



University of
**Southern
Queensland**

NAVIGATING RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT: A GROUNDED THEORY EXPLORATION OF AUSTRALIAN LAW ACADEMICS' STRATEGIES AND EXPERIENCES

A thesis submitted by

Ilana Bolingford

LLB, BJourn

For the award of

Doctor of Philosophy

2023

ABSTRACT

In the dynamic landscape of Australian academia, research in universities has evolved from a purely academic focus to a socially engaged pursuit shaped by government funding imperatives. Law academics now navigate a delicate balance between traditional responsibilities and research engagement, often without formal recognition or integration into their substantial workloads. Using a constructivist grounded theory (CGT) methodology and insights from 14 Australian law academics, this thesis explores the complexities of research engagement and impact in Australian universities. The resulting grounded theory unravels the interplay between academic culture, government policies, and the experiences of law academics, illustrating how these factors shape their encounters in the academic and institutional environment. The prevailing culture in law schools, university dynamics, and government policies significantly influence the opportunities and barriers faced by academics. Common barriers include time constraints and workload-related impediments, limiting their ability to fully participate in research engagement and impact activities. Recognition as experts, within and beyond academia, is crucial, driven by contributions to teaching and research. Amidst these challenges, innovative strategies emerge as academics navigate multifaceted obstacles, making tangible impacts through contributing to societal change such as policy submissions and research-led teaching practices. Establishing relationships with stakeholders, strategic planning, and effective communication are indispensable tools as academics grapple with perceived limitations in controlling research impact achievement. The study provides a unique perspective on research engagement and impact in Australian higher education, offering valuable insights into the interplay between academic culture, government policies, and academic experiences. These findings can inform best practices in law schools and similar disciplines, contributing to ongoing discussions on the role of academic research in fostering societal change.

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS

I, Ilana Bolingford, declare that the PhD thesis entitled *Navigating Research Engagement and Impact: A Grounded Theory Exploration of Australian Law Academics' Strategies and Experiences* is not more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references, and footnotes. The thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.



Date: 18/12/2023

Endorsed by:

Professor Helen Partridge
Principal Supervisor

Dr Kate Davis
Associate Supervisor

Prof Kieran Tranter
External Supervisor

Student's and supervisors' signatures of endorsement are held at the university.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all those who have contributed to the completion of this thesis. This journey has been very long and challenging and I could not have reached this milestone without the support, guidance and inspiration of many remarkable individuals.

First and foremost, I am profoundly thankful to my supervisors, Professor Helen Partridge, Dr Kate Davis and Professor Kieran Tranter, whose unwavering support, expertise, and dedication have been instrumental in shaping this thesis. Your mentorship has not only enriched my academic experience but helped me to believe in myself and that I was capable of completing this thesis.

I also extend my thanks to my confirmation of candidature panel members and to my former associate supervisor Dr Tamara Heck for their invaluable feedback early on in my journey. Your suggestions helped shape this thesis.

I am deeply thankful to my family: to my Mum for always encouraging me to pursue my academic dreams, to my cats, Bella, Maggie, and Violet, for their love and warmth through long days and nights of study, and most especially to my partner, Mungo, for his unwavering belief in my abilities and endless support. Your love and encouragement have been my anchor during the tumultuous waters of academia. All the extra duties you have taken on in the past few years has been instrumental in this thesis being completed. Thank you to my Mum and Mungo for encouraging me to complete this thesis even when I no longer believed I could.

I also extend my most sincere gratitude to my current and former managers, each of whom played a pivotal role in supporting and believing in my ability to complete this thesis. To Maxine Brown, Professor Belinda Carpenter, Dr Leith Hayes, Distinguished Professor Peter Corke and Professor Michael Milford, your guidance, understanding, and flexibility provided me with the necessary work–life balance to pursue this academic journey. Your mentorship and the opportunities you provided have been integral to the completion of this thesis. I am enormously thankful for this.

Lastly, I express my heartfelt thanks to all the participants and contributors who willingly offered their time, insights, and expertise. Your willingness to engage in this research has been indispensable.

In conclusion, this thesis represents the culmination of years of dedication, collaboration, and hard work. It is a testament to the collective effort of many, and I am sincerely grateful to all those who have played a part, however big or small, along this journey.

Editing acknowledgement

Thank you to Susan Jarvis for her professional editing services for this thesis.

This research has been supported by the Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
CERTIFICATION OF THESIS	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
ABBREVIATIONS	xi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background	1
1.3 The research problem	4
1.4 Methodology and research design.....	5
1.5 Key findings.....	6
1.6 Key contributions.....	7
1.6.1. Contribution to knowledge	7
1.6.2. Contribution to academic practices.....	8
1.7 Key concepts and terms	8
1.7.1. Research engagement and impact.....	8
1.7.2. Academic research impact	9
1.7.3. Research active law academic	10
1.7.4 Research quality	10
1.8 Overview of thesis	11
1.9 Conclusion	11
CHAPTER 2: PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW.....	13
2.1 Introduction	13
2.2 The purpose of the literature review in grounded theory	14
2.3 Academic culture.....	15
2.4 Academic engagement practices in the social sciences	17
2.5 Academic perceptions of research impact in the social sciences.....	21
2.6 Conclusion	29
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	30
3.1 Introduction	30
3.2 Research paradigm.....	30
3.3 Grounded theory	32
3.3.1 Origins and evolution of GT.....	33

3.3.2 Key characteristics of GT	36
3.3.3 Constructivism vs constructionism	38
3.3.4 Rationale for using CGT	39
3.4 Research design	40
3.4.1 The studies	40
3.4.2 The participants	43
3.4.3 Recruitment.....	43
3.4.4 Sampling	44
3.5 Data collection	46
3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews in CGT	47
3.6 Data analysis	51
3.6.1 Using software for qualitative analysis.....	51
3.6.2 Coding	53
3.6.3 Memo-writing	58
3.6.4 Theoretical sampling and saturation.....	61
3.7 Research quality	63
3.8 Ethics	64
3.9 Conclusion	65
CHAPTER 4: PARTICIPANTS	66
4.1 Introduction	66
4.2 The participants.....	66
4.3 Conclusion	89
CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS	90
5.1 Introduction	90
5.2 The grounded theory.....	90
5.3 Defining research engagement and impact	93
5.3.1 Describing research engagement and impact	93
5.3.2 Engagement and impact work.....	95
5.3.3 Academic research impact.....	95
5.3.4 Summary	96
5.4 Category 1: Negotiating law school and university culture	96
5.4.1 Dealing with bureaucratic processes and university expectations	97
5.4.2 Being managed.....	101
5.4.3 Disincentivising and discouraging non-academic work.....	103
5.4.4 Feeling like an outsider	105
5.4.5 Applying for grants and funding.....	108

5.4.6 Summary	110
5.5 Category 2: Prioritising time	111
5.5.1 Prioritising valued work	111
5.5.2 Recognising research engagement and impact in workload	116
5.5.3 Balancing workload	118
5.5.4 Planning work	120
5.5.5 Summary	122
5.6 Category 3: Being an expert.....	123
5.6.1 Being known	123
5.6.2 Making connections	134
5.6.3 Being a member of groups	137
5.6.4 Having insider knowledge	138
5.6.5 Summary	140
5.7 Category 4: Contributing to change	140
5.7.1 Being part of the change	141
5.7.2 Making submissions.....	143
5.7.3 Shaping how things are done	146
5.7.4 Academic change.....	148
5.7.5 Summary	150
5.8 Category 5: Planning for impact	150
5.8.1 Planning research engagement and impact	151
5.8.2 Feeling powerless in achieving impact	153
5.8.3 Depending on others for impact	157
5.8.4 Being outside the impact loop	159
5.8.5 Summary	161
5.9 Category 6: Engaging and translating	162
5.9.1 Translating for non-expert audiences	163
5.9.2 Working with journalists.....	165
5.9.3 Translating through talks and training.....	169
5.9.4 Engaging using social media and open access	173
5.9.5 Summary	177
5.10 Category 7: Cultivating impact through teaching and learning	177
5.10.1 Teaching as impact	178
5.10.2 Translating knowledge through teaching	182
5.10.3 Mentoring.....	184
5.10.4 Continuing to learn	186
5.10.5 Summary.....	190

5.11 Relationships between the categories	190
5.12 Conclusion	196
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	197
6.1 Introduction	197
6.2 A grounded theory of law academics' experiences of research engagement and impact.....	197
6.3 Revisiting the literature.....	200
6.4 Contribution to knowledge.....	206
6.4.1 Categories of experience	207
6.5 Contribution to academic practices.....	215
6.5.1 Informing academics training and development	215
6.5.2 Informing academics' understanding of research engagement and impact	216
6.5.3 Informing law school practices and processes	217
6.6 Limitations of the study.....	219
6.7 Future directions	220
6.7.1 Building on the findings of this study	220
6.7.2 Investigating lived experiences of research engagement and impact in other Australian academic disciplines	221
6.7.3 Investigating the gendered aspects of workload and implications for research engagement and impact	221
6.7.4 Expanding on barriers to research engagement and impact: workload, institutional culture, and academic motivation	222
6.8 Conclusion	223
REFERENCES.....	225
APPENDIX A.....	241
APPENDIX B.....	242
APPENDIX C	247
Pilot study questions	247
Main study questions	247
Theoretical sampling questions.....	248
APPENDIX D	250

LIST OF TABLES

1	The participants	45
2	The seven categories of experience	92
3	Relationship between the categories	191

LIST OF FIGURES

1	Screenshot of NVivo transcript codes.....	52
2	Screenshot of codebook.....	53
3	Coding with gerunds.....	54
4	Screenshot of code group.....	56
5	Code groups.....	57
6	Screenshot of <i>Being an expert</i> memo.....	59
7	Screenshot of note memo example	60
8	Screenshot of memo-tracking.....	61
9	Theoretical sampling.....	62

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Expanded form
ARC	Australian Research Council
ECR	Early Career Researchers
ERA	Excellence in Research for Australia
EI	Engagement and Impact Assessment (2018) Australia
HASS	Humanities and Social Sciences
HERDC	Higher Education Research Data Collection
MCR	Mid-Career Researchers
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
Practitioners	Lawyers
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
REF	Research Excellence Framework (UK)
STEMM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine
The profession	The legal profession including judges and lawyers

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Over the last two decades, managerial expectations and policy frameworks have changed the way Australian law academics are expected to do research. The focus of research has moved from being purely academic and exploratory to requiring academics to engage with people beyond academia. Contributing to society was seen as the premise for this push, particularly where funding had been received from Australian government funding bodies, garnering an expectation to provide societal results for taxpayers. These societal results, or “impact” from research is now the norm, with funders often requiring researchers to state how their research will achieve research impact in society.

This thesis and resulting grounded theory stems from 14 participants’ experiences of research engagement and impact as Australian law academics. It explores the barriers to and opportunities for research engagement and impact within an Australian university landscape and contributes to the sparse literature in this space and to academic practices in Australian law schools.

In this chapter, I provide a background to the study, including how higher education policies and research assessment exercises have informed university processes and policies that have influenced academics’ experiences of research engagement and impact. I then discuss the research problem, methodology and research design, the key findings, the contribution of the study, key concepts and terms used throughout and finally provide an overview of the thesis chapters.

1.2 Background

As a practice-led discipline, law is different from other non-practice-led disciplines when it comes to research. This is due to a strong textbook culture, which has been influenced by the need to produce jurisdictional-based textbooks and handbooks for law students and practitioners (Svantesson et al., 2014). There have been suggestions from some legal academics that higher education research assessment practices such as the Australian Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC – now disbanded) and the Excellence for Research Australia (ERA – now discontinued) drove a ‘journal rankings’ culture (Svantesson et al.,

2014), which diverted away from what they suggested was the imperative of legal scholarship – educating law students and informing practitioners and the judiciary as to the evolution of the law. Svantesson et al. (2014) argue that ‘The peak scholarly achievement in law is the writing of the comprehensive legal text, which identifies and develops themes in the law’ (p. 85). This sentiment is echoed in the writings of Sugarman (1986), who explored the link between legal scholarship, legal education and training of the legal profession. This textbook culture often stemmed from legal educators being required to provide texts to law students for their legal training and examinations. As law students were viewed as the future of the legal profession, it was necessary to write textbooks to inform and educate them.

It is also interesting to note how the legal profession, policy-makers and the judiciary (as stakeholders) utilise legal text and research journal articles. A study by Tranter and Meyer (2015) found that the Queensland Law Reform Commission rarely cited academic journal articles in their reports and that when they did, it was ‘for a single specific point, be it a statement of the law, an empirical observation or an argument’ (p. 70). Another study by Smyth (2009b) revealed that approximately 75% of citations to secondary sources cited in judicial decisions were to textbooks. This further elucidates why books, and particularly textbooks, are prominent outputs in the discipline of law as opposed to other disciplines that may be more focused on journal articles.

Bowrey (2012) argues that the humanities disciplines in general published more books than science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM) disciplines, which she believes resulted in research evaluation bias under the former-HERDC research publications data collection assessment. In this assessment, books were awarded five points, regardless of the number of chapters, without considering the substantial time that went into writing them. Bowrey said the award of points arguably reflected a disciplinary bias that benefited these disciplines, particularly those that published more journal articles (p. 21).

Research assessment in Australia began as early as the Howard Government. As Bolingford (2017) notes, the Howard Government introduced changes to research funding and assessment measures through their white paper *Knowledge and Innovation: A policy statement on research and research training* (Kemp, 1999). The aim of this white paper was to ‘encourage and reward diversity of research’ and highlighted the need for university research to be better aligned with

societal needs (Bolingford, 2017, p. 1). Following on from this, the Rudd Government introduced the Research Quality Framework (RQF) in 2006 prior to the long-standing Excellence for Research Australia (ERA). The RQF was lightly based on the UK's Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and considered the impact measures of research (Shewan & Coats, 2006). The main premise of this agenda was a push to focus on quality of research rather than quantity (Bolingford, 2017). Although the RQF was abandoned in 2007, the drive for quality research continued to play a role in the Australian higher education space.

Other assessment measures which were discontinued include the HERDC assessment of publications (which was part of ERA), that was disbanded by the government in 2016, although it continues today as a data-collection tool used to inform the way annual research block grant funding is allocated to universities. The Excellence for Research Australia (ERA), which ran from 2010 until 2018, evaluated the quality of research produced by Australian universities. Indicators of research quality included research outputs, research income, esteem measures and applied measures (such as patents, registered designs and research commercialisation income) (Australian Research Council, 2015; Bolingford, 2017). However, unlike the United Kingdom's Research Excellence Framework (REF), ERA did not assess the societal impacts of research. In 2015, Ian Watt was called upon to review the funding policies (Watt, 2015). As Bolingford (2017, p. 3) notes, the purpose of Watt's review (the 'Report') was to 'identify opportunities for collaboration between industry and higher education providers (HEPs) and to conduct a thorough reform of research policy and funding arrangements'. One recommendation from the Report included implementing an impact and engagement framework, not dissimilar to the REF.

Following recommendations from the Report, in 2016 the Australian Government began taking steps towards focusing on the societal impacts of government-funded research. These changes, under an engagement and impact framework, had the potential to significantly affect the law discipline, as the socio-economic impacts of legal research were not always easily identifiable and could take decades to successfully implement (Peruginelli, 2015). In 2018, the Australian Government via the Australian Research Council (ARC) ran its first Engagement and Impact Assessment (EI) alongside the ERA. In August 2022, the ERA and EI were discontinued by the ARC following an ARC review. Critics of the ERA and EI suggested that the reference period of research to application often took a long time,

which was not taken into account in the EI's narrow reference window (Sheil et al., 2023). The report by Sheil, Dodds and Hutchinson also noted that 'There are also concerns about the rigour of EI case studies, which also risk privileging style and particular kinds of research outcomes, especially were they to be linked to government funding' (Sheil et al., 2023, p. 57). These particular discipline-specific biases had the potential to further disadvantage some disciplines whose research did not have an immediate consequence on society. As noted earlier, law as a discipline is more textbook and practitioner focused, with several legal impacts on policy and legislation, taking many years to realise (Bowrey, 2016; Svantesson et al., 2014). To date, no further research assessment practices have taken their place, however research engagement and impact measures still remain somewhat embedded in policy frameworks and within the assessment of grant application (NHMRC, 2024).

1.3 The research problem

This thesis examines how law academics in Australia experience research engagement and impact. The thesis takes a broad approach to the term 'research impact' to discover how the participants experienced any form of what they deemed to be research impact, including both internal to universities and external to them. This broad stance is in keeping with a grounded theory approach as constructivist grounded theorists Birks and Mills (2015, p. 21) recommend adopting a broad approach to avoid 'locking yourself into a specific study'.

The aim of this study was to investigate how law academics in Australian law schools experienced and understood research engagement and impact. This study was designed around the participants' experiences, allowing them to define research engagement and impact through their lived experiences. While the ARC definitions of research engagement and impact are important for framing these experiences, this study focuses on the participant's personal perceptions and understandings over the ARC's definitions of 'research engagement and impact'.

The thesis also contributes to further discussions in higher education policy and research assessment practices and produces data that may benefit law schools in better understanding how their academics experience research engagement and impact. Bowrey (2012, p. 8) notes the importance of disciplinary discussions around

performance, stating that ‘a lack of knowledge and disciplinary discussion ... contributes to arbitrary and unfair assessments [in law]. It also contributes to considerable anxieties within the discipline as there is little information to inform institutions and researchers about how they can perform better’

This thesis aims to address some of these concerns by investigating how actors within this ecosystem (in this case, law academics in Australian universities) were experiencing research engagement and impact. The literature in the area of research engagement and impact focuses mainly on STEMM discipline experiences and understandings of engagement and impact, with a more recent move towards the experiences of the humanities and social science (HASS) disciplines (Bastow et al., 2014; Haddow & Genoni, 2009).

This research also generated insights into how law school culture, research assessment policies and university level policies produced barriers for research engagement and impact. Finally, this thesis fills this knowledge gap by providing an original contribution on experiences of Australian law academics in relation to research impact and engagement. At present there are no other studies specifically investigating how Australian law academics experience this phenomenon. This study responds to the question: *How do Australian law academics experience research engagement and research impact?*

1.4 Methodology and research design

This study adopted a qualitative approach to inquiry, and employed constructivist grounded theory (CGT) methodology, acknowledging that realities are socially constructed and that people ‘construct the realities in which they participate’ (Lauridsen & Higginbottom, 2014). Charmaz (2006a) suggests that these constructions also impact the researcher, who cannot separate themselves from the research or be objective about that data. This orientation positions Charmaz in contrast to the Glaserian approach to grounded theory (GT) methodology, which entails that the researcher must obtain an objective stance and let the data emerge naturally without forcing it (Glaser, 2001).

Grounded theory was first proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in their seminal book, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. This new qualitative approach to inquiry aimed to legitimise qualitative

research in its own right (Charmaz, 1996). The GT methodology enabled the researcher to discover theories from the data itself suggesting that data already exist. This approach or philosophical worldview is akin to positivist assumptions about reality in that data are already in the world ready to be discovered by the researcher. In contrast, the CGT methodology constructs data from multiple realities that are 'mutually constructed by the researcher and the researched' (Lauridsen & Higginbottom, 2014, p. 11), normally through interviews and other forms of qualitative data collection. Although the paradigmatic (positivist vs constructivist) and theoretical approaches between the original GT and CGT may be different, the process of analysis is similar, with both using a 'cyclical method of data collection, coding, categorisation and theoretical sampling to abstract a theory that responds to [the] research question' (Lauridsen & Higginbottom, 2014, p. 11).

