIR, and to consider carefully the future of Big History in the
context of both Department and University.
Undergraduate Student Numbers

The Department, however, needs to increase undergraduate numbers as a matter of urgency. The overall pattern for both disciplines is a loss of load-share to other areas in the Faculty of Arts. Faculty enrolments grew in 2013 by over 8% but the Department is not matching this rate of growth. MH has experienced a very modest increase in overall numbers since 2010 (1673 in 2010 to 1978 in 2013). PIR has had an absolute loss of numbers in the same period, from 3052 to 2513.

This drop in student enrolments is a problem with which the Department must engage as a matter of urgency since under a relative funding model it has significant implications for revenue and the future capacity of the Department to make academic appointments. There has been some work on the MH side to address the difficulty and to monitor enrolment patterns, continue curriculum renewal, and to the further development of curriculum leadership among members of the discipline; if possible, with one or more new appointments in areas of priority, MH should be able to strengthen its position in an admittedly difficult environment.

Its problems, however, are compounded by a difficulty which, while common to many universities in the sector, is a particularly challenging one for MHPIR. MH has several academic staff who are specialists in Australian history while undergraduate numbers in this field are less healthy than in a number of other areas of MH. While there are no ready solutions to this difficulty, MH has shown ingenuity in reshaping its curriculum; for instance, by creating a unit Screening the Past: History on Film and Television (MHIS 101) that is a vehicle, in part, for teaching Australian history content. It attracted 199 students in its first year of offer, 2013. There may be further opportunities to integrate Australian history teaching into thematic units with a broader appeal. The massive and growing popularity of Big History, taught in the first-year unit An Introduction to World History, also provides MH with a large and popular first-year course although in this case, not one that leads to related latter-year offerings (See Big History below)

In the case of PIR, it is in the somewhat peculiar situation of having smaller numbers of students enrolled in first-year than in second- or third-year units. The recent falling-off of its enrolments had been partly a result of a decline in first-year numbers. The explanation offered for this apparent anomaly in the Self-Evaluation document – the lack of any PIR units in either the ‘People’ or ‘Planet’ program – seems plausible but also somewhat alarming. When the committee sought to find out why PIR had failed to offer any such units despite major changes in University policy that should have prompted a response, it found a lack of clarity about who
had the responsibility for initiating curriculum reform. We believe that this failure is connected with the lack of clarity in responsibility for Learning and Teaching in PIR between the Head of Department, Head of Discipline and the Convener of Learning and Teaching (See Recommendation 3 above).

In general, there needs to be a concerted effort across the whole Department – in the form of the development of a learning and teaching plan – that would consider the possibilities for growth. Some issues to be considered include how second and third year units can be targeted at students working outside the relevant majors in MH and PIR and indeed, even outside the Faculty of Arts. Regular surveying of students to find out their preferences of a kind undertaken by MH should be continued and extended across the Department.

**Recommendation 7:** That in cooperation with the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) the Department develop a learning and teaching plan that identifies areas of current strength and potential growth.

**Recommendation 8:** That following the precedent set by Modern History, the Department carry out regular (annual) surveys of students in order better to monitor changing patterns of student demand. The results of such enquiry should figure in the curriculum planning process.

There has been a strong determination to retain individual disciplinary identity across the Department’s activities. In particular, the teaching programs of MH and PIR have remained separate. Yet there may well be opportunities to strengthen the attractiveness of both majors to students through the creation of a number of units that would be cross-listed between majors. This would be particularly so if the Department were to consider the possibility of one or more joint appointments in areas of agreed teaching need.

**Recommendation 9:** The Department should consider the development of some courses to be cross-listed in the two majors represented in the Department.

**Undergraduate Profile**

The Department has an extensive program of units that comprise two majors – one in Modern History, and the other in Politics and International Relations.
Modern History

Commendation 3: MH has particular strengths in the teaching of Australian, European and World History, as well as the history of popular culture. There is strong evidence in the Self-Evaluation Review, as there was in our interviews with staff, of a commitment in Modern History to an innovative curriculum, regular review of offerings in light of changing contexts and patterns of student demand, and a generally reflective approach to learning and teaching. In 2013, they engaged in an exercise to ensure the systematic embedding of key skills at each level of the Modern History major. Staff in Modern History exercise leadership both within and outside the university with respect to learning and teaching, and they bring these insights to bear in their own practice.

Yet while there is a high quality of general curriculum planning evident in MH, there are also some uncertainties in strategic direction. The downward pressure on numbers in Australian History and the future of Big History are both major challenges. There appears to be a considerable level of agreement that a continuing appointment in American History would be highly desirable, but much less agreement on the future of Big History (See below). Asian History has little presence at the moment in the curriculum, which in light of the teaching of Asian languages at Macquarie, and the broader political, cultural and economic context in which the Department is operating, would appear to be a major gap. Nonetheless, there appears to be limited interest among MH staff in making an appointment in this field in comparison with their support for an American History appointment, where there is clear evidence of current student interest and demand.

Recommendation 10: That the Head of Department make a business case for either a lectureship in American history, or a shared MH/PIR appointment in American History and Politics.

The discipline will need to grapple with where Big History fits into its future teaching plans, and particularly whether it will be developed into a sequence of units at each year level. Although Professor David Christian was overseas at the time of the review panel’s visit, he responded by email to the panel’s request for information concerning current developments, future plans and likely directions. The panel also sought information and views about the future of Big History from other interviewees.