CGT was selected for several reasons. First, CGT is an appropriate method to be used for studies that aim to give participants a voice (Breckenridge, 2012). When this study began, law academics did not have a voice in this specific area of study. This study therefore aimed to provide them with the opportunity to have a voice in the growing literature surrounding academic experiences of research engagement and impact. Second, CGT is also appropriate to use where the aim of a study is to determine how individuals interpret their realities (Suddaby, 2006). This study is based on individual experiences of research engagement and impact, and hence is suited to CGT. Finally, when little is known about a phenomenon, CGT is a suitable method to use, as it functions to explain the phenomenon being studied (Birks & Mills, 2015) and develops an applicable theory to answer the primary GT question: 'What's happening here?' (Glaser, 1978).

Urquhart (2012, p. 7) states that 'when we seek to see what the data indicates rather than shoehorn it into a theory that already exists ... there is more chance of discovering something new'. As this study aimed to discover new data in an emerging and interesting field, CGT was a suitable method to generate this new theory.

1.5 Key findings

The substantive grounded theory of this study examined how Australian law academics experienced the phenomenon of research engagement and impact, from

their own lived perspectives. It did so through seven multifaceted categories of experience. The concise title of the study, *Navigating Research Engagement and Impact*, reflects how participants navigated their way through government and university policies, workloads and various uncertainties and tensions related to research engagement and impact. This grounded theory study examined how Australian law academics balanced their demanding workloads and engaged with various stakeholders, including policy-makers and other academic disciplines, to maximise their research impact opportunities. They encountered challenges in time management and preventing burnout. Moreover, they contributed to change through policy submissions, curriculum development and leveraging their expertise to engage with stakeholders outside academia. This thesis reveals the complexity of the participants' experiences, underscoring the significance of building long-term relationships with key stakeholders and developing effective communication and translation strategies to achieve research engagement and impact.

The seven categories of experience of this grounded theory are:

(1) negotiating law school and university culture; (2) prioritising time; (3) being an expert' (4) contributing to change; (5) planning for impact; (6) engaging and translating; and (7) cultivating impact through teaching and learning.

This is the first study that has considered the diverse experiences of Australian law academics regarding their work and academic culture through the lens of research engagement and impact.

1.6 Key contributions

This thesis contributes to knowledge and academic practice as outlined below.

1.6.1. Contribution to knowledge

The thesis presents the substantive theory of *Navigating Research Engagement and Impact*, which provides an understanding of how Australian law academics experience research engagement and impact. The study provides three main contributions to knowledge. First, it contributes to recognising how university processes and policies, and university culture, affect academics' experiences of research engagement and impact. Often participants noted how their law schools' cultures and university policies drove or hindered their research impact success.

Second, it contributes to understanding how law academics define and experience research engagement and impact, which is different from, and much more complex than, government and university definitions of research engagement and impact. Third, it contributes to the broad discourse and discussion of research engagement and impact, particularly in an Australian context.

1.6.2. *Contribution to academic practices*

This research also contributes to academic practices by providing recommendations to Australian law schools based on participants' experiences. The study assists law schools to understand how their researchers are experiencing research engagement and impact, potentially leading to better training and development resources for researchers. Additionally, it informs law school practices help to provide sustained opportunities for research engagement and impact. It explains how law academics experienced research engagement and impact and how better processes could be put in place to allow for law academics to access opportunities for research engagement with groups such as the legal profession and policy-makers. Providing learning opportunities for researchers to promote their expertise via avenues such as websites, social media and traditional media is imperative to making connections with stakeholders and building relationships that could lead to better opportunities for research engagement and impact work. Contributions to academic practices are discussed further in Chapter 6.

1.7. Key concepts and terms

This section provides brief definitions of key concepts and terms used in this study, including how they were interpreted by the researcher and the participants within the context of the phenomenon. Please also see Appendix A, which provides a discussion on academic roles in the Australian university context.

1.7.1. *Research engagement and impact*

The ARC definition of research engagement sharply differs from how participants defined and experienced it, revealing a fundamental misalignment. Notably, the ARC (2015b) defines research engagement as:

the interaction between researchers and research organisations and their larger communities/industries for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge, understanding and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity (ARC, 2015b).

The participants' experiences of research engagement are broad and diverse. Participants defined and experienced research engagement as activities undertaken to effect change. This often included activities such as writing submissions to inquiries, providing expert evidence to inquiries, and engaging with the legal profession through talks and training. Engagement was also experienced through dissemination of research through social media, traditional news media, blogs and through open access methods. Not all forms of engagement were for mutually beneficial exchange, however traditional engagement methods such as co-designing processes for certain bodies fell under the ARC definition.

Similarly, the ARC defines impact as:

The demonstrable contribution that research makes to the economy, society, culture, national security, public policy or services, health, the environment, or quality of life, beyond contributions to academia (ARC, 2015b).

Again, the participants' experiences of research impact extended beyond this definition. The participants understood impact to be the 'consequences' of their academic work in the real world. This included changes to legislation, business practices and teaching curricula that affected student outcomes. Often work undertaken within academia was seen as having the most impact. Research-led teaching was an example of this. Having work 'adopted' or 'taken up' by others was viewed by the participants as evidence of their impact 'beyond academia'.

1.7.2. Academic research impact

Academic research impact is another term discussed throughout this thesis. Penfield et al. (2013) define academic or scholarly impact as, 'The intellectual contribution to one's field of study within academia', which is recognised primarily through scholarly publications (Doyle et al., 2015a, p. 77). In this study academic research impact is defined as impact within academic spheres. Several participants

described this as teaching outcomes, peer-reviewed publications and citations, seeing this as more a metric-based form of research impact. Additionally, participants viewed mentoring as a type of non-metric-based impact within academia.

1.7.3. Research active law academic

This term was defined specifically for the purposes of recruitment of participants. In order to be true to phenomenon and to recruit participants who were 'excellent informants' (Charmaz, 2014), terminology was developed that helped recruit the right people. For the purposes of this study, 'research active' means an academic whose workload included a research component. This definition did not include teaching only staff. Additionally, for the purposes of this study, a law academic was defined as a research-active academic who was employed within an Australian law school, in an Australian university. The definition did not include academics who were employed on an honorary, emeritus, or adjunct basis, or who did not possess a law degree.

1.7.4 Research quality

In the Australian context, research quality has traditionally been assessed by the Australian Research Council (ARC) through its Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) assessment. For STEM disciplines, research quality was predominately measured using various citation metrics, reflecting how often the scholarly work was used within the academic community (see for e.g. Melchiorson, 2019). For other disciplines such as the HASS disciplines, research quality was often gauged through peer-reviewed scholarly outputs such as publications in top-tier journals (Australian Research Council, 2018). These indicators of research quality were often seen by the participants of this study as a reflection of their academic standing and scholarly impact. Some participants viewed their contributions to top-tier, high-ranking journals as evidence of their research's influence, regarding this as a form of their research impact.

1.8. Overview of thesis

This chapter has presented the background to the research problem, goals, key terms, and an overview of the study. It has briefly discussed the key findings, contributions, methodology and context of the study.

Chapter 2 is a preliminary literature review chapter that discusses the literature at the time the study began (prior to and including 2017 literature) regarding the experiences and perceptions of academics in relation to engagement and impact. The chapter discusses literature from the social sciences and humanities, as at the time of writing Chapter 2, there was no literature related specifically to law.

Chapter 3 is the methodology chapter. It outlines the intended philosophical framework and methodology used in the study. It provides a background to grounded theory and its evolution through to constructivist grounded theory. The chapter discusses the research design, including data collection, participants, and data analysis procedures, and concludes with discussion of research quality and ethics.

Chapter 4 provides short vignettes of each of the 14 participants and the researcher. It discusses how each individual participant experienced research engagement and impact.

Chapter 5 chapter is concerned with the findings of the study. It outlines the substantive grounded theory and seven categories of experience. It also discusses the participants definitions of research engagement and impact and concludes with a discussion of the relationships between the categories.

Chapter 6 is the discussion and conclusion. It provides a final discussion of the thesis and its contributions to knowledge and academic practices. It also provides an overview of the most recent literature in this area while contrasting and comparing the literature with the findings of this study. Finally, it concludes with suggestions for how further research could build on the study's findings.

1.9. Conclusion

In conclusion, the transformation in the expectations placed upon Australian law academics concerning research engagement and impact has been profound, with a notable shift in recent years towards more outward-facing societal expectations. The motivation for this transformation, driven in part by government

funding bodies, has underscored the need for academics to deliver tangible societal benefits. This thesis emerged from the narratives of 14 Australian law academics, shedding light on their diverse experiences, and the barriers and opportunities they encountered, within the complex landscape of academia. By addressing the gaps in the existing literature, this research contributes significantly to evolving academic practices within Australian law schools. The following chapters will further explore the background, methodology and findings, providing a comprehensive examination of research engagement and impact within this evolving landscape.

CHAPTER 2: PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the literature about how academic researchers perceive and experience research engagement and impact. It focuses specifically on research from the previous 10 years. It is divided into four sections: (1) the purpose of the literature review in grounded theory; (2) an examination of the current academic climate and research culture; (3) academic engagement practices in the social sciences; and (4) academic perceptions of research impact. This literature review focuses on literature relating to the social science and humanities disciplines, as there is currently no empirical research devoted entirely to how law academics experience research dissemination, engagement, and impact. As the law discipline is generally treated within the broader humanities and social science categorisation, it is of relevance to investigate similar disciplines in order to obtain an understanding of how law academics perceive research engagement, dissemination, and impact. As Cherney et al. (2013a, p. 782) notes:

The absence of studies that aim to examine research utilization across the social sciences means that our understanding about disciplinary variations in research translation and uptake is limited. Such studies would help shed light on the potential practices or processes that hinder or facilitate research impact and knowledge transfer.

Research engagement and impact also need defining here to set the scene for this literature review. As discussed in Chapter 1, research engagement was described by the study participants as disseminating their work in targeted, concise formats such as policy submissions. In this context, Watermeyer (2014, p. 362) highlights a crucial distinction, stating that 'impact is neither confused nor conflated with dissemination'. In simpler terms, 'impact is about people, not publications'. Dissemination therefore serves as a tool that can be employed as part of research engagement practices or simply to shape public opinion on a specific topic. When executed effectively, dissemination has the potential to eventually lead to impact. Impact was described by participants as making change. Change was often seen through legislative changes or through stakeholders adopting a process that they

had developed often through co-design. These definitions as defined by the participants are important elements to the discussion around research engagement and impact within this literature review.

Finally, this chapter concludes with a brief discussion of how this thesis will close the knowledge gap.

2.2 The purpose of the literature review in grounded theory

Classic GT recommends delaying the literature review until after the data analysis in order to be objective about and not to ‘force the data’ (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Indeed, Glaser (1998) recommends that grounded theorists should stay uncontaminated by extant ideas and rhetorical jargon.

Inversely, Schwandt (1993) makes an important argument that no qualitative study begins from pure observation and that prior conceptual structure, composed of theory and method, provides the starting point for all observations. Although opposed to preconceived ideas, Glaser and Strauss (1967) do acknowledge that researchers do not approach their study as a *tabula rasa* (or blank slate).

Urquhart (2013, p. 29) suggests that it is more accurate to say, ‘that GT research does not start with a theory to prove or disprove’ and that the literature review be delayed rather than be ignored entirely. Other authors argue that the literature review can be used to enhance theoretical sensitivity, an important element within CGT (Birks & Mills, 2015). Charmaz (2014, p. 310) acknowledges that it is difficult for researchers to enter the field with ‘unexamined preconceptions’ about their topic and research questions. She recommends undertaking a preliminary literature review if required by examiners or funding bodies and to return to complete the literature review once the analysis has been completed and the grounded theory has been developed. In this thesis, additional literature since this preliminary investigation, is discussed in Chapter 6, in relation to the findings of this study.

Therefore, this literature review is essentially a preliminary investigation aimed at better understanding the themes related to this study and to determine a ‘gap’ in current scholarship.

2.3 Academic culture

Blaxter et al. (1998, p. 283) describe the traditional roles of the academic as 'a unity of teaching, research and administration'. Universities were once seen to have two main missions: teaching and academic research (Molas-Gallart & Castro-Martínez, 2007, p. 321). However, changes to higher education funding models and a move away from the 'ivory tower' university to the 'public institution' (Watermeyer, 2015, p. 331) have led to what Molas-Gallart and Castro-Martínez (2007, p. 321) call the 'third mission'. They suggest that the 'third mission' of universities refers to 'all activities concerned with the generation, use, application and exploitation of knowledge and other university capabilities outside academic environments' (Molas-Gallart & Castro-Martínez, 2007, p. 321).

The push towards public engagement and research impact is changing how academics view research and how research funders behave (Chandler, 2014). Watermeyer (2015, p. 331) suggests these changes have an impact on 'academic identity, research practice and career progression'. However, as Watermeyer (2015) discovered in his interviews with 40 UK academics from various higher education institutions, there is a definite gap between public engagement as a pathway to research impact and the universities' acknowledgement and incentivisation of this engagement. Indeed, many academics see public engagement as a 'soft and less easily measured version of 'stakeholder' engagement – the latter synonymous with knowledge translation, exploitation and commercialisation' (Watermeyer, 2015, p. 334).

Although the academics interviewed in Watermeyer's study saw some positive aspects of public engagement, this was not translated throughout their institutions, meaning public engagement activities were not seen as important for potential career progression and reward. The interviewees also noted some workload tensions around engagement activities due to upper management viewing engagement as a 'fringe' activity (Watermeyer, 2015, p. 337). One interviewee said, 'They're [managers] happy for you to do it but make sure you do it on your own time' (Watermeyer, 2015, p. 337). Alternatively, Bengtsson (2013) found that universities with clear visions surrounding knowledge=transfer activities experienced more active knowledge transfer.

These findings suggest that research culture, as well as university culture more broadly, needs to adapt to the changes implemented by research impact agendas. Molas-Gallart and Castro-Martínez (2007, p. 321) suggest the need for new indicators and support for academics in their 'third mission' activities. These may include a broader definition of the service allocation for academic workload to include a specific allocation for public engagement activities. Incentives such as grant seed funding or rewards and acknowledgement for impactful public engagement activities may help to boost academic morale around 'third mission' activities and encourage the continuation of these potential pathways to impact.

In addition to culture and workload, academic freedom emerged as another significant theme within the reviewed literature. Phillips (2010, p. 447) emphasised that universities should ideally serve as 'spaces of adventure', nurturing an environment where 'curiosity-driven research has led to major scientific and cultural advances'. Furthermore, as noted by Doyle and McDonald (2016), concerns have been raised regarding contemporary impact agendas and their potential to encroach upon research autonomy and academic freedom, thereby limiting the pursuit of curiosity-driven research. In a study of IT researchers, Bruce et al. (2004, p. 229) found that researchers see value in projects that 'arouse curiosity' or that contributed to the researcher's career prospects or their own research agendas. They were not necessarily interested in projects that were insignificant to their own professional advancement. They also considered projects that generated funding as significant to their research team (Bruce et al., 2004, p. 230).

Similarly, in a 2012 study of academic perceptions of REF, Murphy and Sage (2015) found that academics within the social sciences were generally concerned with the narrowing of the 'types of research being conducted and the types of publications encouraged' (Murphy & Sage, 2015, p. 33). Interviewees also expressed concerns around interesting long-term projects being turned down and how the REF is 'distasteful, difficult and against the principle of academic freedom' (Murphy & Sage, 2015, p. 33). Overall, interviewees expressed common feelings regarding the REF, mainly that it 'constrains and limits academic research' (Murphy & Sage, 2015, p. 34). Interestingly, changes made to the REF in the 2021 assessment were seen much more positively by UK academics (Manville et al., 2021), particularly the changes to staff selection and outputs and inclusion of interdisciplinary outputs.

Finally, in a study of UK social policy academic's perceptions of impact, Smith and Stewart (2016, p. 13) found that one of the most common themes identified by interviewees concerned the 'credibility–clarity paradox'. Academics felt that close relationships with policy-makers could hinder their credibility and independence when it came to critically analysing policy. One interviewee noted the importance of academics maintaining independence and objectivity (Smith & Stewart, 2016, p. 13). However, interviewees recognised that the impact agenda could place them in a position where they would be forced to make compromises and be 'deliberately vague' in order to appease stakeholders (Smith & Stewart, 2016, p. 13). One-third of the academics interviewed by Smith and Stewart thought the REF 'could inadvertently encourage researchers' to pursue short-term research projects as this research was more likely to produce a 'traceable policy impact' (Smith & Stewart, 2016, p. 14.).

It is clear from the findings within this literature that academics were rightly concerned about the effects the 'impact agenda' could have on their freedom and autonomy as researchers. These apprehensions were similar across different disciplines and reflected a need to clarify matters around timing of impact case studies and employing better strategies to trace long-term impact. These issues were of particular importance to the social sciences, where research outputs were 'cumulative, diffuse and conceptual rather than directly tangible' (Ferguson & Head, 2014, p. 2.).

The current literature suggests that research culture and the experiences of academics shaped how they viewed the research impact agenda. These beliefs, in turn, affected how academics approached research engagement and dissemination practices. The next part of this literature review discusses these behaviours in further detail.

2.4 Academic engagement practices in the social sciences

The previous section explored how the landscape of academia has evolved, driven by changing priorities in higher education. As noted in 2.3 above, traditionally, universities were perceived as strongholds of teaching and academic research, where academics balanced roles in teaching, research and administration (Blaxter et al., 1998, p. 283). However, this has shifted to a model that adopts a more 'public

institution' approach (Watermeyer, 2015, p. 331), which involves universities being involved in activities beyond the realms of academia.

Moreover, the concept of engagement in academic research takes on critical significance in this evolving landscape. As noted by Watermeyer (2014, p. 362), 'engagement is not analogous to impact'. Instead, it plays a vital role as the 'mechanism' that determines who may benefit from, support and partner with academic research. It also governs the dynamics of these relationships and how they can be mutually beneficial.

However, the literature finds that measuring academic engagement practices is difficult to detect empirically (Bölling & Eriksson, 2016). Some scholars have attempted to empirically unpack the types of engagement activities undertaken by academic researchers and discovered that the most common forms of engagement activities include meetings, conferences, consultancies, contracts, joint research and training (Bölling & Eriksson, 2016; D'Este & Patel, 2007). Others have found that academic researchers and industry researchers alike favour publications as the most important outlet of knowledge transfer (Bölling & Eriksson, 2016; Perkmann & Walsh, 2008). Despite this, publications do not always lead to relevant citations, and citations do not always have a societal impact.

According to Bölling and Eriksson (2016, p. 3), academic engagement activities may also include 'personnel mobility, training, collaborative research, contract research, consulting, co-authorship, networking and providing ad hoc advice'. Similarly, Olmos-Peñuela et al. (2014) note that the activities of conducting research and interacting with potential users are distinct processes (Olmos-Peñuela et al., 2014, p. 697) that enable pathways to impact.

However, it has conversely been argued that 'what researchers do to realise impact can neither be easily separated from research nor reduced to activities directly connected to research' (Smith et al., 2011, p. 1376). This argument reinforces the notion that research should be conducted in collaboration with stakeholders. Nutley et al. (2007) affirm that engaging with end users involves several stages, including the development of research questions, design and communication of data, and research implications. Morton (2015, p. 406) concurs with this perspective, stressing the significance of 'networks' and the achievement of research impact as a 'process involving many actors interacting and communicating over time'. Similarly, Olmos-Peñuela et al. (2014) recognise the importance of

incorporating societal goals from the outset of the research project and the consideration of potential non-academic utilisation of the research.