Macquarie is unique among Australian universities and exceedingly rare internationally in having been the location for the development of a whole new field of history. The review panel is strongly of the view that Big History represents an
opportunity for both Macquarie and the Department that they should grasp. In the last three years, there has been large and growing national and international interest in the field. It is finding a place in colleges (mainly in the United States) where there are almost 50 such courses and having attracted powerful philanthropic support, it is also being piloted in 150 schools, about a fifth of them in Australia. There is a Big History Association of which Professor Christian is founding president. The filming of a MOOC has begun, and is due to be released in June 2014. There is much else in prospect, and Macquarie’s Big History Institute is building international partnerships to develop the field further.

Yet the scale and complexity of these activities, and the very nature of Big History itself, pose difficulties and challenges. The field is avowedly and radically interdisciplinary, drawing especially on the natural sciences: Professor Christian himself comments that the course he teaches in first-year might even have been called ‘Big Science’. While it has much to offer Modern History via its radical challenge to conventional ways of thinking about the nature and meaning of history, in many ways it sits uneasily in the Modern History discipline and is likely to develop by ‘maintaining links with other disciplines’. Moreover, its emphasis on pedagogy suggests that its research agenda is more focussed on history education than history itself.

The Big History Project, especially at Macquarie, is largely the work of Professor Christian himself, which raises the awkward question of succession planning in a field that has not, as yet, yielded PhD graduates (although Professor Christian does have a small number of research students working in the area). Big History is popular in first-year, and one student to whom we spoke, having nothing but praise for it, expressed disappointment that there were no further offerings in later years for her to study. Professor Christian would like to see an appointment in the field who could develop a second-year unit on ‘Themes and Historiography of Big History’. Such an appointee would also be in a position to teach the popular first year World History unit on Professor Christian’s retirement.

There is no easy solution to the future of Big History at Macquarie. The committee has come to the view that the field is sufficiently important to the University in terms of if its national and international profile and influence – to say nothing of its potential as an interdisciplinary field of study at Macquarie itself – that it needs to attract a significant level of resourcing and support from outside both the Department and the Faculty. Yet at the same time, it would be a matter of regret if Modern History, having hosted Big History since 1989, found itself unable to reap the benefits from it in terms of publicity, reputation and student recruitment just as the
field is taking off in several countries in a range of forms, and especially in school education.

**Recommendation 11:** That the new Head of Department forms a working party that to make recommendations concerning how the relationship between the Big History Project and Modern History at Macquarie might be developed to their mutual benefit.

In addition to the Head of Department, such a working party might comprise: Professor David Christian, Mr Andrew McKenna (Head of Partnerships and Development), Dr Hsu-Ming Teo (Head of History), Tracy Sullivan (Director, Australian History Museum and Special Projects Director, Big History Institute) and Bernie Howitt (President of the New South Wales History Teachers’ Association and participant in Big History School pilot project).

**Recommendation 12:** That the new Head of Department confer with Professor David Christian over the process of succession planning in relation to Big History. Such planning should consider the possibility of making a bid for a new appointment in the field of Big History as an element in this succession planning.

**Politics and International Relations**

The Department teaches a range of units in Australian Politics and Public Policy, International Relations, Political Theory and In ‘Area Studies’ including Europe, the Middle East, the United States and Africa. Thematic courses in Gender and Politics, Environmental Politics and Gender and Politics have also been developed.

**Commendation 4:** The panel was impressed by the breadth and quality of the undergraduate program in Politics and International Relations. The discipline has been conscientious in identifying and filling gaps in its program. We were provided with survey results that suggest satisfaction among students with the quality of courses and teaching, an impression confirmed in conversation with a third-year student and the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching).

These efforts have not, however, arrested the fall in student numbers. While first-year poses a considerable concern (having fallen by 93 enrolments between 2010 and 2013), there was also a decline in numbers between 2010 and 2013 in Levels 2 and 3 (The Self-Evaluation Review reports an increase in numbers between 2009 and 2013 in second and third year but we could not discern these trends from the data provided therein and this claim is contradicted by other data with which we were provided). The enrolment figures provided by the Faculty indicated a decline in Level
2 from 611 in 2010 to 537 in 2013, and in third-year a decline from 543 in 2010 to 479 in 2013 (The figures with which the panel were provided in an excel spreadsheet by the Department were only slightly different). In other words, all three year levels saw a decline over the period 2010-2013, although from 2012 to 2013 there was a 10.3% increase in second year but a drop of a similar order in third year. (And the first-year decline was 15.6%).

The reasons for this decline are not entirely clear since they cannot be attributed primarily to problems in first-year recruitment which is the implication of the relevant section (5.1.1) of the Self-Evaluation Review. It is striking that Sociology have managed to gain 1000 and Philosophy 500 enrolments in the same period, 2010-2013, that PIR have lost 500. PIR might also be in very direct competition for students with the small, but fast-growing undergraduate program in the Centre for Policing, Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism. Students who, in other universities, might enrol in International Relations might instead be taking up units in this field. Yet it is notable that PIR does not actually have a specific major in International Relations, despite the success of this field in its own right in many other Australian universities and, indeed, as a Masters program at Macquarie itself. It is unlikely that an undergraduate initiative in this area will solve the problem of declining student numbers, but it might comprise part of a strategy for arresting a precipitate decline.