The extent and nature of research influence on policy and practice depend not only on the content of the research findings, but also on the 'way in which these messages are delivered and the environment into which they are delivered' (Armstrong & Alsop, 2010, p. 209). For instance, the literature suggests that written forms of dissemination alone are insufficient to drive research use (Bogenschneider & Corbett, 2011; Cherney et al., 2013a). Indeed, the manner in which knowledge is translated plays a pivotal role in whether or not end-users employ research outcomes. Bogenschneider and Corbett (2011) suggest that effective dissemination involves creating clear and accessible summaries, providing practical guidance in toolkits and guides, and facilitating workshops that help researchers and end users to identify the most suitable format and content for research products. Similarly, Sampson (2014) argues that scholarly writing should be 'accessible, transparent, and easily understood'. Complex and filled with specialised terminology, works that are difficult to understand only add to the perception that universities are out of touch with practical reality (Rowe & Brass, 2008).

Cherney et al. (2013a) note four variables that influence the potential for research to be utilised. These are 'the researchers' and users' contexts, the chosen dissemination activities, and the interactions between academic researchers and potential end users' (Cherney et al., 2013a, p. 784). They also discovered from their sample of education researchers that specific and targeted forms of dissemination are required for academic research to be utilised by non-academic audiences (Cherney et al., 2013a, p. 794). Research uptake will therefore be influenced by discipline-based contextual factors, which shape knowledge translation activities (Cherney et al., 2013a, pp. 781-782). Specific disciplines, such as the education discipline, are generally better at engaging with external audiences due to their 'particular culture of engagement that characterises research in the field of education' (Cherney et al., 2013a, p. 798). The law discipline's academic work is often of significance to members of the judiciary and may have the potential to influence legal decisions, especially those related to policy (Smyth, 2009a). Nevertheless, tracking the utilisation of knowledge within law, similar to other social science disciplines, presents challenges since judges seldom cite secondary sources employed in judicial decisions (Smyth, 2009b, p. 721). These concerns may be

alleviated through enhanced interaction and engagement with stakeholders from the outset.

Dissemination generally encompasses a broad range of methods, including traditional academic publishing approaches. However, it is generally recognised that while academic publishing in scholarly journals and monographs primarily contributes to academic impact and influence, it may not necessarily result in non-academic or societal impact. There are many reasons for this, including stakeholders being unable to access subscription-based journals and expensive monographs as well as the style, and the academic jargon contained in these articles making them inaccessible to stakeholders and the general public.

Chikoore et al. (2016) undertook a study of academics from English universities to discover practices and attitudes towards public engagement. The study found that the more experienced the researcher, the more likely they were to be invited to present their findings to the public. Interestingly, 73% of the interviewees noted 'presented to a professional audience' as their most common public engagement and non-academic dissemination activity. Others noted using traditional media outlets to disseminate findings and use of public relations firms. Social media were also seen as an important tool for disseminating research to the public, with 31% of interviewees using Facebook and Twitter to engage the public. Blogs and podcasts were also used. However, the study found that some academics did not use social media due to generational differences and perceptions of its 'unsuitability' to engage with other academics or the general public (Chikoore et al., 2016, pp. 16-17).

Another study found that only 10% of researchers were interacting online with the public (Davies, 2013). These results suggest that there may be researchers who may not feel confident in using social media as a tool for dissemination and that universities should incorporate further training and skill development in this important area.

Chan et al. (2014) assert that making research findings accessible is essential for encouraging end users to consider and potentially adopt them. The literature suggests that translating research knowledge into policy or practice is 'largely dependent upon effective dissemination practices' (Doyle & McDonald, 2016). Broadbent (2016) states that effective dissemination strategies should be part of the overall research design.

In summary, this section highlights the significance of academic engagement in the evolving landscape, emphasising that engagement is not equivalent to impact

but rather serves as a mechanism that governs relationships and mutual benefits. It also discussed the complexity of academic engagement practices and the diversity of potential pathways to impact.

The concerns raised within the literature about societal engagement influencing long-term research directions, altering research agendas and increasing workload pressures provide a foundation for addressing cultural shifts within academia. The discussion expands beyond academia to explore the importance of research impact in the broader community and industry sectors, emphasising the need for academics to engage effectively with end-users. The intricate process of achieving societal research impact and the role of knowledge translation in this process was also discussed, noting that effective dissemination strategies are crucial for research utilisation. This discussion highlighted the need for accessible, transparent and easily understood communication, while also pointing out the significance of utilising social media and other modern tools for dissemination.

In conclusion, this section points to the importance of understanding the behaviours and perceptions of academics concerning engagement and dissemination practices. It calls for further research to explore these aspects and their impact on achieving research impact. In light of the call for further exploration into the behaviours and perceptions of academics regarding engagement and dissemination practices, the next section discusses the intricate nature of research impact. This concept has often been ambiguous and perplexing to those it seeks to evaluate. The Australian Research Council (ARC) provides a definition of research impact, emphasising its tangible contributions to various facets of society. However, it is essential to recognise that research impact can extend its influence not only beyond academia but also within the academic realm. The next section will examine how academics in the social sciences define and perceive research impact.

2.5 Academic perceptions of research impact in the social sciences

The concept or idea of research impact is ambiguous and confusing. The ARC defines research impact as ‘The demonstrable contribution that research makes to the economy, society, culture, national security, public policy or services, health, the environment, or quality of life, beyond contributions to academia’ (ARC, 2015a). This definition acknowledges research impact ‘beyond academia’, but

research impact can also occur within the academe. Penfield et al. (2013) define academic or scholarly impact as an intellectual contribution to an area of expertise that is primarily recognised through scholarly publications. Doyle and McDonald (2016, p. 77) argue that there remains a need to ‘further explore what constitutes impact’.

The understanding of research impact, including both its definition and the practical application of processes such as knowledge exchange, often remains a challenge for many academics. This complex landscape requires a closer examination, not only to define it but also to explore the various means of exchanging knowledge. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the knowledge exchange process, it is relevant to look into the experiences and perceptions of knowledge producers themselves, as emphasised by Cherney et al. (2013b, p. 253). By understanding how academic producers perceive and engage in knowledge exchange practices, we can gain valuable insights that inform their overall experiences of research impact.

Capturing the essence of non-academic research impacts can prove to be a formidable challenge, primarily due to their indirect and non-linear nature (Meagher et al., 2008). In their study, Meagher et al. (2008, p. 165) propose that focusing on the development of ‘indicators of activity’ might offer a more feasible approach than attempting to assemble ‘robust evidence of research impact’. The existing literature, including works by Nutley et al. (2007), Armstrong and Alsop (2010) and Meagher et al. (2008, p. 165), collectively characterises the impact of social science research in several dimensions:

- *instrumental impact*, which involves influencing policy development, shaping legislation, altering behaviours and impacting the provision of services
- *conceptual impact*, which contributes to our understanding of relevant issues and reframes debates
- *capacity-building impact*, which fosters technical and personal skill development.

These studies aid in understanding and defining research impact, which is often challenging for most academics, who struggle to articulate and define what research impact is.

Furthermore, recent studies conducted in the United Kingdom and Australia have explored the perceptions of research impact held by social science academics (See e.g. Brauer, 2023; Chikoore et al., 2016; Doyle, 2018; Golhasany et al., 2021; Kondakci et al., 2021; McNamara, 2018; Brendan Thomas O'Connell et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2020a; Watermeyer, 2012; Wróblewska, 2021). While similar investigations have taken place in other academic fields, the following section will provide a detailed examination of studies focused specifically on how social science academics perceive research impact, particularly in the context of the United Kingdom's REF2014 assessment.

Murphy and Sage (2015) undertook a study of social science academics to understand their perceptions relating to the United Kingdom's REF2014. Their survey data revealed some interesting findings about how academics perceive research impact evaluation policies and how these perceptions affect the research they choose to undertake as well as their workplace morale and potential for promotion (Murphy & Sage, 2015).

The major themes identified in the study were concerns around academic freedom, how publishing habits were being shaped, the administrative and costly burden of the REF, morale and career progression, and time-management issues (Murphy & Sage, 2015).

With regard to academic freedom, interviewees noted concerns around the types of projects that were deemed 'REF-able' by their departments (Murphy & Sage, 2015, p. 33). Section 2.4 addressed how academics feel about the REF impacting their research autonomy and freedom to investigate things, which they consider 'socially and politically important' (Murphy & Sage, 2015, p. 33).

The study by Murphy and Sage (2015) also interestingly acknowledges the administrative and costly burden of the REF, with academics frustrated about the time and resources spent on impact case studies. One interviewee said they could have 'written, realistically speaking, at least three additional articles or half a book manuscript' (p. 34) in the time it took to prepare the impact case studies. This, in turn, led to some interviewees articulating concerns around time management and workload, leading to less time for 'other academic duties' (Murphy & Sage, 2015, p. 35).

All these issues, as well as 'self-imposed' pressures to publish, led to interviewees noting contention around workplace morale and career progression.

Some academics felt that the REF promoted 'research-prolific' staff who might look more attractive to potential employers. This sentiment has been distinguished in the literature where it was suggested that the 'impact agenda is encouraging an arrogant, self-cresting, boastful and narrow form of sociology which positions big research stars as impact superheroes' (Back, 2015, p. 1).

Overall, Murphy and Sage (2015) study raised a number of apprehensions regarding the 'impact agenda', with REF being seen as having a 'negative impact on academia and the working environment within UK universities' (Murphy & Sage, 2015, p. 35). However, the study did note some positive responses in that REF was valuable for ensuring 'value for money' as well as for 'quality' and 'excellence' (Murphy & Sage, 2015, p. 36).

Murphy and Sage (2015) emphasised concerns related to the 'impact agenda', notably how the REF was perceived as negatively affecting academia and the work environment in UK universities, while acknowledging some positive aspects. Building upon this, Chubb and Watermeyer (2016) conducted interviews with senior academics spanning various disciplines in the United Kingdom and Australia to explore how academics perceived their role within this 'impact agenda'. Their grounded theory approach yielded further insights into the intricate dynamics of academia and research impact.

The authors invited the interviewees to discuss issues pertaining to academic values, accountability, scientific freedom and sense of public duty (Chubb & Watermeyer, 2016). They found that interviewees were 'united' in identifying that academics exaggerate potential impact claims on funding applications to obtain research funding (Chubb & Watermeyer, 2016, p. 5). Interviewees suggested it was 'normal' and 'necessary' to embellish and sensationalise their impact claims, part of academic culture in applying for competitive funding (Chubb & Watermeyer, 2016, p. 6). Academics interviewed suggested that the reasons for the 'untruths', 'gaming' and 'lies' regarding impact were simply a necessity for occupational survival and career progression (Chubb & Watermeyer, 2016, p. 6). Indeed, many felt that the pathways to impact statements and articulating impact in advance were 'unfeasible and futile', with some seeing them as 'dumb' and 'illogical', something thought up by someone who 'doesn't understand research' (Chubb & Watermeyer, 2016, p. 7). Chubb and Watermeyer (2016) hence argue that the academic culture of sensationalism around funding is a potential backlash to the neoliberalism and

academic capital mandate. The authors suggest that the embellishing of impact statements for funding purposes is not necessarily about 'displays of dishonesty', but rather acts of 'creative expression' in answer to the 'absurdities of new public management' (Chubb & Watermeyer, 2016, p. 10). Moreover, Smith and Stewart (2016) discovered similar concerns to those of Chubb and Watermeyer (2016) in that academics, with the imperative of achieving grant funding, would embellish their grant applications to maximise their chances of funding success.

In their case study of 52 academic researchers based in social policy units between 2004 and 2015, they sought to understand academic perceptions and experiences of the 'impact agenda' (Smith & Stewart, 2016, p. 3). Smith and Stewart (2016, p. 3) found that the interviewee perceptions were not 'wholly positive' and reflected 'mixed responses'. The authors found that the most common concerns surrounding the impact agenda included concerns about how 'bad impact will be rewarded', the difficulties surrounding tracing research impact, timing issues and how the impact agenda will constrain academic freedom and autonomy (Smith & Stewart, 2016, p. 5).

In particular, interviewees were concerned with the findings of single studies being widely disseminated and influencing public policy. The paper acknowledged that the REF2014 Assessment Criteria 'all appear to encourage academics to work to promote the impact of single studies or collections of studies within the same group of researchers' (Smith & Stewart, 2016, p. 6). Overall, the interviewees were concerned that academics would feel encouraged to disseminate findings regardless of the value in order to meet the assessment standards. These issues also came out in concerns around research being misinterpreted by the media and hence understood incorrectly by policy-makers, leading to a lack of credibility.

The issue of timing and tracing research impact was also of great concern. Smith and Stewart (2016, p. 11) suggested that 'if the time period is too restrictive, the REF impact system runs the risk of discouraging research which addresses longer-term social and policy concerns'. One interviewee noted that the REF should be 'taken as a long-term investment, rather than a short-term solution to particular policy questions'. Several interviewees articulated that most of the more serious matters facing society are much longer term in nature (Smith & Stewart, 2016, p. 11), hence the need for longer-term research to be undertaken in a heterogeneous society.

In a related study by Given et al. (2015), academics' experiences with non-academic research impact and their perceptions of societal research impact were explored. The research, based on constructivist grounded theory, involved interviews with 10 academics from Australian universities, examining their understanding of research impact, information behaviours related to impact activities and the support needed to foster such engagement. Themes that arose out of the interviews included a 'general understanding that societal and academic impacts are different' (Given et al., 2015, p. 4). However, there was general consensus about the difficulty of measuring impact outside the academy, with one interviewee noting 'the greatest impact you will achieve is when someone takes up [your research]. But then there's no way to link yourself to that when you come to demonstrate that impact formally' (Given et al., 2015, p. 4).

Academics were familiar with the traditional publishing metrics, but were unsure how these would help to measure societal impact. Given et al. (2015) proposed that achieving societal impact necessitates a transition from relying solely on quantitative metrics to adopting a range of assessment methods, including qualitative research approaches. Following the findings of this study, the authors suggested ways forward would be for universities to provide extra administrative support around research engagement and impact activities. Training in communicating and disseminating research findings to non-academic stakeholders was also another area interviewees felt they required support. Participants in the study also highlighted the need for advice around non-academic publishing sources. Given et al. (2015) contended that academics expressed a desire to engage with stakeholders and comprehend research impact, but often harboured reservations. Issues such as disseminating findings to end-users and determining suitable publication outlets for non-academic audiences were key concerns among the interviewees in their study.

Similarly, an Australian study in 2015, conducted by Doyle, McDonald and Cuthill, employed a phenomenological approach to interview researchers within a regional Queensland university to uncover their lived experiences of research impact (Doyle et al. (2015b, p. 78). They undertook qualitative research in a two-stage study via semi-structured interviews and follow-up focus groups to capture 'common themes' and similar understandings of research impact (Doyle et al., 2015b, p. 78).

Common themes that emerged from the study included the belief that research should ‘make a difference’ (Doyle et al., 2015b, p. 78). Researchers understood the distinction between research quality and research impact; however, there was little understanding of the correlation between the two. Doyle et al. (2015b, p. 78) suggest that this supports the literature, which accepts that there is ‘potential for poor quality research achieving high impact’. Interestingly, the study noted above by Smith and Stewart (2016, p. 5) also found that interviewees were apprehensive about the research impact agenda promoting and rewarding ‘bad research’. This evidence suggests that research impact policy needs to address the issue of quality in order to discourage ‘fast results’ and ‘single case studies’ (Smith & Stewart, 2016, p. 6), which in turn leads to credibility issues with policy-makers and other stakeholders. Although the REF sets a threshold for quality where case studies must demonstrate ‘thorough and professional application of appropriate research design, investigation and analysis, plus the potential of providing valuable incremental advances in knowledge’, it is clear that academics are ‘not convinced’ (Smith & Stewart, 2016, p. 6) about the quality threshold.

The study by Doyle et al. (2015b, p. 78) also discovered that the majority of interviewees displayed a good understanding of research impact in terms of ‘academic impact’. Interviewees also expressed confidence in research dissemination achieving research impact. They articulated confidence in traditional academic outputs such as ‘conference papers, presentations and citations’ as being the ‘most tangible evidence of research impact’ (Doyle et al., 2015b, p. 78). The authors found that ‘specific examples of action arising from research [were] more challenging to articulate, with researchers resorting to examples of academic impact as demonstrable evidence of their research impact’ (Doyle et al., 2015b, p. 79). These findings demonstrate that academics are largely confused about the differences between academic impact and influence versus non-academic societal research impact.

Expanding upon the findings from the preceding case studies, the study conducted by Doyle et al. (2015b) sheds light on the intricate nature of research impact. It reveals that academics raised concerns regarding challenges related to resource accessibility, time constraints and accountability, all of which significantly affect the successful implementation of research outcomes. They also emphasised a standard belief within social sciences that impact is not just about ‘tangible’ results,

but also about 'creating awareness of research knowledge' (Doyle et al., 2015b, p. 79). With regard to implementation of research findings, interviewees felt this was 'largely outside the domain of their accountability' (Doyle et al., 2015b, p. 79). These findings suggest that academics may feel 'outside the loop' when it comes to engaging with industry. Indeed, this study – as well as other studies – has highlighted the fact that 'implementation of research findings is dependent upon action by government, community organisations, industry associations, businesses, and other research stakeholders' (Doyle et al., 2015b, p. 79). Herein lies an interesting notion that offers important insight into the lack of engagement with end-users and suggests further studies are needed in this area to bring about cultural change in academia regarding engagement with industry and working with industry from the start to achieve mutual impactful results. Overall, the results of this important study by Doyle et al. (2015b) offer valuable insights into academics' current perceptions and lived experiences of research impact.

This section has discussed the need to examine how academics experienced and perceived knowledge transfer practices, which subsequently informed their experiences of research impact. It highlighted the challenges of capturing non-academic research impacts, with the difficulty arising from their indirect and non-linear nature. Various studies on the impact of social science research were summarised, showing that it could be instrumental, conceptual and capacity building. Several studies in the United Kingdom and Australia explored how social science academics perceived research impact. Murphy and Sage (2015) found concerns regarding academic freedom, administrative burdens and their impact on research autonomy and morale. Chubb and Watermeyer (2016) suggested that academics often exaggerated impact claims for funding purposes, considering it a necessity for career progression. Smith and Stewart (2016) echoed similar concerns. Given et al. (2015) conducted an exploratory study that investigated academics' experiences with non-academic research impact and found that societal and academic impacts were perceived differently. Doyle et al. (2015a) noted that most interviewees had a good understanding of academic impact but struggled to articulate non-academic societal research impact. The studies also highlighted concerns about resource access, time pressures and accountability affecting the implementation of research impact success.

In conclusion, these studies shed light on the complexities of research impact perceptions, encompassing both academic and non-academic dimensions.

2.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has provided a foundation for the subsequent grounded theory study and research question ‘How do Australian law academics experience research engagement and impact?’ by highlighting the critical issues surrounding the impact agenda, research culture and academic dissemination practices within academia. The empirical data presented in this literature review have underlined the multifaceted concerns of academics in relation to research impact. These concerns cover areas such as the lack of adequate rewards and incentives, issues related to workload, preservation of academic freedom and research autonomy, the challenge of balancing short-term and long-term impact, issues of credibility and accountability, a prevailing culture that sometimes struggles to grasp engagement in broader terms and the need for adequate training in communicating research to the general public. These themes have been observed recurrently in the diverse literature discussed in this chapter.