**Recommendation 13:** That PIR considers the feasibility of the development of a major in International Relations.

In general, the panel found less evidence of curriculum leadership and innovation in Politics and International Relations than in Modern History. Where there is in MH a long history of engagement with learning and teaching issues, with considerable value being attached to academic leadership and mentoring in this field, the culture in PIR in this regard is not as strong or as embedded. This is despite the presence of excellent and even award-winning teachers in PIR. There is an unevenness of interest in such matters; and junior staff, in particular, need to be supported and encouraged in curriculum innovation. Where successful innovation has occurred in the past, such as in simulation exercises in the teaching of Middle Eastern politics, it has for one reason or another not been maintained.

This is one respect in which the lack of contact in learning and teaching matters, as in other respects, between the two discipline areas in the Department has been a missed opportunity. A greater level of integration – indeed, even simply better communication – might well have stimulated more involvement in learning and teaching innovation across the department and provided a more conducive environment for innovation across both the disciplines.
Recommendation 14: That in close consultation with the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) PIR undertakes a systematic review of its undergraduate curriculum in light of how the learning objectives of the major can best be achieved and the decline in its enrolments arrested.

Open University Australia

Both Modern History and Politics and International Relations contribute to the Open University Australia (OUA) program. As is most other aspects of the Department’s activities, the two programs are administered separately and, indeed, in somewhat different ways. Modern History allocates a coordinator (currently Dr Matthew Bailey), a full-time contract staff member (Dr Lorna Barrow) and casual staff as required. Politics and International Relations has also recently hired a new staff member, Dr John Symons, who will coordinate its program but it is envisaged that on-campus conveners will assume ‘responsibility for the development, maintenance and teaching requirements of the OUA version of their on-campus courses’.

Commendation 5: The OUA Program provides both Modern History and Politics and International Relations with a significant source of additional income. One of the major benefits of the activity for the Department is that because courses already being offered in the Department are also rebadged for the purposes of OUA, there is minimal investment in course development beyond that required for offer within Macquarie awards.

The OUA programs in both Modern History and Politics and International Relations face a number of significant challenges, although these seem to be more pressing in the case of PIR. While MH numbers grew from 1033 in 2009 to 1742 in 2012 (69%), PIR numbers have fallen over the last five years and, in the case on one popular first-year unit, the drop between 2011 and 2012 was from 925 to 250.

There do appear to be some quality assurance problems with the PIR OU offerings, which the hiring of Dr Symons is intended to resolve. Recorded lectures in one course, for instance, were several years out of date. PIR might also have too many courses at second- and third-year level compared with its first-year offerings; MH’s first year units accounted for almost 60% of its enrolments, which were by no means unhealthy in the latter years (four out of six courses had enrolments ranging from 118 to 198). It also seems possible that if relevant PIR courses were included in the International Relations major, instead of being confined to the Politics major in the OUA program, that there would be greater up-take on the part of students.
Recommendation 15: That as part of its larger review of curriculum, the Politics and International Relations discipline review its Open University Australia offerings in light of the need to improve the consistency between on-campus and OUA offerings, achieve quality assurance, and arrest the decline in student numbers.

As stated above, the two disciplines resource their OUA programs rather differently. Each system has benefits and disadvantages. The OUA programs run on a cycle in which only a weekend might separate one teaching period from the next. Final assessment for the previous offering is still taking place when the next unit is launched. The implications of this situation for the research performance and career development of the staff member who is allocated to OUA teaching would need to be considered. Yet the system being implemented by PIR also has workload implications for the staff members whose courses are included in the OUA program. This would need to figure in workload management. It is also unclear that, in view of the nature of the duties involved, compensation of one hour per week seems an adequate level of resourcing for the work of the OUA coordinator.

The panel did not feel that it should recommend one system of managing OUA over another as this is an operational matter for the Department. However, it is convinced the OUA program constitutes an obvious case of inefficiencies arising from separate systems of management and duplication of functions in the two discipline areas. The coordination of OUA does not appear to require disciplinary specialisation. Nor does there seem to be any justification for running two different systems of resourcing OUA, which is likely to lead to inequities in terms of workload across the Department.

Recommendation 16: That the Department moves towards appointing a single OUA coordinator and adopting a single system for resourcing the teaching of OUA.

Postgraduate Coursework

The Department has for some years offered postgraduate coursework awards at Masters level.

Modern History

Modern History has offered a ‘Modern History’ specialisation in the Master of Arts and has contributed to a ‘History’ specialisation alongside the Department of Ancient History. The discipline has also contributed to Postgraduate Diploma and a Postgraduate Certificate. Enrolments in postgraduate coursework in connection with these awards have been in decline in recent years and it is anticipated that for a
number of reasons internal and external to the university – for example, the Master of Research initiative, the discontinuation of Museum Studies and the move from Commonwealth Supported Places to full fees – the decline will continue. The discipline has therefore decided to discontinue its ‘Modern History’ specialisation, and is negotiating with Ancient History to discontinue ‘History’. It is, however, considering the possibility of contributing to a postgraduate diploma in historical pedagogies. Such an initiative could dovetail very neatly with the work of the Big History Institute but in light of the continuing uncertainty surrounding the national history curriculum, caution is probably warranted. There also remains an insufficient incentive for over-worked classroom teachers to invest both fees and time in further study.

Recommendation 17: That in consultation with relevant bodies and stakeholders, the Department continues to explore opportunities for Graduate Certificates and Diplomas in the field of historical pedagogies in light of developments at the state and national level in the history curriculum.