In light of the existing gap in the literature, this study takes a unique approach by investigating whether law academics understand and experience research impact in a manner similar to their counterparts in the broader social science disciplines. While previous studies have explored this issue in the context of various social science disciplines, there has been a clear absence of research dedicated to understanding the perspectives of law academics. Previous literature has illuminated the fact that, while related to the broader humanities and social sciences, law occupies a distinct and often separate realm that requires understanding how law academics experience research engagement and impact.

By shedding light on the unique nuances of research impact in law, this study will contribute significantly to addressing a gap in the existing literature. Furthermore, this research will not only be valuable to law academics, but also broadly to other disciplines that are seeking a better understanding of research impact in HASS.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology that addressed the research question ‘How do Australian law academics experience research engagement and research impact?’

This chapter discusses the justification for using constructivist grounded theory (CGT) and will provide a comprehensive overview of the research design, implementation, and data analysis. First, this chapter will briefly discuss the research paradigm that informed the study. Second, it will introduce constructivist grounded theory as the study’s research method and briefly explain how CGT developed from classic grounded theory (GT). Third, this chapter will present the research design and implementation, which includes a discussion of the participants, data collection and data analysis. Finally, it discusses maintaining research quality in CGT and the research ethics before concluding.

3.2 Research paradigm

The worldview or research paradigm of the researcher determines the overall direction and design of a study. The term ‘paradigm’ may be defined as a ‘loose collection of logically related assumptions, concepts or propositions that orient thinking and research’ (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 2). Put simply, a paradigm is a worldview or how the world is perceived (Annells, 2010). It relates to how the researcher views the world (ontology) and how these views inform what can be known or understood (epistemology) (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Essentially, the paradigm sets the purpose, direction and design of the study, and consequently its contribution to scholarly knowledge.

The paradigm of inquiry and the chosen methodology should harmonise in answering the research question. A constructivist/interpretivist paradigm generally operates by using qualitative methods of inquiry (Bryman, 2008; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006) The interpretivist data collection tools thus include interviews, observations, document review and visual data analysis (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Indeed, the research question itself emerges from the researcher’s perspectives about ‘The nature of reality, the relationship between the

knower and what can be known and how best to discover reality' (Annells, 2010, p. 380). A constructivist/interpretivist paradigm generally rejects objective reality and supports an interpreted construction of reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This aligns with the CGT research methodology, which is constructed between participant and researcher and then interpreted and 'retold' by the researcher. In relation to this, Corbin and Holt (2011, p. 113) state that, 'Data is itself a construction and not a direct reflection of reality...but what is important...is how persons experience and give meaning to those events.' This in turn contributes to the building of a grounded theory that explains 'how and why persons, organizations, communities or nations experience and respond to events, challenges and problematic situations' (Corbin & Holt, 2011, p. 113).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) identify that a constructivist methodology follows the hermeneutical and dialectical process. They state that individual constructions can only be refined via interaction between the investigator and participants (p. 111). They contend that constructions are 'subject to continuous revision', with changes in the data likely to occur when 'relatively different constructions' are discovered via the dialectical process (p. 113). As a researcher who utilises a constructivist/interpretivist approach, I relied greatly upon the 'participant's views of the situation being studied' (Creswell, 2003, p. 8).

A constructivist/interpretivist paradigm informed my choice of research method for this study as I believe that 'meaning is negotiated mutually in the act of interpretation' and not simply 'discovered' (Schwandt, 2000, p. 195). My research embraces the socially contextual, constructed nature of meaning-making through interpreted construction of multiple realities (Schwandt, 1998) or subjective realities. As the objective of this study was to understand law academics' experiences of research engagement and impact, a constructivist/interpretivist worldview aligns with this. CGT is therefore the appropriate method to respond to the research question 'How do Australian law academics experience research engagement and research impact?' as the research question intends to explore human experiences of a particular phenomenon.

3.3 Grounded theory

The research methodology chosen for this study was grounded theory (GT) or, more specifically constructivist grounded theory (CGT), which is a version of the original GT. GT was founded in 1967 by Glaser and Strauss. The methodology came about as an approach to qualitative inquiry, enabling the researcher to generate theories from data. GT developed as an argument against the positivistic methodological approaches of the time, urging researchers to 'develop theory grounded in naturalist data' (Corbin & Holt, 2011, p. 114). The method became popular with social scientists, who were now able to inductively generate theory as opposed to deductively testing hypothesis (Birks & Mills, 2015). GT, it was hoped, would lead to the 'discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 2).

Several versions of GT have been developed from the original version coined by Glaser and Strauss. These include versions by Glaser, Strauss and Corbin and by Charmaz. This study follows Charmaz's version, CGT. Charmaz (2014, p. 1) states that 'grounded theory methods consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories from the data themselves'. She suggests that CGT is an inductive method that invokes iterative strategies for constantly comparing data, which keeps the researcher interacting and involved with the data and emerging analysis.

Charmaz (2008b, p. 398) states that, from the very beginning, grounded theory has offered explicit yet flexible guidelines that encourage innovation. However, she also recognises that some researchers have treated the method as a recipe, which she says 'limits the potential of GT and fosters the production of superficial studies'. Therefore, researchers must be diligent in specifically stating in their data analyses how they undertook grounded theory methods such as constant comparison, memo-writing and coding. This is imperative to ensure a quality grounded theory study that allows for flexibility and innovation but remains true to the methods of CGT practice.

In this study I used constructivist grounded theory as the research method, which informed the design, data collection and analysis of the study. It also informed the quality of the research by adhering to the flexible guidelines and methods as noted above.

The following section of this chapter will discuss the origins and evolution of GT, including a brief overview of the different versions of GT. It will finish with an overview of CGT.

3.3.1 Origins and evolution of GT

As mentioned, prominent grounded theorists included Corbin, Strauss, Glaser and Charmaz. Although all these theorists follow a similar approach, each is slightly different depending on the researcher's philosophy and background. This section briefly discusses how GT developed from its original origins in 1967 to other forms such as Straussian GT and CGT. It also highlights the debates between the various GT theorists and the development of CGT.

GT began with Glaser and Strauss's 1967 book, which addressed the important statement about 'how the discovery of theory from data – systematically obtained and analysed in social research – can be furthered' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 1). The main aim of the book was to 'stimulate other theorists to codify and publish their own methods for generating theory' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 8). Theory generation out of grounded data via constant comparison was the key premise of the original version of GT. Glaser and Strauss's GT method informed a breakaway from the traditional quantitative methods that existed within sociology at the time. Charmaz (2008b, p. 399) says many qualitative researchers at the time relied solely on the 'justificatory ammunition' put forward by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 in defence of qualitative research. She states that Glaser and Strauss 'made qualitative research defensible – even respectable' at a time when quantitative ideologies controlled what counted as research (Charmaz, 2008b, p. 399). However, their method was not without criticism, even from those who were their former students. For example, Charmaz (2008b, p. 399) contends that 'their research reports emphasized generality, not relativity and objectivity, not reflexivity'. The fact that Glaser and Strauss proposed that researchers could conduct GT research without any preconceptions was seen as a failure of the original version by Charmaz, who advocates the importance of bringing preconceptions to the data and analysing them as data (Charmaz, 2014).

GT as a method is fraught, with criticism and debate about different techniques used. Some researchers have emphasised objectivity and theoretical sensitivity, while others have pursued more prescriptive rules and relativity. Often,

the worldviews of the researchers informed their method and stance on what they believed GT should entail. Glaser preferred a more objective and critical realist stance (Birks & Mills, 2015, p. 5), emphasising a strict approach to allowing data to emerge without forcing it. Indeed, his approach adopted a strong stance on adhering precisely to the 'emerging' data and the development of an objective grounded theory. Strauss and Corbin pursued a different direction, following a more traditional pragmatic and symbolic interactionist view of grounded theory, in which they believed that actors were able to control their destinies by the decisions they made in response to their conditions (Stern, 1980, p. 20). Strauss and Corbin moved away from Glaser's concept of emergence to view starting points of analysis through a wider lens (Charmaz, 2008a). They acknowledged that 'other influences, such as personal experiences, professional exigencies and earlier ideas, may spark inquiry' (Charmaz, 2008a, p. 159). Their approach to GT methodology was prescriptive and included further techniques to apply to the data analysis, which were not apparent in Glaser's approach – such as the addition of axial coding – in order to find 'truth' within the data (Hall et al., 2013). Verification of theories was important within the new Straussian version of GT. Charmaz (2006a, p. 7) notes that, 'In short, Strauss brought notions of human agency, emergent processes, social and subjective meanings, problem-solving practices, and the open-ended study of action to grounded theory.' Some of these processes, particularly emergent processes and actions, were later adopted by Charmaz's CGT.

Like Strauss and Corbin's GT, Charmaz's direction followed symbolic interactionist and relativist constructionist paradigms (Charmaz, 2014). She pursued research directions and meanings based on co-construction of the data between the researcher and the participants. This differed significantly from the Glaserian approach to GT, in which patterns of behaviour were more important than individual experiences (Glaser, 2002). Therefore, it can be argued that Glaserian GT aims for 'a conceptual understanding of social behaviour', which differs from the constructivist GT that focuses on interpreting participants' meanings (Breckenridge, 2012, p. 3) through their actions and experiences.

Theoretical sensitivity and preconceptions were another area that formed part of the GT debate. Charmaz (2014, p. 160) contends that theoretical sensitivity is the ability to 'understand and define phenomena in abstract terms and to demonstrate abstract relationships between studied phenomena'. Charmaz emphasised her

disagreement with the statement by Glaser and Strauss that researchers enter the field without any preconceptions. She said Glaser and Strauss assumed that researchers would already have the theoretical sensitivity needed to discern and follow leads from examining their data (Charmaz, 2008a); however, this was not always the case. Indeed, preconceptions formed an important part of the data within the CGT method, which lends itself to rigorous analyses as preconceptions also become part of the data constructed between the observer and the observed. Charmaz states:

Glaser (1978, 1992) assumes that we can gather our data unfettered by bias or biography ... this is not so ... Instead, a constructivist approach recognizes that the categories, concepts, and theoretical level of an analysis emerge from the researcher's interactions within the field and questions about the data. (Charmaz, 2000, p. 522)

A constructivist grounded theory signifies a mutual 'construction' of data between participants and the researcher. It is not a method that stands apart from the research process; instead, it resides within it (Charmaz, 2008a; Clarke, 2005). Charmaz's approach to grounded theory makes the following assumptions:

(1) Reality is multiple, processual, and constructed – but constructed under particular conditions; (2) the research process emerges from interaction; (3) it takes into account the researcher's positionality, as well as that of the research participants; (4) the researcher and the research co-construct the data – data are a product of the research process, not simply observed objects of it. (Charmaz, 2008b, p. 42).

The essential ingredient of co-construction provides a breakaway point for CGT, ensuring that the resulting research product is more than the researcher learns in the field (Charmaz, 2008a). Indeed, 'all become part of the research process and product', including everything that the researcher brings to the study (p. 160). Charmaz (2008a) points out that the researcher's perspectives should not determine their research but will direct the study. She argues that researchers cannot remove themselves from the process but should rather aim to make their influences explicit. Finally, Charmaz (2008b, p. 398 emphasis in original) suggests that 'constructivist grounded theorists attend to the *what* and *how* questions' of the study while

objectivist grounded theorists (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998) 'explicitly aim to answer the *why* questions'.

The debates about GT continued over a long period from the original split of Glaser and Strauss in the 1970s to the development of CGT in the 1990s. GT continues to evolve as a methodology today; however, some of the original techniques are still present in various GT types today, including comparative analyses, constant comparison, theoretical sampling and generating substantive and formal theory. These key characteristics will be discussed further below.

3.3.2 Key characteristics of GT

The prominent GT researchers approached the method through different epistemological and ontological lenses; however, there are shared characteristics across GT. Generally, GT involves theory construction, theoretical sensitivity, constant comparison, coding and theoretical saturation. The central feature of analytic approach to GT is a constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which entails a 'continuous interplay between data collection and analysis' (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 273). Grounded theorists use constant comparison to 'raise the level of abstraction of their developing analyses' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 342).

The key characteristics and common features of GT are:

1. *Theory construction.* Founded theories are generally substantive theories, as they 'address delimited problems in specific substantive areas' (Charmaz, 2006a, p. 8). However, they can also be developed across multiple substantive areas into the 'realm of formal theory' (Charmaz, 2006a, p. 8).
2. *Inductive and abductive research.* GT researchers use inductive and abductive logic in their processes. Inductive processes include collecting and analysing data, which inform the next stage of work (Makri & Neely, 2021). Abductive research is the process of 'considering all possible theoretical explanations for the data, forming hypotheses for each possible explanation, checking them empirically by examining data, and pursuing the most plausible explanation' (Charmaz, 2006a, p. 104). It is a process that is consistent with the constant comparative method of CGT, constantly analysing and checking data with data, while 'testing' hunches (Charmaz, 2006a, p. 104).

3. *Theoretical sensitivity*. Glaser (1978) describes theoretical sensitivity as the researchers 'skill, fatigue, maturity, cycling of motivation, life cycle interest, insights into and ideation from the data'. Charmaz (2014, p. 160) emphasises the importance of theoretical sensitivity in CGT by asserting that, 'Implicit processes become visible. Connections between codes emerge. And your questions about your data grow more precise and penetrating.' Unlike Glaser and Strauss, Charmaz's CGT welcomed preconceived ideas as part of the data and therefore part of the emergent theory (Charmaz, 2014).
4. *Constant comparison method*. Charmaz (2006a) states that a hallmark of CGT is using the constant comparative method, which involves 'making comparisons during each stage of the analysis'. Urquhart (2013) describes the constant comparison method as a process of comparing instances of data in a category with other instances of data within the same category. This technique is used throughout the various versions of GT.
5. *Coding*. Grounded theorists use coding as the fundamental analytic process of theory generation (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 12). CGT proposes two main phases: (1) an initial phase, which involves coding line by line; and (2) a focused/selective phase, where frequent initial codes are used to sort and synthesise the data (Charmaz, 2014). This differs from Strauss's GT, which involves more prescriptive techniques and a third level of coding called axial coding, used to develop dimensions of a category (Charmaz, 2014, p. 113).
6. *Theoretical sampling*. Theoretical sampling is seen across multiple variations of GT, including CGT. It is undertaken in the later stages of the study and is used to develop the emerging concepts and theory (Morse, 2007).
7. *Theoretical saturation*. Charmaz (2014) argues that some grounded theory researchers use GT like a recipe, foreclosing further possibilities from the data. She states that doing so may force data into preconceived frameworks (e.g. Strauss and Corbin's axial code and Glaser's theoretical coding), which in turn 'renders it directive and prescriptive' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 215). Consequently, this leads to illegitimacy of analyses, defeating the credibility of the study and rigorousness of the data.

Charmaz (2014) suggests being open to what is happening in the field and being willing to grapple with it. She suggests going back and recoding earlier data to see whether any new leads can be defined before assuming theoretical saturation has occurred.

CGT also employs several other characteristics, such as reflexivity and memo-writing. Unlike other forms of GT, the literature review is preliminary and is not revisited until the study has completed. As per Charmaz (2006) and (Giles et al., 2013), the secondary literature review, following the data analysis and theory development is woven into the findings of the study. This is done in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

The key GT characteristics will be discussed in further detail in the data analysis section of this chapter, where they will be applied to the design and processes of the study. The following section explains constructivism and constructionism, and how they relate to Charmaz's CGT.

3.3.3 Constructivism vs constructionism

Charmaz adopts both a constructivist and a modern social constructionist approach to her CGT methodology (Charmaz, 2014), which can lead to confusion as constructivism proposes that individuals mentally construct their worlds through their own experiences (Young & Collin, 2004) while social constructionism asserts that knowledge is created through social processes and interaction with society (Young & Collin, 2004). Although constructionism and constructivism are somewhat different, they both adhere to the fact that knowledge is constructed, and that there is no fixed reality.

Charmaz (2014, p. 14) contends that she chose the term 'constructivist' to acknowledge the subjectivity of the researcher and the subsequent involvement of the researcher's construction and interpretation of the data. This position aligns with the positions of other constructivists such as Lev Vygotsky (1962) and Yvonna Lincoln (2013), who support sharing between the participant and researcher, and interpreting understandings within social contexts (Charmaz, 2014, p. 14). The constructivist framework proposes that, 'We are part of the world we study, the data we collect and the analyses we produce' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 17). This fits with Charmaz's method of all data, including the researcher's own preconceptions and knowledge forming part of the overall analyses.

However, there is often confusion between the epistemological perspectives. According to Raskin (2002, p. 2), confusion is caused when the terminology is used inconsistently: 'Terms like constructivism, constructionism, and constructive are employed so idiosyncratically and inconsistently that at times they seem to defy definition.' Indeed, Crotty (1998) suggests that the best way forward is to consider the aims of the study and the research question itself:

It would appear useful then to reserve the term constructivism for epistemological considerations focusing exclusively on the meaning-making activity of the individual mind and to use constructionism where the focus includes the collective generation and transmission of meaning. (Crotty, 1998)

Although this study aims to develop a theory about the experiences of law academics, the emphasis will be on the individual's experience of research engagement and impact, not on the experiences of the collective group, research group or faculty/school in which they work. Therefore, although the definitions 'constructivist' and 'constructionist' may be similar, this study will use the term *constructivism* and *constructivist* to maintain consistency with the goals of the research study and to avoid confusion.

3.3.4 Rationale for using CGT

The GT methodology, specifically CGT, has been selected for several reasons. First, CGT is an appropriate method to use for studies intending to give voice to participants (Breckenridge, 2012). CGT does this through theoretical abstraction; this is different from other qualitative research methods, which may invoke a more 'descriptive' approach (Charmaz, 2014).

Second, CGT is best suited to 'efforts to understand the process by which actors construct meaning out of inter-subjective experience' and when making knowledge claims about how individuals interpret their realities (Suddaby, 2006, p. 634). This study is based solely on the individual's experiences in social settings and is hence suited to CGT.

Third, CGT is an appropriate methodology to use when little is known about the area of study (Birks & Mills, 2015, p. 17). As this is the first study to investigate the research engagement and impact experiences of law academics within

Australian law schools, CGT is a suitable methodology to use, as it will function to explain the phenomenon being studied (Birks & Mills, 2015, p. 16).

Finally, as noted in Chapter 2, similar studies undertaken in social science studies of academic perceptions of research impact have adopted a grounded theory approach (Chubb & Watermeyer, 2016; Given et al., 2015). There have also been GT studies undertaken in similar areas, such as academic perceptions about working offshore (Dobos, 2011) and nursing academics' perceptions and experiences of scholarship and research (Worrall-Carter & Snell, 2003-2004). This suggests an existing body of knowledge of using GT methodology in studies that explore perceptions and experiences of academics in relation to research engagement and impact, and other aspects of academic life.

Overall, CGT is a suitable methodology for exploring the experiences of law academics in relation to research engagement and impact. CGT is appropriate for this study as it concurs with my own worldview that reality is not fixed but rather constructed by individuals through their experiences and interactions in society. The next section will discuss the research design and implementation of the study.

3.4 Research design

This section outlines the practicalities of the research design that was guided by constructivist grounded theory. In this section, I will present the studies undertaken and the participant cohort and detail my recruitment and sampling strategies.

3.4.1 The studies

The study included a total of 14 participants (three participants from the pilot study and 11 participants from the main study). Participants 11–14 were part of the main study theoretical sample, which involved recruiting participants to saturate the developing categories. This section will provide a brief overview of the pilot study and the main study, with details of these studies flowing throughout the data-collection and data-analysis sections that follow.

3.4.1.1 Pilot study

Nunes et al. (2010) suggest that pilot studies can be used early in the study to acquire contextual sensitivity about the phenomenon. Akin to theoretical sensitivity,

the authors claim that this process is imperative to construct tangible theory and make meaning of empirical events and participants' understandings of the concepts. The pilot study is also an important way to test the interview questions, which will ensure that quality data are collected. Following this CGT approach, I conducted a pilot study to test the research questions and interview procedures. For the pilot study, I undertook initial or convenience sampling (Morse, 2007) to start the data collection. This involved selecting participants based on their accessibility (Morse, 2007). I therefore recruited law academics from the law school where I was working as they were the most convenient, and I also recruited a law academic who was visiting at the time of her interview. Recruiting people I worked with and who I could interview in person was important to me for the pilot study so I could test the research instrument and make the required changes before the main study.

The first two participants (Professor Miller and Dr Kirby) were recruited in person, sent the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form (see Appendix A), then followed up with an email to confirm interview times. The third participant, Professor Jane Lambert, was recruited through my professional networks as I was working in a law faculty at the time.

I also used the 'snowballing technique' (Morse, 2007), which required asking former participants to invite their professional networks to participate in the study. A recruitment email was developed with information about the study and the ethics information. Pilot study participants were asked to send this to their networks where possible. I also asked my own professional networks to send to their colleagues.

The research instrument and interview questions (see Appendix B) were first developed for the pilot study. Charmaz (2014) recommends creating open-ended non-judgemental questions, which encourage participants to be more open and may elicit unanticipated statements and stories. She recommends using some initial open-ended questions to set the scene and drive the conversation. Questions such as 'Could you tell me about what happened?' or 'Could you describe the events that led to ...?' are recommended to start with (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 65-66). With these recommendations in mind, the following questions were developed for the pilot study:

- 'Can you tell me about your experiences with research impact and engagement?'

- ‘How do you define research impact?’
- ‘Can you describe research engagement in your own words?’
- ‘What’s your most present problem in relation to research impact and engagement?’
- ‘What, in your experience, has been the most negative aspect of research impact and engagement?’
- ‘Can you tell me about your experiences of translating your research for a non-academic audience?’

These questions assisted in exploring the interview topic and were a good fit with the participants’ experience (Charmaz, 2014, p. 65). In this way, the emergent nature of the interview process shifts control from the interviewer to the participant (Corbin & Morse, 2003). This allowed me to take on the role of ‘interested learner’ and to open spaces for participants to be ‘experts on their lives’ (Corbin & Morse, 2003, p. 73). Questions were used as starting points and often further prompts were used throughout the interview based on how the participant responded to the initial questions. Flexibility was important to ensure that participants could talk openly about their experiences.

I also wrote reflective memos about how the interviews went afterwards, which helped me to prepare for the next interview. I determined that what worked well with the participants was discussing their background as a law academic a little bit before launching straight into the questions. It helped set the scene regarding their experiences as law academics. This background information from the participants was then used in the data analysis and participant vignettes that informed Chapter 4.

Following the conclusion of the pilot study, I found that the main interview question ‘Can you tell me about your experiences with research impact and engagement?’ seemed to work quite well as it enabled the participant to first define what they thought research engagement and impact were and to state their experiences in relation to this. I had originally planned on separating research impact and research engagement into two separate questions, but I am glad I took the advice of my supervisor, who suggested I combine it into one so as to not preconceive the answers from the participants. I did not make any major changes to

the interview research instrument until after my Confirmation of Candidature and before the main study began.

3.4.1.2 Main study

Following the pilot study, I began the main study, where I recruited seven participants to begin with, then another four participants during the theoretical sampling stage. Each stage involved CGT approaches throughout, including sampling purposively (Morse, 2007) and memo-writing and reflecting after each interview (Charmaz, 2014).

The next section will provide an overview of the participants who were recruited throughout the main study. The following section will discuss the recruitment and sampling methods employed using CGT methods.

3.4.2 The participants

The 14 participants were law academics who worked in Australian law schools. They were from various Australian states and universities, ranging from junior/early career (ECR) to professor level. All participants had law degrees and were considered to be research active staff members (no teaching-only academics were recruited). Study participants were selected for convenience and availability (Morse, 2007) as well as for their knowledge and expertise about the phenomenon being studied (Spradley, 1979). Vignettes for each participant are provided in Chapter 4. The following section will discuss the recruitment process, which followed CGT approaches such as recruiting people who could speak expertly to the phenomenon and using recruited participants networks to seek further participants (Morse, 2007).

3.4.3 Recruitment

Recruitment for this study took place in multiple stages – pilot and main. For the main study, a total of seven participants were recruited using the recruitment methods stated above. Participants for the main study were generally purposely selected based on their research profiles and availability, which spoke to their ability to be ‘excellent informants’ (Spradley, 1979). Essentially, they were chosen because they met the criteria of being law academics, with law degrees, who were research active (had research workloads); their online academic staff profiles showcased their

current research publications and grants. Some participants' profiles also showed their research impact through submissions and reports they had written for policy-makers, industry or the legal profession. This spoke to their ability to be experts about their lived experiences of research engagement and impact, as all participants were current researchers.

Finally, for the theoretical sampling stage of the main study a total of four participants were recruited through professional networks and sent the recruitment email and Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form following the same process as above. Following Charmaz's approach to theoretical sampling, which allows for the researcher to 'pursue developing conceptual ideas rather than amassing general information' (Charmaz, 1990, p. 1163), participants were selected based on their experience in areas of the study that were not yet saturated. This process will be discussed more below. A copy of the recruitment email that was emailed to all the study participants can be found in the Appendix A.

3.4.4 Sampling

I followed constructivist grounded theory writers in relation to recruitment of participants and was guided specifically by Charmaz (generally) and Morse's (2007) sampling methods, including convenience sampling, and purposeful sampling. Charmaz further discusses two phases of sampling in CGT, initial sampling and theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2014). I used pseudonyms for each of the participants of the study in line with ethics and ensuring anonymity.

Table 1 shows the participants' details, including which study they were part of and their interview date.

Table 1. The participants

Name	Position	State	University grouping	Study	Interview
Professor Paul Miller	Professor	QLD	None	Pilot, initial phase	February 2017, in person
Dr Hannah Kirby	Senior Lecturer	QLD	None	Pilot, initial phase	March 2017, in person
Professor Jane Lambert	Professor	VIC	GO8	Pilot, initial phase	April 2017, in person
Professor Mohammed Aaiz	Professor	NSW	GO8	Main, initial phase	October 2017, via Skype
Dr Laura Glover	Senior Lecturer	NSW	None	Main, initial phase	October 2017, via Zoom
Professor Sharie Kemp	Professor	TAS	None	Main, initial phase	October 2017, via Skype
Associate Professor Julian Henson	Associate Professor	NSW	ATN	Main, initial phase	September 2018 via Zoom
Professor Hao Lee	Professor	QLD	IRU	Main, initial phase	October 2018, via Zoom
Associate Professor Katherine Mason	Associate Professor	NSW	GO8	Main, initial phase	November 2018, via Zoom
Dr Jason Matthews	Senior Lecturer	VIC	None	Main, initial phase	November 2018, via phone call
Dr Naomi Long	Lecturer	QLD	None	Main, Theoretical sample	February 2022, via Zoom
Professor Daniel Swanson	Professor	QLD	GO8	Main, Theoretical sample	February 2022, via Zoom
Professor Belinda Smith	Professor	VIC	None	Main, Theoretical sample	March 2022, via Zoom
Dr Thomas Murray	Senior Lecturer	QLD	GO8	Main, Theoretical sample	March 2022, via Zoom

Following the pilot study, the main study commenced, still in the initial sampling phase. Participants for this study were purposely selected, based on their expertise about the phenomenon – the lived research engagement and impact experiences of law academics. Purposeful sampling assists in obtaining what Spradley (1979) defines as ‘excellent informant[s]’. This meant an expert in the phenomena being investigated, who was willing to be part of the study, willing to be reflective and able to speak accurately about their experience. Morse (2007, p. 234) states that an excellent qualitative sample must be purposely selected. She notes that excellent qualitative data is inherently biased in that it is ‘deliberately sought and

selected'. Charmaz (2006) also suggests At this stage of the study, I was no longer focused on selecting 'convenient' participants and began to recruit participants across Australia. The interviews for the main study were all undertaken via Zoom, Skype or telephone. Due to budget constraints, it was decided to undertake the interviews via these methods, as meeting people in person would've required considerable expenditure across the various participants and locations.

Following the convenience sampling and purposeful sampling, I moved to the second sampling phase, theoretical sampling, to determine the needs and general weaknesses of the study, fleshing out the theoretical concepts of the emerging categories. Four participants were recruited for the theoretical sampling; they were purposely selected based on the needs of the developing theory. Regarding sample size, Charmaz (2014) states that it is not possible to know how many participants or subsequent interviews you will need in a CGT study until you begin analysing the data. She suggests that the number of interviews also depends on the purpose of the research and the analytic level to which the researcher aspires. Charmaz (2014, p. 213) recommends stopping gathering data once categories become 'saturated'. Categories become saturated when there is no 'fresh data' arising, no 'new theoretical insights' and no 'new properties or core theoretical categories' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 213). Hence, data gathering stopped once categories became 'saturated' following the theoretical sampling interviews. Similarly, Gaskell (2000) notes that saturation is reached when there are no new emergent patterns in the data.

After the theoretical sampling interviews and comparing the data and codes with the earlier collected data, it became clear that no new patterns were emerging, and hence the data collection ended. Theoretical saturation occurred with 14 participants and a total of 14 interviews.

3.5 Data collection

In this section, I will discuss the data-collection techniques and process, outline the rationale and appropriateness for data collection by interview and discuss development of the research instrument and my interview approach across the pilot and main studies. Grounded theory approaches were adhered to during the data-collection and data-analysis phases, which occurred simultaneously.

Munhall (2010) suggests that sources of data should be selected based on what they bring to the emerging theory. Grounded theory studies may use a number of different data sources, including interviews, extant texts, questionnaires, journals, personal accounts, observations, organisational and policy documents, historical documents and media articles (Charmaz, 2014). For this study, I used semi-structured in-depth interviews that were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The data were collected in two stages: pilot study and main study (incorporating theoretical sampling). The interview research instrument (see Appendix B) was updated slightly between the stages of pilot study and main study, with questions added for the theoretical study to flesh out the emerging properties of each category.

3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews in CGT

Semi-structured interviews are appropriate for use in a CGT study as they allow participants to tell their stories (Charmaz, 2014). The role of the researcher is to listen without interruption (Morse, 2007) so the participant assumes power and direction over the conversation (Birks & Mills, 2015). According to Burgess (1984, p. 102), these types of interviews are ‘conversations with purpose’. Similarly, Fielding (1994) argues that semi-structured interviews allow respondents to use their own way of defining the world and allows for respondents to raise considerations the interviewer had not considered. In CGT, the interviews are co-constructed between the researcher and the participants, with importance placed on the ‘interviewer’s approach and way of asking questions, listening and following up what the interviewee is telling’ (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021, p. 317). These steps are crucial to a quality co-construction (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021).

Additionally, open-ended questioning is encouraged to elicit conversation. The more ‘open-ended’ the questions, the better – as the researchers carefully listens to ‘what people say or do in their life setting’ (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 5). This study used semi-structured interviews, following an open-ended research instrument where questions were used as prompts rather than prescriptively to allow participants to tell their stories. I also encouraged participants to tell their stories via prompts such as ‘go on’ and ‘is there anything else you want to say about this’. The approach of listening and adapting questions based on the participants’ responses led to collecting ‘rich data’, which revealed the participants’ ‘views, feelings,

intentions and actions, as well as the context and structure of their lives' (Charmaz, 2006a, p. 14).

3.5.1.1 The research instrument

The research instrument was constructed first for the pilot interview as discussed above. It was then revised to add a new question about the participants' working week – 'What does a normal working week look like for you?' – for the main study and revised again for theoretical sampling. The research instrument and the prompt questions are discussed further below (see also Appendix B).

For the main study, the interview protocol retained similar sample questions to that of the pilot study, with some minor changes including the addition of a question about the participants' working week as discussed above. The questions are listed below:

- Can you tell me what a normal working week looks like for you?
- Can you tell me about your experiences with research impact and engagement?
- How do you define research impact?
- Can you describe research engagement in your own words?
- What do you think is the most important mission for academics?
- What's your most present problem in relation to research impact and engagement?
- What, in your experience, has been the most negative aspect of research impact and engagement?
- Can you tell me about your experiences of translating your research for a non-academic audience?

Again, questions were used as starting points or prompts, and were not prescriptive. Other more-nuanced or follow-up questions were asked when the participants discussed something interesting that may have not yet been discussed in detail by other participants. The participant interviews were constantly compared, code with code, with some interesting findings beginning to emerge by about the fifth interview. I decided at this stage to interview another two participants in the main study, who both had very different experiences from other participants, adding to the developing rich data.

Following these interviews from the main study, I determined that some of the categories had begun to saturate while others required more data. I redeveloped the research instrument for the final four interviews, adding some additional prompt questions to aid in saturating the emergent categories and their properties. At this stage of the study, I had determined that I needed to recruit at least one more professor to fill out some of the properties and at least two more early career researchers to gather further data about their experiences. Some of the questions were going to be directed at both cohorts, while other questions were more relevant to the professors or the ECRs. New sample probing questions were added to the research instrument (see Appendix B). The original interview questions were also asked to ensure no new information was arising and to check and validate the emerging categories and their properties with the new interview data. The theoretical sample led to the data becoming saturated, with gaps in properties and emergent categories being filled, and no new data arising from the interviews.

3.5.1.2 Interview procedures

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews allowed the participants to have a general conversation with me about how they experienced research engagement and impact. As discussed above, the questions were mostly open-ended, allowing participants to discuss their experiences flexibly.

Interviews began casually with a discussion about the participants' time working in academia and what their experience had been to date. It then moved to more open-ended questions to allow the participants to describe their experiences of research engagement and impact without 'forcing' responses (Charmaz, 2006a, p. 18). Charmaz (2006) suggests thinking about the wording around open-ended questions to 'avoid blurting out loaded questions' (Charmaz, 2006a, p. 18). I also added in an 'ending question', which Charmaz suggests is important to slant the end of the interview in a positive direction (Charmaz, 2006a, p. 30) My ending question was always to ask the participant whether they had anything else they would like to add about their research engagement and impact experiences before the close of the interview.

Pilot study interviews

The first two interviews (Professor Miller and Dr Kirby) were conducted in March 2017, one week apart. The interviews were conducted face to face and in person at the participants' and my place of employment. The first interview lasted approximately 55 minutes while the second interview lasted about 35 minutes. Within 30 minutes of completing the interviews I wrote a memo reflecting on how the interview went and what could be improved. I added to this memo during and after the transcription process. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed soon after completing the interviews. Audio recordings were used to be able to go back to the data to spark new ideas that may not eventuate during the initial transcription and listening process (Charmaz, 2014).

The first two pilot interviews were transcribed in March 2017. I transcribed the interviews manually without the use of any transcribing software. Both transcriptions were then sent to my supervisors to review.

The third pilot interview took place at my place of employment while the participant was visiting so we could do a face-to-face, in-person interview. This interview went for 44 minutes. I followed the same process as for the previous two interviews, whereby I wrote a reflective memo within 30 minutes of the interview's conclusion and then proceeded to transcription. The interview was transcribed manually and then sent to my supervisors for review.

It was determined by my supervisors that the main study could commence with the additional question added. This was added to the research instrument to situate the participants within their working environment before focusing on the questions about research engagement and impact.

Main study interviews

The main study interviews were conducted between October 2017 and November 2018. All interviews were conducted via Skype, Zoom or phone, as participants were based interstate. Following the same procedures used in the pilot, all interviews were recorded and transcribed. Some were transcribed manually, while others were transcribed using Rev.com transcription services. However, in order to stay intimately familiar with the data, the transcripts were all manually checked by listening to the audio to confirm the transcription had been done correctly. Quotes

were left verbatim in the transcripts and edited in the thesis to remove superfluous words (such as 'ah' and 'um') with text added in square brackets where something was not said by the participant but needed to explain context, or where a word or words had been omitted for anonymity.

Once the interviews were transcribed and coded, we (myself and my supervisors) realised further data was needed to flesh out the developing properties and emerging categories. This was evident through the various memos I was writing at the time in order to develop the emerging ideas about potential categories. Following CGT theoretical sampling methods, I went back to the field in early 2022 to conduct the final four interviews for the main study's theoretical sampling phase.

The next section discusses how the collected data was analysed in keeping with grounded theory methods such as coding, memo-writing and the constant comparative method.

3.6 Data analysis

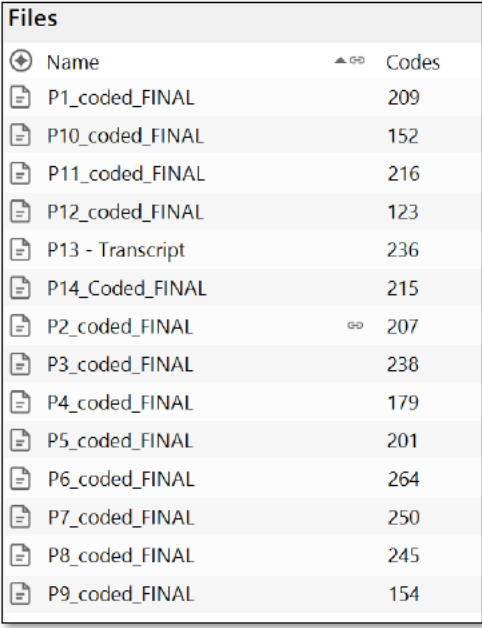
This section on data analysis will discuss the procedures undertaken to analyse the data. The main CGT methods used in this study included coding, memo-writing and the constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2014). Notably, the constant comparative method is used throughout the entire analytic process from data collection to constructing the theory to 'establish analytic distinctions' (Charmaz, 2006a, p. 54). In line with this tenet, data were collected and analysed simultaneously, while coding and memo-writing were undertaken as iterative, to explore codes and to begin to develop properties and initial categories as they began to emerge.

Charmaz (2014) outlined four analytic stages in constructivist grounded theory research: (1) coding; (2) memo-writing; (3) theoretical sampling, saturation and sorting; and (4) constructing theory. The following section will discuss these the analytic process in more detail, including using software for qualitative analysis; coding (including initial coding and focused coding); memo-writing; theoretical sampling, saturation and sorting; and constructing theory.

3.6.1 Using software for qualitative analysis

The software used for the qualitative analysis included Microsoft Word (for initial coding and memo-writing), Microsoft Excel (to begin comparing the memos

and emergent categories for theoretical sampling) and NVivo (for focused coding, sorting, and development of categories). Once the initial coding was completed, I became aware that it would be difficult to succinctly manage the number of codes I had without employing software to manage the data. I therefore moved my transcripts over to NVivo and manually re-coded each transcript, adding in the codes I had previously developed using Word (Figure 1). I ended up with a total of 2889 codes across the 14 interview transcripts.