Politics and International Relations

Commendation 6: Politics and International Relations has successful fee-paying Masters programs that attract significant income based on the quality of program: the Master of International Relations (MIR) and the Master of Public Policy (MPP). It is especially notable that one of these programs, the MPP, relies substantially on a domestic student base, and the other, the MIR, more on international students.

There has, however, been a decline in student numbers in the Master of International Relations. This decline may well be in line with sector-wide pressures on international student numbers associated with a highly-valued Australian dollar as well as a number of other difficulties experienced by the Australian international student market. At the same time, however, there appears to have been little progress towards implementing many of the key recommendations of the review of the MIR undertaken in 2010 and chaired by Professor James Cotton. While some of the recommendations in that report, such as those concerning the extension of the length of study, might have been overtaken by the Australian Qualifications Framework, others remain relevant. For instance, the 2010 review found that ‘the interface with Macquarie International appears to leave something to be desired’ and it made some specific recommendations in order to effect improvements. It also made recommendations about the need to locate additional resources to reduce class sizes. The panel’s enquires elicited no indication of there having been any attempt to implement these recommendations at the departmental level.
Recommendation 18: That the report of the 2010 review of the MIR be re-examined, its key recommendations identified, and that they form the foundation for a process of curriculum renewal and resource planning that would recognise the MIR’s status as the ‘Faculty flagship’ identified in the 2010 review of the program.

If the MIR is to continue to attract students and income it will require both curriculum renewal and the allocation of staffing resources to it commensurate with its value to the Department. Key parts of the curriculum, especially in the Asian and Middle Eastern areas, rely on staff who do not have continuing positions.

The Master of Public Policy has experienced some modest growth. It appears to have a strong reputation, and to be well marketed, administered and taught. It is, however, hampered in its planning and development by excessive dependence on contract and casual teaching. Unless the Department engages in appropriate planning and develops a strategy to meet the requirements of the MPP, the program is likely to decline. Yet especially in the context of the serious problems being experienced in terms of student numbers at the undergraduate level in PIR, the MPP appears to be a valuable, albeit minor, enterprise for the Department.

Recommendation 19: That the Department move towards the appointment of one full-time continuing staff member who would be responsible for coordination, core teaching and promotion of the Master of Public Policy. That the Department also consider how best to support the MPP with other staffing allocations, which might include both PIR staff with continuing positions and some casual staff.

The review committee learned some details of possible new ventures, such as a Masters in Global Governance and Development which might be offered out of a Centre for Global Governance located within MHPIR. The Centre would seek external/philanthropic funding and would be looking to tailor its offerings to the National Curriculum. There have been discussions with the University of Calcutta in relation to this award. Second, there is a proposal for a Masters in Global and Comparative Security Policy, which might be offered jointly with Plymouth University. These ventures seem in an early stage of planning, so the committee did not feel that it was in a position to make any specific recommendation in relation to them. However, it is clear that MHPIR should be looking for opportunities to offer fee-paying postgraduate degrees and that doing so in partnership with an overseas university might have benefits in terms of student exchanges and engagement with international communities in the relevant disciplines (See Macquarie Academic Plan).
Compliance Issues

The panel was not primarily reviewing particular awards and therefore did not enter into the issue of TEQSA/AQF compliance beyond enquiries of coordinators concerning how such matters were figuring in relation to planning. Yet if the AQF is to be maintained by the new government in anything resembling its current form, it is important that its implications for future curriculum planning and student recruitment be carefully monitored. There remains some uncertainty in the sector about the implications of the AQF for the duration of Masters programs. The current entry requirement for the MIR of an ‘Australian Bachelor degree or recognised equivalent in relevant field’ implies the direct passage from a Level 7 to a Level 9 qualification with just a single year of study leading to the award of the MIR. It is unclear to the panel whether this would make the award AQF compliant.

Master of Research

The Master of Research (M.Res.) is a Macquarie University initiative with implications for the entire university sector in Australia. As both a replacement for Honours and a new pathway to PhD enrolment, it represents an experiment that, if it succeeds, may well be widely emulated. Yet alongside its opportunities, it also poses some dangers to the Department in terms of doctoral recruitment from outside Macquarie itself (See below).

Commendation 7: The implementation of the Master of Research at the departmental and discipline level has not been without some teething problems but the two coordinators, Noah Bassil (PIR) and Leigh Boucher (MH), have worked well – and often together – in overseeing this transition. Despite strict, university-set timelines, their efforts have ensured a fairly smooth transition. The students to whom we spoke, while seeing some evidence of haste in implementation, have reported a generally positive experience of the program’s first year.

There are some reservations about aspects of the University-wide course – for instance, that it was seeking to teach basic English expression skills – and about the need for stronger methodological training, especially in International Relations. Another problem noted by the panel was student dissatisfaction in PIR with the double-badgeing of existing Masters units as M.Res offerings. This appears to have been less of a problem in MH which, although it has also double-badge existing units, also has seminar units available only to M.Res students. It is an implication of MH’s decision to wind up its Masters-by-coursework programs that it will move to stand-alone units, a transition with significant workload and resourcing implications.
(since the units concerned are likely to have small numbers) that will need to be managed carefully by any future Head of Department.