The screenshot shows a table titled 'Files' with two columns: 'Name' and 'Codes'. It lists 14 files, each with a corresponding number of codes. The files are: P1_coded_FINAL (209), P10_coded_FINAL (152), P11_coded_FINAL (216), P12_coded_FINAL (123), P13 - Transcript (236), P14_Coded_FINAL (215), P2_coded_FINAL (207), P3_coded_FINAL (238), P4_coded_FINAL (179), P5_coded_FINAL (201), P6_coded_FINAL (264), P7_coded_FINAL (250), P8_coded_FINAL (245), and P9_coded_FINAL (154). Each row has a document icon to the left of the file name.

Name	Codes
P1_coded_FINAL	209
P10_coded_FINAL	152
P11_coded_FINAL	216
P12_coded_FINAL	123
P13 - Transcript	236
P14_Coded_FINAL	215
P2_coded_FINAL	207
P3_coded_FINAL	238
P4_coded_FINAL	179
P5_coded_FINAL	201
P6_coded_FINAL	264
P7_coded_FINAL	250
P8_coded_FINAL	245
P9_coded_FINAL	154

Figure 1. Screenshot of NVivo transcript codes

I found NVivo useful, as I could refer to codes that were hyperlinked to the transcript so I could easily check the entire paragraph of a transcript to ensure that what I had coded was correct and in context. NVivo was also useful at the focused coding and sorting stages, as I could sort codes alphabetically and by the number of references per code, which enabled me to see the most prominent codes as they emerged. Additionally, NVivo allowed me to export my codes and their descriptions to an Excel file, or 'Codebook', that allowed me to then filter via the participant or via the focused code (Figure 2). This helped immensely during the process of writing up the findings, as I was easily able to see the participant, the quote, and the code in one easy-to-use file.

Participant	Coded Text	Initial Code	Focused Code
P11_coded_FINAL	when saying that you will be the same thing, it's a moment, 30 years, yeah, exactly, to be an expert across multiple areas. so have you found like, with your expertise in this space, have you had any experience of engagement and impact specific to that expertise. Participant 11 So I'm not sure if this kind of counts, but I've seen like, I've seen, like an academic from another university, who's kind of been providing an overview of what's going on in this space. And like, he's actually had a photo of me and stuff I was doing up on his presentation and stuff like that, which kind of caught me, which was fine, but kind of caught me off guard and like, oh, so I guess there's things like that where I forgot, obviously, obviously, people, people in this space, know I'm doing something.	Being known to other researchers in her space	Codes\\Being an expert\\Being known to other researchers in her space
P11_coded_FINAL	And while I might have expertise in what I teach, it's, it's really important to draw on the expertise of everyone in the room as well, because they will all have really valid expertise as well, even if they've just come from high school.	Drawing on everyone's expertise	Codes\\Being an expert\\Drawing on everyone's expertise
P11_coded_FINAL	I don't know if you'll class this as research exactly. But I did a masterclass online a couple of years ago, which was subsequently uploaded to YouTube. And it had lots of good hits and things but something happened to the link and it needed to be re-	Having no control over online feedback	Codes\\Being an expert\\Having no control over online feedback

Figure 2. Screenshot of codebook

Notably, Charmaz (2006a, p. 179) cautions against relying upon software programs as they can 'short change' the analytic process or lead to superficial analysis. Therefore, after I sorted the codes into their draft categories, I stopped updating NVivo but kept it for record purposes. I worked off the Codebook and used filtering to drill down into the codes and associated quotes from the participants.

Although I found NVivo helpful for managing the large number of codes I had, and sorting the codes, I also found it limited when it came to analysing the data, finding this much easier to do by filtering codes in my Codebook and through writing about what I was seeing in the data through memos.

3.6.2 Coding

Charmaz (1996) emphasises that coding is the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data. In constructivist grounded theory there are two stages: initial coding and focused coding. Initial coding can be done line by line or incident by incident. The researcher should look at the actions and code data as actions (Charmaz, 2014). Focused coding is undertaken after initial coding and uses the more frequent earlier codes to explain the data, using codes that 'make the most analytic sense' (Charmaz, 2006a, p. 58).

In accordance with Charmaz (2006, 2014), coding was done line by line with the actions and processes of the participants captured in the codes by using gerunds. Charmaz states that a gerund is 'a *heuristic* device to bring the researcher into the data, interact with them and study each fragment of them' (Charmaz, 2006a, p. 121). Line-by-line coding also helped to spark new ideas throughout the coding process and to reduce the chances of superimposing preconceived ideas about the

phenomenon onto the data (Charmaz, 2006a). It also helped to ensure that I was not taking the participants worldviews at face value, and was rather seeing the processes and actions that were taking place and the behaviours and feelings of the participants about the phenomenon (Charmaz, 2006a). To enable a consistent coding approach, I developed a coding steps image that helped me to go about coding each of the transcripts. I was struggling with the coding process and often described what was happening in each segment of text rather than considering the processes. I also struggled to code the experience; however, using gerunds did help with this process. By using the image I developed, I was able to quickly review my codes to ensure I was following the correct process.

3.6.2.1 Initial coding

Initial coding was undertaken using Microsoft Word by highlighting segments of text and adding comments on the transcripts. As noted above, this was done line by line or incident by incident. Gerunds were used to code the majority of the transcript as much as possible. Gerunds are important in a grounded theory study as they enable the researcher to define meaning and actions whilst 'sticking to the data' (Charmaz, 2006a, p. 120; Glaser, 1978). Actions included participants' feelings, views and behaviours in relation to the phenomenon as well as any active actions they took. An example of a coded transcript using gerunds is shown in Figure 3.

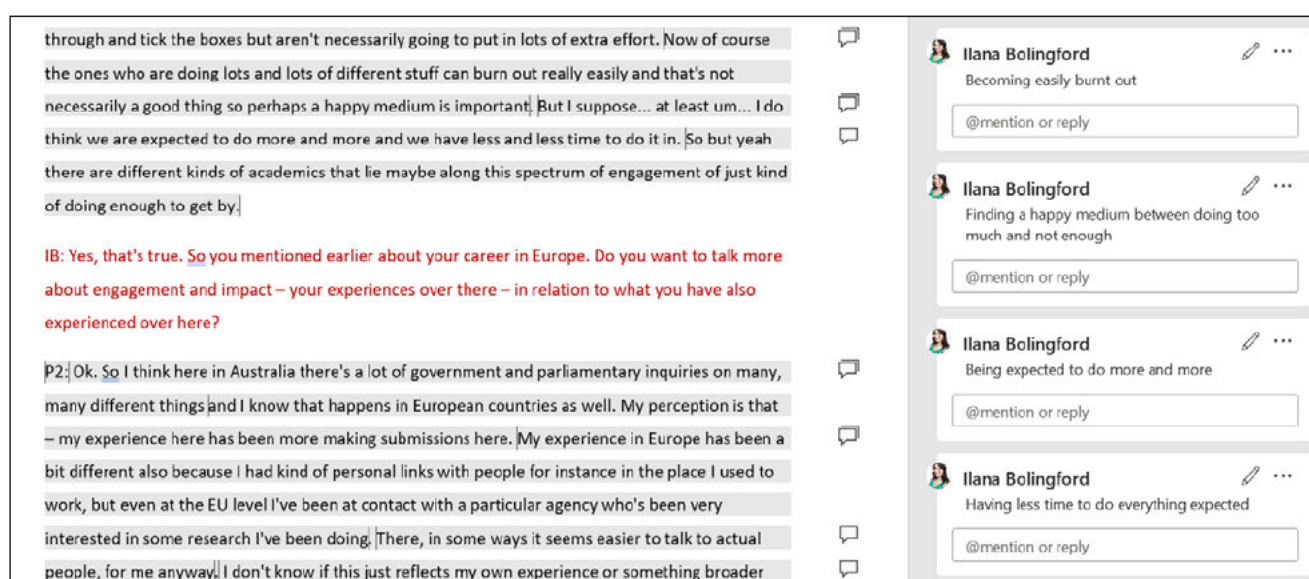


Figure 3. Coding with gerunds

This process of using gerunds enabled me to easily begin to see what was happening in the data and also to begin developing emerging concepts. In the example shown in Figure 3, I was able to see that the participant was struggling with time management and workload expectations, which were causing her to worry about burning out. These initial codes, which were similarly echoed across several transcripts, provided starting points for what would be a final category of the study, *Prioritising time*. When coding with gerunds, I tried to use verbs that were connected to the experience such as ‘understanding’, ‘feeling’ and ‘finding’. Gerunds were not always possible however and some gerunds used such as ‘having’ and ‘experiencing’ were not always as descriptive as some of the more emotive gerunds.

In addition to using gerunds, I also used in vivo codes where sensible to do so. In vivo codes serve as ‘symbolic markers of participants’ speech and meanings’ (Charmaz, 2006a), often based on participants social worlds and organisational settings. Several in vivo codes emerged as part of the coding process, some of which later became properties of categories such as *Feeling like an outsider* and *Shaping how things are done*.

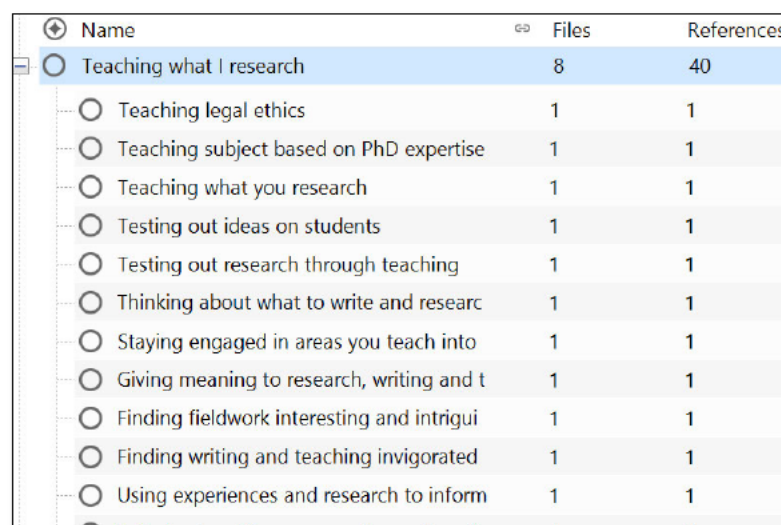
Finally, constant comparative methods were utilised by printing the transcripts and cross-checking codes across the transcripts. This often led to going back to edit codes that were originally used on older transcripts to change them to codes that had emerged later on in the process and that made more analytic sense.

3.6.2.2 Focused coding

NVivo was used for focused coding once all the initial codes were completed. Using NVivo made the focused coding process simpler as I was able to sort the codes by frequency. This allowed me to see what codes were arising (Charmaz, 2014) and what concepts were beginning to emerge from the data. Once I had determined the codes that were heavily referenced, I was able to go back to the initial codes and apply some of the focused codes to larger segments of data. I then extrapolated the most frequent of the focused codes into memos to begin theoretically analysing the data to determine patterns and gaps. I noticed a lot of codes that spoke to expertise, for example, so began a memo on expertise. I exported all of the codes to a Codebook in Microsoft Excel and then filtered for all of the codes related to expertise. I then began to compare them with other codes, edit and refine codes where required, which Charmaz (2006a, p. 71) calls ‘fresh coding’, and started

writing what would later become the properties of the category *Being an expert*. Charmaz (2006a, pp. 91-92) states that treating focused codes as categories ‘prompts you to develop and scrutinize them’ by asking ‘what category does the code indicate’. She suggests you can then begin to evaluate the tentative categories to determine if they are categories or not (Charmaz, 2006a).

Like Shastri et al. (2017, p. 48), I used ‘code grouping’ where codes are ‘grouped together to produce a higher level of abstraction’. In NVivo, this looked like codes sitting under a higher level or focused code. An example of this can be seen in Figure 4.



Name	Files	References
Teaching what I research	8	40
Teaching legal ethics	1	1
Teaching subject based on PhD expertise	1	1
Teaching what you research	1	1
Testing out ideas on students	1	1
Testing out research through teaching	1	1
Thinking about what to write and research	1	1
Staying engaged in areas you teach into	1	1
Giving meaning to research, writing and t	1	1
Finding fieldwork interesting and intrigui	1	1
Finding writing and teaching invigorated	1	1
Using experiences and research to inform	1	1

Figure 4. Screenshot of code group

I also used granular coding (Rylee & Cavanagh, 2022) to enable me to easily search for codes to pull out the data during the writing-up phases of the study. One example of this was using the granular code ‘understanding impact’ to quickly pull out codes related to how the participants understood and defined impact. Upon completing the coding, I had 19 code groups as shown in Figure 5.

Name	Files	References
Producing and disseminating knowledge	15	273
Strategically prioritising time	13	217
Controlling impact, planning for impact, having impact,	15	211
Contributing to change	13	193
Law school culture	15	189
Being an expert	13	184
Making connections and developing relationships	14	184
Collaborating through giving and receiving and interdiscipli	15	174
Engaging with media	9	150
Making it as a law academic, freedoms, publishing	12	113
Becoming an academic	11	110
Laboring within the system (workload)	13	85
Belonging	12	84
Vignettes	13	81
Teaching as impact	9	76
Continuing to learn as an academic, Developing self	9	52
Mentoring	8	41
Teaching what I research	8	40
Academic role	3	12

Figure 5. Code groups

Not all the code groups or focused codes became categories, however: some became properties of categories. Some of the code groups, such as *Becoming an academic* and *Vignettes*, served a different purpose: coding all pieces of data that related to the participants' individual experiences of becoming an academic, including how long they had been an academic and any previous careers. These code groups were later used to develop Chapter 4 of this thesis. Other code groups began to collapse into more concise focused codes as I continued to write memos about what was happening in the data to compare and contrast the different codes. Upon moving the focused codes to memos, I had 15 tentative categories to begin working with:

1. Being an expert
2. Belonging
3. Feeling powerless in achieving impact
4. Mentoring others
5. Teaching as impact
6. Publishing for the profession
7. Translating for non-academic audiences
8. Having research freedom

9. Making it in academia
10. Workload
11. Teaching what I research
12. Collaborating with others
13. Engaging with media
14. Culture
15. Becoming an academic

I realised during the memo-writing process that several of the focused codes, such as Making connections and developing relationships, and Collaborating through giving and receiving, were related to one concept: Collaborating with others. The relationships formed during these collaborations were important, but so was the process of how these relationships came to be and how they were sustained. I realised after several iterations of memo-writing that all these relationships were built around the participants' expertise. These focused codes eventually collapsed into the category *Being an expert*. Similarly, I grouped the more internal practices such as the focused codes Mentoring others, Teaching as impact and Teaching what I research into one memo to see how these would fit together. I found that the focused codes were all speaking to the same concepts about *Cultivating impact through teaching and learning*, which focused more on internal forms of impact within the academy. Essentially through the memo writing of focused codes, I began to see the development of categories and how the properties sat within the categories. Often properties of categories revolved around themes or groups that focused on a particular experience of the participants. As noted above, the development of the category *Being an expert* was originally focussed on collaboration and developing relationships with stakeholders. However, after several iterations of memo writing I realised that all of the experiences were related to the participants expertise, hence *Being an expert* was born. Overall, these 15 focused codes eventually collapsed into seven categories of experience.

3.6.3 Memo-writing

Memo-writing in CGT is used to 'elaborate categories, specify their properties, define relationships between categories, and identify gaps' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 7). Memos are considered the 'single most important mechanism' in the construction of

a grounded theory as they are written accounts of a researcher's thinking process while engaging with the data (Birks & Mills, 2015).

Memo-writing is integral to a constructivist grounded theory study as it aids the researcher to expedite analytic work and accelerate productivity (Charmaz, 2006a). Lempert (2007, p. 245) says memo-writing is the 'methodological link through which the researcher transforms data into theory'. I employed memo-writing throughout every stage of the study from the initial interviews, where I wrote a memo after each interview to aid in developing the interview schedule, to the focused coding stage where I filtered and extrapolated frequent codes to write about what I was seeing in the data. An example of this can be found in the memo I wrote about *Being an expert* (Figure 6).

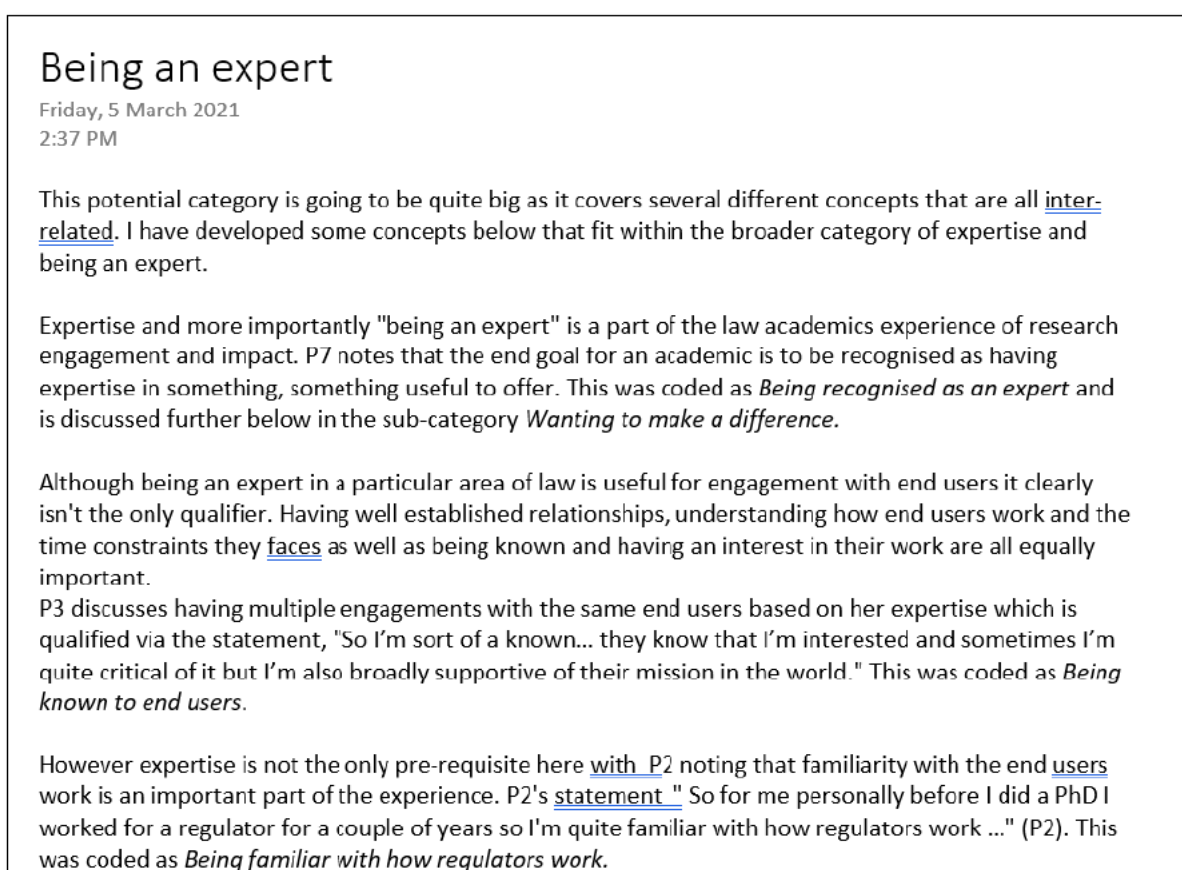


Figure 6. Screenshot of Being an expert memo

Memo-writing was also used in the theoretical sampling stage to determine any gaps in the data and the emerging categories, and to develop and refine categories and their properties. Occasionally, I also used memo-writing to write note

memos about something I was seeing in the data that I thought might need to be explored in more detail. An example of this is shown in Figure 7, where I was beginning to see emerging details about what would eventually become the category *Cultivating impact through teaching and learning*.