**Recommendation 20:** As the Department moves to the next stage of implementing the transition from Honours to M.Res., it should consider the feasibility of:
- shared units between MH and PIR;
- cross-Faculty and interdisciplinary units; and
- minimising co-badged units and maximising units designed specifically for the M.Res. that provide appropriate training in the theory and method of each of Politics, International Relations and History (as the three main fields represented in the Department).

The M.Res initiative provides significant financial incentives to students as well as guaranteed entry into the PhD program with a scholarship where students achieve a mark of 85% or above (High Distinction) in Year 2 (when they complete their thesis). This is likely to assist student recruitment into the M.Res from other universities. However, it also means that a student will no longer be able to enter the doctoral program at Macquarie or compete for scholarship support with even an outstanding first-class honours degree from another university. This is likely to ensure that Macquarie doctoral candidates in both MH and PIR are increasingly recruited from Macquarie itself, although a candidate with an M.Res from Macquarie will be able to compete successfully for entry to programs elsewhere.

### 6.3 RESEARCH

The Self-Evaluation Review document told two very different stories about research in the Department. About Modern History, the story is a largely positive one. About PIR, while recognising some areas of achievement and of potential, the document found less that was praiseworthy. The panel did find confirmation of this broad pattern but it also sees great potential, especially on the PIR side, in the recent proposals for research clusters. It also feels that with stronger research leadership by senior academic staff, and more systematic research mentoring, the research future for PIR need not be a bleak one. But much more coherent research planning needs to occur if PIR is even to retain its ERA ranking of 3 let alone contemplate the prospect of further improvement.

On the Modern History side, there is a stronger and more even culture of research leadership and mentoring. However, the departure of a significant number of research-active senior staff (most at Level E) raises the problem of succession planning in the research field. The area’s Australian Research Council (ARC) grant record is solid, but strongly biased towards Linkage Grants and Fellowships. There is
a need to support and mentor those staff – especially perhaps at Levels C and D – who are likely to be able to succeed with a Discovery Grant application in the near future as they will, in turn, become research mentors for staff at Level B. Again, cross-departmental effort here could yield significant benefits, since there are several senior academic staff in PIR with considerable successful grant-writing experience. The key, in this area as in so many others, is to ensure that each section of the department – irrespective of its discipline – feels a sense of investment in the success of the whole. This does not always seem at present to be the case.

**Commendation 8:** The glass cabinets full of research publications that the review panel passed each day during their visit to the Department in September 2013 served as a reminder of an impressive volume and variety of research activity across both areas over many years. In the most recent Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) round (2012), History at Macquarie (which includes Ancient History and Archaeology) achieved a 4 out of a possible 5 (above world standard) and Political Science was rated 3 (at world standard), up from 2 in the previous (2010) round (below world standard).

**Research Performance**

**Modern History**

Modern History has international recognition as the home of Big History and is widely recognised in Australia, and increasingly abroad, as a major centre for the study of gender, sexuality and popular culture. It has strong research outputs in terms of both quantity and quality and a solid record of attracting externally competitive grants. MH has aligned itself carefully with both Faculty and University research goals. All of its full-time continuing staff are research active.

The main challenge that Modern History faces with respect to its future research performance is that its staff are heavily concentrated as Level B (Lecturer), a profile that can raise problems in terms of mentorship, leadership and grant-winning capacity. There are three Level Cs (Senior Lecturers) and two Level Ds. Of the latter, Associate Professor Michelle Arrow was a recent promotion, and Associate Professor Robert Reynolds is currently performing the role of Associate Dean (HDR) in the Faculty of Arts. The only Level E, Professor David Christian, is on a contract that sees him as Macquarie for only one semester each year. While both Professor Christian and Associate Professor Reynolds have played mentoring roles for more junior staff, it could not be said that the current staff profile is a balanced one, although the addition of a Professor of History and Head of Department will partly remedy some of these difficulties.
Politics and International Relations

The panel largely accepts the argument in the Self-Evaluation Review that PIR’s current research performance as a whole could be improved in terms of volume. Yet, as the Self-Evaluation also recognises, there is an upward trajectory – something which is likely to have been registered in the ERA movement from 2 to 3 – and a number of relatively recent appointments hold great promise. Two Level B lecturers, for instance, published single-authored books in 2013. Since 2008, PIR has attracted over $1 million in ARC funding, as well as other grant money. This all seems a rather substantial base from which to strengthen a research culture. In sum, the panel was as impressed by the potential of PIR in terms of future research performance as by its frailties.

There is, however, a need for research leadership and mentoring if this promise is to be fully realised. We did hear of some informal research leadership and mentoring, but the panel felt that the culture of the lone researcher remained very strong in PIR, to the detriment of the discipline’s overall research culture and performance. Senior academics, and especially professors, need to be increasingly active in fostering a supportive research environment. Research mentoring should be more systematic to assist junior staff in their development as researchers, and especially in preparing them to apply for competitive grants and promotion.

General

There appears to be limited formal research planning in the Department as whole, although there is more planning activity in Modern History than in Politics and International Relations. When Professor Bridget Griffen-Foley and the Centre for Media History left MHPIR, there appears not to have been any decision made to replace her as chair of the research committee in Modern History, so that Hsu-Ming Teo, already Head of History, filled the role herself for the time being. There needs to be stronger central direction in such matters, and a case might well be made that such a position should normally be filled by a Level D or E who would be seen to have a particular responsibility for providing such leadership. Again, it seems likely that the appointment of a single research director for the whole Department might be an effective way of strengthening leadership in this area. Provided that the Department has a well-developed mentoring system in place (See Staff and Student Profile below), specialist disciplinary expertise should not be required for such a position.
Recommendation 21: That the Department consider the feasibility of appointing a single research director for the Department, with an overall responsibility for overseeing research planning and mentoring. The position should normally be occupied by a Level D or E academic, and the first responsibility of the role should be to work with staff in developing a research strategy for the Department.

The ERA needs to figure as central to appointment processes and internal research planning. It should no longer be an option for disciplines or researchers to ‘opt out’ by disregarding the research measures set out by the federal government because these have a major impact on funding. Senior management in the Department – the Head of Department in consultation with the Research Director – should monitor research plans and performance to ensure that, at a minimum, full-time continuing staff, and especially senior staff, do not become research inactive during an ERA census period. But strategic planning in research should obviously be aimed at achieving more ambitious goals than the achievement of such a minimum.

We also endorse and encourage the movement towards research clusters, such as that in ‘Religion and Politics’, and are particularly enthusiastic about the idea that some of these might involve colleagues from both parts of the department. This is an opportunity for members of the Department to work collaboratively, pool capacities and consider what it is that distinguishes MH and PIR (and perhaps, in some instances, MH and PIR together) from these disciplines in other universities. It will also be a chance to build mentoring relationships so that early- and mid-career researchers are able to receive guidance and opportunities that will help in the development of their careers and researchers.

Finally, the panel became aware that there was concern among some MH staff about the poor attendance of the joint departmental research seminar by members of PIR. This was seen as symptomatic of a lack of commitment to building a vibrant research culture in MHPIR. We suggest that the departmental seminar could become, in part, an opportunity for activities centred on the emerging research clusters, which might increase the sense of investment that all staff have in it. It is also felt that the Head of Department should play a role in making expectations of regular attendance at the joint departmental research seminar clear to all staff.

6.4 RESEARCH TRAINING

The panel considered the quality of Higher Degree Research training in the Department, including in comparison with other parts of the Faculty. We spoke to the Associate Dean (HDR); the HDR Directors in both Modern History, and Politics and International Relations; and to PhD students in PIR and MH. We considered
Comparative data on completions and the results of the MUSEQ-R surveys of HDR experience. (There were some discrepancies between the data in the Self-Evaluation Review (in regard to PIR, primarily) and other data on completions that the committee requested from the Faculty of Arts. Where they were in conflict, we have preferred the Faculty figures.)

**Commendation 9:** HDR students in the Department seem on the whole to be well supported and there is evidence of a strong commitment to high-quality research training. The students to whom we spoke were satisfied with the quality of their learning experience. In the very week of our visit to the Department, there was a seminar organised by Dr Kate Fullagar, the HDR Director in Modern History, about non-academic post-PhD careers at which the Executive Officer of the Australian Academy of Humanities, Tina Parolin, was an invited speaker. The seminar was open to PhD students outside Modern History. PIR runs a regular Friday seminar for HDR students.

HDR students in the Department do not, however, have a common experience of doctoral study based on their location in the Department. It is clear, for instance, the disciplinary differences matter in this respect. As a consequence, the survey data is of limited usefulness as it fails to disaggregate the experiences of MH and PIR students. Taking the Department as a whole, the overall level of satisfaction (taking ‘Agree’ and ‘Strongly Agree’ together) is 77% (up from 68% in 2011 but down from 83% in 2010). This places MHPIR a little below the Faculty figure (81%). However, it is possible – and considered by this panel as likely – that this figure obscures discrepancies between the results in the two discipline areas.

The MH program is considerably more structured than PIR’s. A commencing MH student will attend a social function, HDR seminars and reading groups. After six months, they will be expected to present a short overview of their project at an event called a Faculty Showcase, which is attended by their supervisors and the Associate Dean (HDR). After a year, the student will meet a review panel comprising supervisors, the HDR director in Modern History and another academic staff member, in order to ensure that the topic and candidature are viable. Each October, there is an annual review via the University’s reporting system, with an opportunity call for a review if, after reading the reports, the supervisor and Associate Dean recognise a problem. The MH HDR Director also carried out an informal review with students once a year.

The PIR approach is much less structured. It participates in the Faculty Showcase, but not in the twelve-month review process. It was a matter of quite some concern to
the panel that the University does not seem to be enforcing a consistent system of annual reporting across all departments and disciplines.

There are fewer seminar events for PIR students. Where these are organised, such as the Friday seminar, attendance is often poor. HDR completions, moreover, appear to be a particular problem in PIR which needs attention. Taking the period for which comparisons are feasible on the figures we were able to collect, PIR has had 9 completions between January 2009 and July 2013, all in the PhD. (We are here dependent on figures provided by the Faculty of Arts; the Self-Evaluation Study gives the number of completions as 7). Modern History, with a similar number of students enrolled each year to PIR, has seen a higher number of completions: 15 (11 PhD and 4 M.Phil) Since 2009, English has had 36 (32 PhD; 4 M.Phil) and Sociology 22 (All PhD).

Four of the Modern History students completed within time, compared with 3 in PIR. In Sociology, 13 of 22 completed within time; in English, 16 of 36. Improvements in this area for MHPIR would be welcome but both disciplines appear to have experienced difficulty recruiting a sufficient number of very able postgraduate research students, a problem that might be addressed, to some extent, through the innovations associated with the M.Res (See above).