Being the student, being the teacher

One of the key things I have picked up on this week is the experience of law academics around engagement and impact relates to learning (being the student) and mentoring (being the teacher). This relates to the memo I wrote recently on *the learned academic* but goes further as it includes the academic not just as a learner but also a teacher and mentor of others.

Translation is a key element of “being the student” as academics grapple with the challenges that arise from speaking the language of an academic to speaking the language of policy makers and other stakeholders.

Mentoring is a key element of “being the teacher” as more senior academics mentor and collaborate with the more junior for funding applications and publications. Some participants view teaching as an avenue of impact hence the memo *teaching as impact* is relevant here. HDR supervision and leading and developing research groups is another facet of being the teacher as academics explore collective ways to produce engagement and impact.

The memos belonging, *becoming an academic*, and *making it in academia* also fit here, showcasing the development of the academic along a “learning continuum”. Where they sit on this continuum inadvertently impacts their experiences of engagement and impact. The learning continuum could potentially relate to the position of the academic but goes further than this. I will be developing a diagram to show how I see this continuum and how the journey to impact is helped or hindered by place.

Figure 7. Screenshot of note memo example

In addition to using Word to write memos, I also began to track memos in Excel, where I could easily compare what was happening across the memos and where there were possibly links between memos. This was the start of developing the tentative categories and theory. Throughout this process, I began to realise that some of the memos I had written around focused codes were not going to form categories. However, by using my tracking spreadsheet, I was able to see where there were tentative links between various memos and how these could inform categories. For example, in Figure 8, *Belonging* was a frequent focused code, so I began to memo about it.

Memo working title	What is it about	Where are the links	further development	tentative category
Becoming an academic	Discusses the journey to becoming an academic and the different pathways participants took to get there. It also discusses the experiences of being a new academic and the difficulties faced by the participants.	This entire memo relates to the experience of becoming an academic. The sub-themes will relate to how they experience becoming an academic in relation to how they experience engagement and impact. For example - workload and experiencing being overloaded; developing self which includes learning from others.	Becoming an academic will become a category with some sub-themes which include: - Developing self - Experiencing overload -	Navigating academia
Being an expert	Discusses how academics experience different facets of being an expert such as being known and recognised, making connections, bringing expertise to end users and wanting to make a difference. Might re-name this to "Identifying as an expert".	This is a core category and relates to almost every other memo. Without expertise an academic would not be known outside (or even inside) of academia. Being an expert at something is key to the identity of being an academic and to how they experience engagement and impact.	Being an expert will form a category and may subsume some concepts developed earlier on.	Identifying as an expert
Belonging	Discusses the experiences of the participants as to how they see themselves as belonging and how they see their academic self as belonging groups, having membership and making connections with others inside and outside of academia.	I think belonging can possibly be two-fold. First, belonging relates to feeling valued and respected by peers. This relates to academic identity, social and cultural acceptance and is more intrinsic. Second, belonging relates to Membership and Making connections. This is key to the experience of engagement and impact as an academic and is more extrinsic in nature as viewed outside the concept of self (own views) and more as the academic self (others views). I am considering taking the extrinsic elements of Membership (moving it to being an expert) and Making connections (making it a category).	I am not sure where belonging sits at the moment. It seems to sit across multiple areas so possibly will form some sort of subcategory	
Collaborating with others	Discusses how they collaborate with those inside and outside of academia and how these relationships developed.	This might fit with "making connections". I am considering pulling making connections out of belonging and making it a category	I have renamed this Making connections and building relationships	Making connections and developing relationships

Figure 8. Screenshot of memo-tracking

However, the more I wrote and analysed the data in the potential category, the more I realised that *Belonging* in and of itself was not a category but rather an experience that went across many different higher-level experiences, such as *Making connections* and *Being a member of groups*, which later formed properties of *Being an expert*. As *Belonging* was often discussed in conjunction with activities and actions around expertise and collaboration, it was important to memo about this in Word and Excel, enabling me to conclude that *Belonging* would not form a category, but rather would contribute to the many facets of collaborative activities in *Being an expert*.

3.6.4 Theoretical sampling and saturation

Theoretical sampling is 'strategic, specific, and systematic' (Charmaz, 2006a, p. 103). It is a process that is inductive as well as deductive and is undertaken to develop emerging theoretical categories by obtaining data that explain the categories. It is different from other forms of sampling, where a researcher may need to sample for more people from a specific age group for example, whereas in CGT the researcher samples for category development and saturation (Charmaz, 2006a).

During the theoretical sampling phase of the study, I used my memo-tracking Excel spreadsheet to record my reflections on the memos and to list the gaps and need for further inquiry. When something interesting and different arose in the data, I noted this down as potentially requiring further data. For example, in the *Belonging*

memo I noticed there was a lot going on in relation to feeling valued and being recognised. I also noticed that some of the participants who had come to academia after another career pathway seemed to struggle more with feeling valued and belonging. Some of my notes around this included:

I started exploring 'belonging' further and am realising more and more that it relates to the key concepts of belonging such as 'being valued', 'being known', 'being recognised'. There is obviously the concept of feeling accepted, but this is not discussed in words per se. Some of these concepts are discussed in the Memo – being an expert as 'being known and recognised' are key concepts of expertise. Maybe the difference here is being known as an expert on a particular topic vs being respected or trusted by managers and colleagues? Just some ideas at this stage. I have now started looking closer at Dr Laura Glover who openly discusses the difficulties she faced in transitioning from public policy to law academia and how this has affected her potential for academic impact. (*Memo-tracking reflections on Belonging*)

In addition to writing reflections, I also had a column on who I might approach for theoretical sampling. For the issues noted above regarding *Belonging*, I decided to interview an early career researcher who had transitioned to academia to gather further data about her experiences. A screenshot of the memo-tracking and reflections spreadsheet is shown in Figure 9.

Memo working title	Reflections	Gaps and potential further inquiry	Who I need to approach	Interview Questions	Revised questions
Being an expert	Participants at different career stages and with different backgrounds and expertise have experienced being an expert. P10 is the only participant that doesn't discuss expertise. Not a gap but something of interest – "being known" is more about end users/policy makers coming to academics for advice based on their reputation and expertise. It may or may not be based in previous working relationships. I think P9 describes it perfectly when she says "coming to us", "bringing expertise" is more about already having the connection and providing expertise directly to the end user to solve their issues, its more about "going to them". Being known as an individual researcher vs through groups you belong to.	In general participants have very similar experiences with being an expert. P2 seems to prefer these more personal connections when engaging with people outside of academia. This might be something to touch on in theoretical sampling.	Possibly don't need to clarify this any further.	1. In relation to engaging with people outside of academia - do you prefer when you have personal connections or do you prefer to work with new people? 2. How do you experience the concept of being known? 3. Do people come to you for expertise or do you go to them to offer your expertise?	Tell me about your experiences working with people outside of academia? Probing do you normally work people you have a prior relationship with or new people? Previous participants have discussed the concept of being an expert - has your experience with
Belonging	Belonging is a distinguishing feature of membership. The "right bodies" along with "belonging" are subjective terms suggesting that there will be nuances between the participants in relation to how they view belonging and who they see as the right bodies of people. This will be explored further. Perhaps that is another reason people enjoy being on groups/committees outside of academia. It could be that they enjoy collaborating with people who are interested in the same issues they are interested in or that they prefer a non-academic audience or that they are looking to add value and have impact. This requires further inquiry. I note P1 discusses the positive experiences in working with those outside of academia whilst having negative experiences with other academics. It also prefers working alone. I feel these are pretty obvious gaps that need to be looked at further. Perhaps P1 feels more valued by those outside of academia which could in turn lead to the positive feeling. Maybe he does not feel valued by his academic colleagues hence the negative feelings.	Follow up query for theoretical sampling of those who transitioned to academia (did you feel undervalued when you started due to your non-traditional academic background? Did this affect your experience of engagement and impact?) I would like to look at belonging as a higher level concept and their experiences of belonging - this will be an open question. Who do you view as the right people to be working with (inside or external to academia)? Do you enjoy working with those outside of academia? Why is it important to you? Do you want to make a difference with your work? Why or why not? Do you feel valued? What are your experiences with being valued? Do you feel recognised and known? How does this aid in having engagement or impact? Do you work with other academics? Why or why not? Do you feel a sense of belonging with other academics or with those outside of academia? Why?	Someone who has had a non-traditional academic career and transitioned to academia later on - an ECR/MCR might be appropriate	1. Has it been difficult to find acceptance in academia as someone who has transitioned from the outside? 2. Have you experienced feeling undervalued as an academic due to your non-traditional academic background? 3. Did this affect how you approached or experienced engagement and impact? 4. How do you experience belonging as an academic as an early career researcher? 5. Do you feel a sense of belonging with other academics or with those outside of academia? Why?	ECR: Tell me about your experience transitioning from a role outside of academia to one in academia. Probing - Do you feel your non-academic background impacts on your ability to have engagement and impact? - Other participants ever experienced feeling undervalued due to their non-academic background - has this been your experience?

Figure 9. Theoretical sampling

Finally, I added a column with some interview questions and probing questions that could help structure some of the queries I had in relation to some of the emerging categories.

Charmaz (2014, p. 213) posits that ‘theoretical saturation’ occurs when there is essentially nothing new happening in the data. This means that no new properties of the particular category are emerging even after backtracking and re-checking the data, the codes and then re-checking them again. At this phase of the study, I had some categories that appeared to be saturated with no new data or insights occurring. As part of the theoretical sampling interviews, I still addressed the original interview questions as part of the CGT cross-checking process to ensure that the categories were indeed saturated and that the new interviews did not generate any further avenues for inquiry. Saturation was achieved following the final four theoretical sampling interviews, as no new data emerged (Charmaz, 2006a, 2014) in the developed theoretical categories and the interviews provided enough data to explain what was happening in other focused codes, some of which became categories or properties of categories.

3.7 Research quality

Birks and Mills (2015, p. 33) identify several factors that can influence the quality of grounded theory research. These include ‘researcher expertise, methodological congruence and procedural precision’. Indeed, Corbin and Strauss (2008) also point to the personal and professional characteristics of the researcher. They say that issues such as ‘self-awareness, clarity of purpose, commitment to hard work and internal motivation to do research’ can affect research quality. The researcher must appreciate the importance of the study, feel passionate about the topic and be committed to achieving quality outcomes Birks and Mills (2015, p. 35). Birks and Mills (2015) argue that there must be congruence between the research philosophy, the methodology and the aims of the research in order for the research question to be answered appropriately. They argue that, ‘Methodological congruence is the foundation of a credible quality study’ (Birks & Mills, 2015, p. 35). Methodological congruence occurs when your philosophical position, research aims, and methodological approach align. The authors recommend rectifying any

inconsistencies in philosophy or methodology as they arise, acknowledging that this is the evolving nature of a grounded theory study.

Proponents of CGT methodology, Charmaz (2006a) and Birks and Mills (2015) discuss the importance of process in the grounded theory method. To ensure 'procedural precision', attention must be paid to:

- maintaining an audit trail
- managing data and resources, and
- demonstrating procedural logic (Birks & Mills, 2015, p. 37).

Therefore, to ensure quality I maintained an audit trail of the study via memo-writing and memo-tracking. Memos were undertaken at all stages of the study (including after interviews) to aid in analysing the emerging theory and to compare emerging data.

Validity is another issue for researchers, who must prove their findings to be credible. Indeed, Creswell and Miller (2000) argue that validity can be sought by ensuring the findings of the study are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher and participants. This suggestion mimics the purpose of the constructivist grounded theory: to 'construct' data and meaning between researcher and participants. By ensuring that participants are given the chance to analyse the findings and determine whether they are indeed valid speaks to the overall validity of the study. I employed the process Creswell defines as 'member checking', where I sent the transcribed interviews back to participants to determine whether they felt they were accurate and to ask whether they had anything else to add.

3.8 Ethics

Ethics approval was sought from the Human Research Ethics Committee of USQ in January 2017 to begin the pilot study in March 2017. The low-risk ethics application was approved (USQ Ethics Approval Number H17REA015). Ethics was revised to add external transcription through Rev.com. The ethics application was closed in late 2022 once all data had been collected and finalised.

All participants were given a consent form to sign before the interview, which stipulated that they may withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. They were also advised that the information they provided was

anonymous. To protect the identity of participants, I have given them pseudonyms throughout the data instruments, including Word documents and spreadsheets where participant information was stored. Different pseudonyms will be used for any future publications.

3.9 Conclusion

As noted by Caelli et al. (2003), researchers must address their theoretical position, evidence the congruence between methodology and methods, and highlight the strategies they used to establish rigour. This chapter identified the approach that was taken and acknowledged my theoretical position that influenced and guided the study. It also acknowledged how the theoretical position, the research methodology and the chosen methods aligned and why they were suitable to address the research question.

Strategies used to establish rigour included the general grounded theory tenets of constant comparison, theoretical sampling and memo-writing throughout the study. The approach of constructivist grounded theory methodology allowed the data to be mutually constructed with the experiences of the participants and the researcher forming the overall substantive grounded theory.

CHAPTER 4: PARTICIPANTS

4.1 Introduction

Having presented the research method and approach in the previous chapter, this chapter introduces the participants. Constructivist grounded theory involves constructing a theory based on the lived experiences of the participants, hence giving them a voice. These voices are entwined with that of the researcher in a co-constructed manner (Charmaz, 2014), which in turn develops a substantive theory of lived experiences and meanings. To further develop and personalise the voices of the participants, I decided to include a chapter about them describing the attributes and individual experiences that each of the participants brings to the study

4.2 The participants

The 14 law academics (seven male, seven female) who participated in this study ranged from early career academics to professors. They were spread across different states of Australia, worked at various universities and were of various ages, genders and backgrounds. Participants were given number pseudonyms to start with and names during the final stages of writing up. I left their titles intact (such as Professor) as this was important for determining what stage they were at in their career, which informed their overall experiences of research engagement and impact. Participants were given a random first name and last name; however, their title and last name will predominately be used throughout the thesis. When they are first mentioned in this chapter, and in each category of Chapter 5, I have used their title, first name and last name. Subsequent mentions use their title and last name.

Although the interviews were undertaken individually with the researcher (myself) and each participant, the findings present the overall theory that was co-constructed by all participants and me as the researcher. This chapter presents a profile of each participant, where I outline some basic information about the participant as well as their own description of research engagement and impact and how they have experienced the phenomenon.

Professor Paul Miller

Position: Professor

Years as an academic: Forty-plus years

Gender: Male

Interview phase: Pilot

Engagement strategy: Attending events and running seminars and workshops for the legal profession; publishing in trade journals; writing submissions to inquiries

Main impacts: Significant impact in legislative changes in several Australian states; impact and citations in Australian case law

Professor Paul Miller is a male professor who has been a law academic for over 40 years and has worked at different Australian universities.

Professor Miller's experience with research engagement and impact has been 'profound', in part due to his connections with the profession and also his eagerness and motivation to contribute outside of academia. He described research engagement as, 'the necessary precursor to impact ... [it] may take place over a lengthy period and may take a number of forms.' He described impact as, 'There are probably two types of research impact, one is academic impact and the other one is impact in the wider community, the latter of which presupposes that the research may have been taken up in some way by policy makers or law makers and taken to a stage of implementation for the community.' Professor Miller also noted that there was a lot of confusion around what constituted research engagement and impact in law schools and universities in general.

Professor Miller has extensive connections with the legal profession and maintains these connections through workshops and presentations at various law societies. He prides himself on publishing for the legal profession (through trade journals) and to students (via textbooks). He described working with people outside of academia as 'a breath of fresh air' and discussed how he enjoyed working with policy-makers on legislative changes.

Professor Miller said in his interview that he has mostly achieved impact outside the university, particularly in the legislative and policy space. He has strong connections to the legal profession and regularly talks to judges by telephone to assist them with their legal decision-making. He would have liked to have had more

international impact but understood that his area of expertise was more locally relevant; hence, he focused his impact goals on maintaining local connections by attending events for the profession and running workshops for government and the profession. He also worked collaboratively with other academics to write submissions to government inquiries in his area of expertise.

Dr Hannah Kirby

Position: Senior Lecturer

Years as an academic: Five years

Gender: Female

Interview phase: Pilot

Engagement strategy: Translating research papers for non-expert audiences in *The Conversation*,¹ using Twitter (now known as X), to promote expertise; writing submissions to government inquiries

Main impacts: Changes to legislation through submissions to inquiries

Dr Hannah Kirby is a female Senior Lecturer who, at the time of the interview, had been an academic for approximately five years and had worked at more than one Australian university.

Dr Kirby described research engagement as follows:

Engagement I see as something maybe more complimentary to this academic work, for me it seems to be more ... academics doing things beyond their more typical research. Let's say, for example, to involve themselves with community groups, or providing advice to political parties or industry, but it seems to me to have a slightly different character which is based on research expertise but involves different sorts of activities.

Dr Kirby described impact as 'really ... in some ways what consequences our academic work ... has in the real world, so in non-academic spheres'. She described some of her own engagement as using her own research to write submissions to government inquiries: 'I've had experience of my research ... being used, usually by

¹ *The Conversation* (<https://theconversation.com/au>) is an online publishing platform that publishes academics articles in collaboration with journalists for non-expert, general audiences.

me, to inform submissions to parliamentary and government agency inquiries about a number of topics that are relevant to my work.’ She noted that she normally writes submissions with colleagues, as it is quite time-consuming to write alone.

Dr Kirby began her career in policy overseas prior to becoming an academic. She has maintained her extensive networks to these overseas regulators and policy-makers, noting that as her area of expertise has an international focus, it is important for her to stay on top of international policy as it often informs her work. Dr Kirby also has good local and national connections, which she puts down to attending events, conferences and workshops to meet with people. She noted that it was easier in Australia to liaise with government through submissions than it was overseas. She said overseas such liaison was done less formally, usually through personal connections with policy-makers, while in Australia the submission process was much more formal.

Dr Kirby said that although she enjoyed engaging with people outside of academia through events and workshops and pursuing impactful activities such as submissions, she often worried about being burnt out due to the time it took to undertake these activities. She felt concerned that her university did not incentivise participation in these research engagement and impact activities, and that several other academics in her law school were just ticking boxes and were not interested in pursuing research engagement and impact due to there being no internal university incentives.

Dr Kirby was also one of the few participants who regularly used social media, mostly Twitter (now X), to promote her publications and to connect with the media, other academics and policy-makers. She noted that people had even reached out to her through her profile as she was the one of the only people in Australia working on her topic of expertise. Additionally, she enjoyed writing for *The Conversation* and translating her work for non-expert audiences through this platform.

Professor Jane Lambert

Position: Professor

Years as an academic: Twenty-plus years

Gender: Female

Interview phase: Pilot

Engagement strategy: Translating research papers for non-expert audiences in *The Conversation*; media opportunities including opinion pieces and radio interviews; attending conferences and community engagement groups (academics and legal practitioners), developing professional training courses for the legal profession and other professions

Main impacts: Changes to regulator processes and policies

Professor Jane Lambert is a female professor who has been a law academic for over 20 years and has worked at several Australian universities since the start of her career.

Professor Lambert noted in her interview that her work over the years had always had a strong policy focus, and that she had used her experiences, connections and skills to help legal bodies and regulators to better their practices and policies through evaluating their work. Since completing her PhD and becoming an academic, Professor Lambert had continued to consult and work with some of the same legal bodies she had previously worked with. She said that as she was known to them as someone who supported their mission, they tended to contact her whenever new work became available.