**Recommendation 22:** That a single HDR Director be established for both the MH and PIR programs.

**Recommendation 23:** That common review procedures are established and followed for all PhD candidates in the Department, and that the current standard in Modern History be treated as the appropriate benchmark. In the interim, and as a matter of urgency, the HDR Director in PIR should ensure that from early 2014 a cycle of 12-month reviews commences for current PhD candidates.

**6.5 STAFF AND STUDENT PROFILE**

Staff profiles have been discussed in earlier passages of this report in relation to a range of topics. The issue of professional staff was raised in 5.1 and especially in the context of a Faculty process concerned with their roles and organisation, it is not proposed to take the matter up again here. This section will instead deal with the alignment of academic staff and student profiles.

It has already been pointed out that, in the case of Modern History, the departure of much of the discipline’s senior leadership over the course of recent years and the
resulting concentration of academics at Level B poses significant challenges especially in connection with research leadership. Yet Modern History also has a strong sense of its strengths and priorities, and a culture of systematic planning which is likely to ease the process of managing academic succession.

Nonetheless, this robust sense of direction might also give rise to differences of opinion and perspective between the discipline area on the one hand, and departmental, faculty and university leadership on the other. The priority to be accorded to Big History is one area where there is something other than unanimity within Modern History. It is not only that Big History is growing in its influence; it is also a highly popular area among students at Macquarie who are voting with their feet. The significance of this field as an asset to the Department and University seems to this panel beyond doubt, and it must figure in planning about future staff profiles. The present staffing profile in MH cannot sustain Big History as its local and global influence expands.

There have also, in the past, been strategic appointments and fellowship conversions made from outside the Department that have resulted in changes in the staffing profile of MH that have cut across the area’s own sense of its needs and priorities in terms of student profiles. Again, these decisions might have reflected Faculty or University research priorities that were not understood or accepted at the discipline or departmental level. All the same, the result was a perception among some academic staff of a lack of alignment between staff and student profiles, and a sense that the planning for their own discipline has been taken from their hands.

PIR is rather differently placed to MH in some respects, with three professors and three associate professors, but almost all of its other staff are at Level B. It faces the challenges of succession planning as many senior staff approach retirement. PIR also has a less developed sense than MH of its priorities in teaching and research. It is imperative that it works to define these priorities in advance of having to consider making a business case for appointments as staff retire or leave. A good example is the field of Middle East politics, where Dr Jumana Bayeh, who is on a two-year fixed-term position as an Early Career Fellow, teaches courses at 200-level, 300-level and in the MIR. The discipline will need to decide what level of priority it will accord Middle Eastern Politics in shaping its staffing profile. It faces a similar dilemma with respect to the postgraduate teaching of public policy.

This priority-setting with respect to activities and accompanying staff profile will occur against a background of declining student enrolments (in PIR) and a declining share of Faculty load (in the case of both PIR and MH). As such, making a successful business case for new appointments even in instances where key staff have
departed and particular areas have been identified as areas for investment, may well be difficult in the immediate future. In this environment, MH and PIR might find that their respective goals might be better served with one or more joint appointments. Such an appointee could teach units into both majors, or could devise units that would be fit for cross-listing (Or they could do a mixture of each.)

**Recommendation 24:** The Department should consider joint academic appointments in agreed areas. The most likely of these, in the near future, are in American and Asian Studies.

The difficult financial circumstances of the Department created in part by the loss of revenue associated with a declining share of Faculty student load means that developing the careers of existing staff will be of the utmost importance for the future of the Department. Unless the Level B academics in each discipline achieve across the key areas of academic activity – and especially research – and are guided in preparing themselves for promotion, the role for an incoming Head of Department will be mainly to manage decline. But in view of the talent in both disciplines there is no reason why this should be the case. What will be required, however, is more systematic mentoring, more active academic leadership from senior staff, and a vision of the whole Department’s future from the leadership group that we have recommended a new Head should form as an early priority.

The Performance, Development and Review (PDR) process needs to be made consistent across the Department, and practised in the context of mentoring and career development. At present, PDR is dispersed in the case of MH, and centralised for PIR; that is to say, in the case of MH, reviews are conducted by several staff and in PIR, all are carried out by the Head of Department. The review panel does not have a firm view on whether one approach or the other should be used, although it is arguable that a more dispersed system in PIR along the lines of Modern History’s would better facilitate much-needed mentoring relationships.

**Recommendation 25:** That every academic in the Department below Level D should be allocated to a mentor who will be a suitable person to guide their career development in terms of research, learning and teaching and service. That consideration be given to how the the Performance, Development and Review (PDR) process can be better used within the Department in this context.
6.6 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In order to assess community engagement, the panel interviewed the current President of the History Teachers’ Association of NSW, Bernie Howitt, and Tracy Sullivan, the Director of the Australian History Museum. Professor Holmes and Associate Professor Bongiorno visited the Australian History Museum on the morning of 18 September. The chair, unconnected with his obligations to this committee, participated in the seminar Presenting the Past: A Symposium on History and the Media on 10-11 September 2013.

**Commendation 10**: The community engagement by members of the Department is exemplary.

The panel heard from the president of the History Teachers’ Association of NSW of the value which teachers attach to the activities Modern History has organised to support them over many years. Professor Christian’s Big History initiative is also beginning to make an impact and had greatly strengthened an already impressive record of outreach to schools on the past of MH. Members of the Department are prominent in public debate and media discussion. Associate Professor Michelle Arrow’s Hindsight radio documentary on the Royal Commission on Human Relationships, far from being a casual media appearance, was a major exercise in knowledge transfer involving a vast investment of time and energy and a high level of skill in media communication. Professor Murray Goot is a leading commentator on Australian politics.

The Australian History Museum under the directorship of Tracy Sullivan is highly-valued by schools and, in the context of the Australian university system, unique in its significance and role. It is also a valuable resource for the teaching of Australian history at Macquarie but is little used in the teaching of Australian politics.

**Recommendation 26**: That the Department continue to support the Australian History Museum and that consideration be given to how the value of the museum could be increased in the teaching of Australian politics. Such consideration might figure as part of the process of curriculum renewal in PIR.

Members of the Department are also busy in their professional networks as board members of refereed journals, members of professional associations, judges for book prizes and much else. They are invited to give keynote lectures.
As mentioned earlier in this report, members of Modern History have been more active in the historical profession’s broader processes of curriculum development. Similar opportunities are available in Political Science, and participation of this kind would be valuable in the context of curriculum renewal at Macquarie.

**Recommendation 27**: That consideration be given to how the political scientists at Macquarie might be represented in discussion within the Australian Political Studies Association, and more generally in their profession, concerning learning and teaching in their discipline.

### 6.7 FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Department of Modern History, Politics and International Relations, like all other academic departments in Australia, is facing the problem of planning a future for itself in an environment that is neither benign nor stable. The University has a new Vice-Chancellor; the country has a new government. The Department will soon have a new Head.

Shifting policies and priorities are inevitable, and they will demand creative responses from those whose intention it is to flourish, or at least to survive. The review panel has sought to identify some of the ways in which governance, leadership and management of the Department could be improved in order that it might respond effectively to the new challenges that such change will bring.

This is a particularly difficult area. MHPIR is a young department in its current form, and the current Head, Associate Professor Hawker, is to be commended for his not inconsiderable achievement in helping to build up a collegial, civil environment for academic labour. Yet it has appeared to the panel that it functions in many respects like two departments. The panel members did not set out with any particular assumptions about whether or not such a separation was in itself a problem. All of its members share the basic view which we understand prevails in the department: that disciplines exist in part because they make sense as a way of apprehending reality. There are good reasons why they should be kept strong even in the context of a department that incorporates more than one of them. The development of ‘relevant disciplinary knowledge’ figures in the Macquarie Academic Plan as central to the University’s mission.

Yet after examining a large body of data and hearing much testimony, we are convinced that much more needs to be done to create a single department animated by some agreed goals. The issue of whether it would be better if the two discipline areas went their separate ways into two departments was not considered in detail
by the committee, although the topic did sometimes come up in our discussions with members of the Department and Faculty. We were, however, impressed by the member of Modern History who, when asked what would be missing if the Department were in fact dissolved, replied that it would be the potential for what the Department could have been.

Still, if the two discipline areas are to have a future together in a single Department, we feel that much more needs to be done to create a shared identity, including a sense of investment in the performance of the other. This is not about breaking down disciplines, which must remain strong and coherent. It is rather about creating structures and a culture in which members of a single department have a shared sense of academic community alongside their disciplinary identities. We have assumed that it is possible to belong to more than one community at the same time and in the case of MHPIR, we consider that the interface between the disciplines needs considerable attention.

The Department faces some immediate and pressing problems, the most urgent of which is to address the downward enrolment trend. While improved research performance might to some extent act as a buffer against decline in a context where the university is attaching more dollars to research output, student enrolments are overwhelmingly significant as a source of income. If present trends continue, staff numbers will inevitably shrink. This is why we have made a strong case for continuing curriculum renewal in the case of Modern History, a significant boost of activity in this field for Politics and International Relations, and Department-wide consideration of ways the disciplines might work together – such as through joint appointments – for their mutual benefit.

Similarly, the panel has suggested a number of ways in which research performance might be improved across the board, so as to develop the ‘pervasive research culture’ that figures in University-level strategic planning. We are not advocating that everyone sink their individuality and join a research team, but have suggested a more collaborative and strategic approach to the research effort. Again, without seeking to force the two disciplines into each others’ arms, we see some scope for cooperation between them.

There is perhaps no area in which the uncertainties of the present are more apparent than in postgraduate research recruitment and training, a field in which Macquarie has embarked on a course of sector-leadership via the Master of Research. If this experiment works, there will be opportunities for MHPIR at Macquarie to attract able students and guide them through a long apprenticeship as
researchers. This process, while not without its dangers and costs, could have very positive effects on the research culture of the Department.

Meanwhile, the Department faces the challenge of succession planning over the next few years. The leaders of MHPIR in 5-15 years’ time will be mainly the academics in their 30s and 40s currently at Level B, C and D. They need to be mentored not only with respect to their research (on which the prospects of promotion and wider professional recognition will so largely depend) but also into successful academic administration and leadership. The Department’s future rests largely with this important and promising group of scholars.

Modern History, Politics and International Relations at Macquarie have all made a distinguished contribution to scholarship and public life in Australia over many decades. There is much in the current operations of the Department of which it can be proud: inspiring teaching, outstanding research, first-class supervision and fine community outreach and professional service. This review has endeavoured to suggest some ways in which Modern History, Politics and International Relations can continue to do even better, what it has long done so very well.