Professor Lambert did not define research engagement; however, she described some of her engagement experiences, which included such things as talks, providing training, media engagement and being a part of communities of engagement where academics present on topical issues to the legal profession. She described impact as, 'So I think of it at the moment as research outside academia ... where you're having an impact on the way anyone other than academics think about stuff ... on government policies or regulatory policies.' She noted that impact was often dependent on many factors and other people play a crucial role in it being realised: 'You can't guarantee impact because that depends on somebody else doing something.' She noted that she

often felt more in control of her research engagement activities and that impact was not always guaranteed.

Professor Lambert utilises social media such as Facebook to post written articles to her friends and family in order to gather feedback from them to see whether they understand what she has written about. She publishes her translated research on platforms such as *The Conversation* to reach broader, non-expert audiences. Additionally, at the time of the interview, Professor Lambert was interested in pursuing other more technical (apps) and creative (infographics) forms of engagement but felt she did not have the skills to undertake these activities. She said she would often have to hire research assistants with certain skills to undertake work on projects in areas that she did not have the required skills. Professor Lambert was very eager to learn more – for example, she indicated that she wanted to do professional training to learn some more creative skills such as developing infographics. She noted that her university had run media training and that this had helped her prepare for all her media engagements including radio interviews and writing opinion pieces.

Professor Mohammed Aaiz

Position: Professor

Years as an academic: Thirty-plus years

Gender: Male

Interview phase: Main study

Engagement strategy: Talks to NGOS the legal profession, policymakers, and the general public; books written for public consumption

Main impacts: Developing international regulatory policies; teaching impacts through careers of alumni

Professor Mohammed Aaiz is a male professor who had been a law academic for over 30 years and had worked at overseas universities and several Australian universities since the start of his career. Professor Aaiz noted at the beginning of his interview that he pursues international legal impact as someone who specialises in international law. He began his academic career overseas and later came to Australia.

Professor Aaiz described research engagement as a two-part process that included making research accessible and building relationships with key people,

making your research accessible to the audiences that matter to you and that will change from academic to academic ... The second part of research engagement is actually doing the research and maybe it's my own personal development, but I find that [working with] very discreet relations, small groups of individuals or just other individuals [is part of it].

He also discussed engagement and impact aspects of applying for and managing grants. Professor Aaiz was one of the few participants to talk about the research engagement and impact expectations that were now part of the grant application and post-award process.

Professor Aaiz described impact as doing more work outside of the academy, which included making connections with more people outside of academia: 'Over the last ten years I've ... more and more [tried] to deliver research that has a broader appeal outside the policy arenas and outside the academy particularly outside the academy.' He said he still gives talks and lectures to several universities nationally and overseas around his area of expertise, and also likes to talk to NGOS, the legal profession, policy-makers and the general public. He feels it is very important to connect with those outside of the academy.

Prof Aaiz also described teaching as one of his biggest impacts to date:

It really is a tremendous, a tremendous product of one's academic endeavours that these students go out with these questions and enquiring minds and some of them knowledge and verve and a keenness to learn.

That's surely our greatest legacy as it's so direct. It's so person to person.

Professor Aaiz had influenced policy change through working with various national and international law reform commissions over his career. He also did a lot of work in development and aid overseas that he said, 'really gives meaning to what I study and write about and teach'. Prof Aaiz was one of the participants who described teaching and research as intrinsically connected. He said he often used his teaching to inform his research and vice versa.

Dr Laura Glover

Position: Lecturer

Years as an academic: Six years

Gender: Female

Interview phase: Main study

Engagement strategy: Writing submissions to government inquiries; sitting on boards and professional memberships to influence change; working on commissioned law reform reports

Main impacts: Changes to legislation through submissions to inquiries and law reform reports

Dr Laura Glover is a female lecturer who had been a law academic for approximately six years at the time of the interview and had worked at one Australian university since the start of her academic career. Dr Glover began her career as a lawyer and then policy-maker and hence came to academia with many connections in government and an excellent understanding of how to engage with policy-makers to effect impact.

She described her research engagement as being a member of boards and other committees that influenced legal change. She noted that she was a member of several boards and advisory committees that collectively worked together to inform and influence policy and regulatory changes. Dr Glover described impact more fully as, 'I think from academia there are a number of ways you can have significant research impact in the real world. One of the ways I have found to make that connection is through submissions to public inquiries.' She explained that she kept an eye out for submissions in her area of expertise so she could ensure she had enough time to write a submission to them. As someone who had been a policy-maker, she understood the value academic experts brought to the law reform process, especially as policy-makers did not have the time or resources to undertake the in-depth research that academics did: 'So I think there is a great depth of knowledge I think in very specific areas because we're specialists. And when an inquiry comes up in your specialist area, I think are really powerful mechanisms to make that change and to have impact [the best way] is to lob your submissions into those inquiries.' Dr Glover also noted that she would always attach a relevant article

to her submission, which helped policy-makers and contributed to her article being cited throughout the inquiry's final report.

In addition to submissions, on which Dr Glover generally collaborated with other academics, she also discussed her impact through a commissioned government report that she was leading. She felt frustrated that the work she was doing in the research engagement and impact spaces such as submissions and commissioned reports was not considered by her university to be as important as publishing her research in top-quality journals. She discussed how working on this highly impactful report had put her significantly behind on her academic publications. She felt that the lack of incentives to do impactful work such as reports was not conducive to academics seeking out research engagement and impact work, thus limiting societal benefits through law reform and policy changes.

Professor Sharie Kemp

Position: Professor

Years as an academic: Seventeen years

Gender: Female

Interview phase: Main study

Engagement strategy: Writing submissions to government inquiries; sitting on boards and professional memberships to influence change, including overseas boards; very engaged with media

Main impacts: Changes to legislation through submissions to inquiries and board memberships; national and international impacts

Professor Sharie Kemp is a female professor who had been a law academic for approximately 17 years at the time of the interview and had worked in another profession and as a lawyer prior to becoming an academic.

Professor Kemp described research engagement as 'more of a qualitative type of exercise. So, engaging with the community or engaging with politicians or engaging with industry is much more of a I guess a two-way communication.' She also described the mutual benefits of research engagement: 'When you are engaging with the community, you're actually getting some benefit out of it yourself by presenting things and thinking of how this is informing your own research and

how it will inform the way you write and convey in the academic context as well.’ She did not view engagement as a burden, but rather saw it as something that contributed to her career development as a legal expert.

Professor Kemp described impact as using her expertise to have a direct impact on policy change. She described experiences of this as sitting on committees and panels with an influence on policy changes in her area of expertise. She felt impact was a more ‘quantitative exercise’, noting that it was very metrics based:

So, impact I think is something that – I guess to me – is something that is measurable in the sense that I did this research, and I can show say that x number of media outlets reported on it, or we were quoted x number of times in the law reform enquiry and so on ...

Professor Kemp felt concerned that there was not enough guidance from her university and even from the government regarding what research engagement and impact entailed and how to record it. She felt that most legal impacts were easy to explain, yet the lack of guidance on this left her unsure about whether her impact was what the government and university were seeking.

Professor Kemp said she utilised media outlets to publish her opinions and her research. She used *The Conversation* to translate her academic research for non-expert audiences while she regularly undertook traditional media interviews, providing expert opinion for journalists’ articles in her area of expertise. She noted it was often a challenge to ensure journalists had interpreted her message correctly and that she often had to negotiate with the media to present things in a particular way.

Professor Kemp’s main impacts were around changes to national and international policy in her area of expertise. This was often achieved collectively through sitting on policy boards and committees, and through writing submissions.

Associate Professor Julian Henson

Position: Associate Professor

Years as an academic: Eighteen years

Gender: Male

Interview phase: Main study

Engagement strategy: Social media, including LinkedIn and Twitter (now known as X), to engage with policy-makers and broader audiences; engagement with academics and non-academics through conferences and events; member of practitioner committees.

Main impacts: Changes to practices within the [omitted] profession; teaching impacts through alumni careers

Associate Professor Julian Henson is a male associate professor who had been a law academic for around 18 years at the time of the interview and has worked at several universities. Associate Professor Henson began his career as a lawyer before deciding to pursue a career in academia. He began tutoring in law before realising he wanted to do this full time.

Associate Professor Henson enjoys engaging inside and outside of academia, and regularly attends conferences and events to 'get new ideas and talk to practitioners and academic colleagues about research ideas'. Like some of the other participants, he also uses his research to inform his teaching and vice versa. He described his research engagement as being influenced by the interactions he has with practitioners and the issues they are grappling with. He explained his engagement process as talking to the legal profession, researching about the issues they face, publishing papers on these issues, talking to the profession at conferences and events to generate further discussion and feedback.

Associate Professor Henson described impact as 'distributing my research fairly widely ... certainly beyond just publications [and through] influencing other people's perspectives on an issue'. He does this through writing opinion articles, posting to online blogs and using social media to promote his research and to state his position on areas related to his expertise. Associate Professor Henson was one of the participants who actively engaged with people on social media platforms, particularly Twitter (X) and LinkedIn. He noted that he was 'indebted' to LinkedIn for

some of the prolific connections to the profession and to policy-makers he had made through the platform. He commented that he mainly made his own connections to those outside of academia through online platforms and events, and he had not achieved many connections through his university. He also viewed impact as something achieved through academic publications that he felt were more 'permanent', as they were easily picked up on databases and through Google Scholar searches. Associate Professor Henson also viewed teaching as impact due to being able to influence a student's views through teaching, ultimately impacting how they approached their careers as lawyers or in other similar professions. He viewed his main impacts as changes to practices within the profession with which he worked closely and impacts on students' development through teaching.

Professor Hao Lee

Position: Professor

Years as an academic: Thirty-plus years

Gender: Male

Interview phase: Main study

Engagement strategy: Writing reports and influencing changes to the legal profession through practitioner networks; media interviews and blogging; being a member of legal services boards

Main impacts: Changes to regulatory practices within the legal profession; teaching and mentoring impacts

Professor Hao Lee is a male professor who had been a law academic for over 30 years at the time of the interview and has worked at several universities in Australia and overseas. He said he started his career as an academic 'purely by accident' after dropping out of school at 16 years of age. A tutor convinced him to go to university, where he finished his undergraduate studies, and he then did graduate work. He then said he was 'sort of following this [academic] path'. He attended prestigious universities overseas for his studies.

Although Professor Lee did not define research engagement, he spoke to several experiences of research engagement, which included blogging and undertaking interviews with media and journalists about topics on his area of

expertise. In addition, he was a member of a legal services board overseas, which contributed to regulatory overview of legal profession practices. He also works closely with tech start-ups, often advising them about legal regulations related to technology. He said this was not legal advice as such, but rather wide-ranging advice that is often legal, economic and social.

He described impact as 'introducing change or introducing a cultural shift or change in consciousness'. His main impact has been on changes to legal profession practices overseas, which he noted took a significant amount of time to achieve. He also experienced the other side of impact, where he was publicly attacked by members of the profession for the research methods employed in his report.

Professor Lee was one of a few participants who notably discussed the impacts of mentoring junior academics and students in career choices. He prided himself on seeing his former colleagues and students go on to have successful careers, often beyond law and even beyond academia. He often provided them with advice to help them make decisions about their careers, but also worked with them collaboratively on projects. As a multidisciplinary legal scholar, he said he has felt at times that other legal scholars do not always understand his work, thinking the law discipline should be 'pure' black letter law. He noted that his experience across many fields has in fact opened up doors for him, being hired for his skills in multidisciplinary spaces.

Professor Lee was one of the participants to discuss impact in terms of it being multifaceted and the outcome of various people and circumstances. Although he noted the significance of his work to legal practice overseas, he acknowledges that he played only a small part in it: 'I think, what I've done over the years has, you know, pushed in the direction that things would hope to go eventually. I'm not claiming that my work was the ... key part of that, but I think ... it was certainly a part of it.'

Associate Professor Katherine Mason

Position: Associate Professor

Years as an academic: Ten-plus years

Gender: Female

Interview phase: Main study

Engagement strategy: Communicating complex knowledge to broader audiences through media, opinion articles and through a book (written for non-experts)

Main impacts: Changes to legislation through submissions to inquiries; Teaching and mentoring impacts

Associate Professor Katherine Mason is a female Associate Professor who had been a law academic for over 10 years at the time of the interview and had worked at several Australian universities. Associate Professor Mason began her career as a lawyer before coming to academia. At the time of the interview, she was in a key service and leadership role in her law school, which she said she very much enjoyed. She had worked in other leadership roles previously in the university.

She described research engagement as ‘all the things you do ... in the hope to have impact. Research engagement is the bit you have control over.’ She also explained engagement as something that is very easily measurable while the impact is less so: ‘[Engagement] could include a plethora of activities ... and the ultimate objective with engagement is to have some sort of impact.’ She often did media pieces and had written a book for non-experts to explain complex legal issues in an easy-to-understand format.

She described impact as ‘where an academic’s research affects the direction of public debate, industry ... activity, professional activity, or government policy activity, legislation. So, it’s the focus on the effect.’ She also discussed that impact was much more contingent on other factors, so it was difficult to determine the causes and effects of actualised impact, ‘and so [it] is much more difficult ... to know ... whether you have had that impact ... or some other factor has had the impact’.

She noted that there was often discussion about research engagement and impact, but she preferred to consider it broadly as all forms of engagement and impact. Like other participants, Associate Professor Mason saw teaching as one of

the more important impacts that law academics had on students who entered the legal profession.

In her leadership role, she supported and mentored other academics in developing their skills. She listened to what sort of training and skills they wanted to develop and helped them to achieve these objectives. She also mentored them on how to do intensive engagement following publication of important research. This included media training and helping them to approach industry or government partners. She also noted the importance of mentoring higher degree research (HDR) students about research engagement and impact for their own career purposes.

Associate Professor Mason felt that doing high-quality research as an academic expert was key to high-quality research engagement that could lead to impact. She explained that without the high-quality research, it was only possible to engage at a superficial level, leading to someone being 'found out' as not being the expert they were claiming to be. Her main impacts included submissions to inquiries, and teaching and mentoring impacts.

Dr Jason Matthews

Position: Senior Lecturer

Years as an academic: Fourteen-plus years

Gender: Male

Interview phase: Main study

Engagement strategy: Publishing in quality academic journals for citations; publishing in trade journals to influence the profession; talks at conferences and publishing to online repositories

Main impacts: Publications and academic impact (citations from other academics)

Dr Jason Matthews is a male senior lecturer who had been a law academic for over 14 years at the time of the interview. Dr Matthews had formerly worked as a lawyer and was still practising when he began work as an academic. He had developed good connections with the legal profession and had previously written papers for the profession in his area of expertise. He felt his university had now moved away from encouraging law academics to publish for the profession in trade journals and was now encouraging publishing in top-tier law journals, mostly read by other academics.

This coloured his view of research engagement and impact, which he thought of as the same thing. He described research engagement as 'some part of a broad academic or legal discourse in being ... a participant in that fiscal focus, as a receiver of information and also as a disseminator of information'. He said he saw impact similarly; however, he also viewed citations and references by judges and other academics as impact, 'Maybe it's ... getting picked up in court judgments and stuff like that.' As someone who did research in more theoretical areas, he said he struggled to have engagement outside of universities and he was disappointed about his impact to date: 'I would've hoped for a bit more, but you know that's how it is.' He said the others in his law school were getting far more citations than he was, and he was unsure about whether this was due to his area of expertise and the topics he wrote about. He noted a time when he had written an article on a more 'sexy topic' that had received heaps of citations.

Dr Matthews felt that research assessment exercises had changed the publishing strategies of universities, which were now more focused on rankings and international reputation than on having impact more locally and in smaller circles (such as the legal profession). However, he dutifully stated that if his university wanted him to publish only in top-tier law journals, then that is what he would focus on, even if it meant being less widely read and having less or no influence on his key audience (the profession): 'So, I largely confine, not entirely, but primarily confine myself to academic publication in journals.'

Additionally, he also engaged with the profession through doing talks at conferences, which were more practitioner focused, and through publishing his papers to repositories such as SSRN, to get his research seen by more people.

Dr Naomi Long

Position: Lecturer

Years as an academic: Less than five years

Gender: Female

Interview phase: Theoretical sampling

Engagement strategy: Connecting with people, conferences and events. Writing submissions; being a member of communities of practice

Main impacts: Being cited through submissions to inquiries with other academics; teaching, course design and mentoring impacts

Dr Naomi Long is a female lecturer who had been a law academic for less than five years at the time of the interview and had worked at one Australian university. Dr Long began her career as a lawyer, public servant and educator before moving into academia. Her background gave her a good understanding of engaging with people in different sectors outside of the academy.

She described research engagement as ‘I feel like engagement encompasses a broader range of things. To me, I feel like it’s connecting with ... stakeholders.’ Her experience with research engagement has included connecting with people at national and international conferences, where she presents her work through talks. Dr Long has also experienced research engagement through writing submissions to government inquiries with her colleagues, connecting with other academics through communities of practice and delivering information sessions. She noted that she has attempted to translate her academic research in places like *The Conversation* but has not always had success in this space. She wondered whether this was mainly due to publication outlets being over-saturated with articles on topical areas and from prominent academics.

She described research impact as follows:

I feel like my research has had an impact if the people who it has the potential to benefit get access to it ... And I don’t necessarily mean that they would have direct access to the research, but that the people say community legal centres or law firms, or different aspects of law have access to it. And that that might ideally, one day, shape how they might do certain things.

She also discussed the importance of being a resource for law firms and developing reciprocal relationships to support teaching activities, where she was able to support their initiatives.

Like other participants, Dr Long viewed research and teaching as overlapping and said she consistently translates her research into her teaching. She said this has given her experience in translating her research into more palatable pieces of information, suitable for non-expert audiences. In addition, Dr Long views the work she has undertaken on course design and teaching as some of her most impactful ventures. She said she has been contacted by former students who told her how much she had helped them with their studies and their career choices:

So a lot of those students have very rapidly gone out into the workplace and reported back, like how valued their skills are ... that they're bringing that into their workplaces. So ... lots of people have picked up really important jobs in these different areas. So, to me, that has been a big impact, much bigger than my research at this stage.

Dr Long felt proud of her contributions to students' careers.

Professor Daniel Swanson

Position: Professor

Years as an academic: Twenty-five-plus years

Gender: Male

Interview phase: Theoretical sampling

Engagement strategy: Attending conferences and networking events; being a member of public bodies

Main impacts: Writing books for academic and public consumption; developing international and national changes to policy and systems in area of expertise

Professor Daniel Swanson is a male professor who had been a law academic for 25 plus years at the time of the interview and had worked at several Australian and overseas universities. Professor Swanson had been an academic for his entire career and had worked and studied overseas before moving to Australia.

He described research engagement and impact as the same thing, and said he felt that research engagement and impact had occurred when an external party had taken up his research in some way: 'So someone reads it. Someone responds, someone thinks about it, to me would be [impact] so I think adoption, adoption.' He noted that although he had achieved several applied impacts nationally and internationally that had informed policy and law, he felt some of his biggest impacts were around his exploratory and curiosity-driven research. Professor Swanson said some of this work had been utilised heavily in the Australian High Court in informing their decisions. He felt that research did not always need to be specific or strategic, and sometimes it could just be 'exploring a question'.

Professor Swanson mentioned that the biggest issue he faced with research engagement and impact was how to record it, similar to experiences of other participants in the study. He also similarly experienced teaching as impact, explaining that his goal with teaching was to 'equip students with the capacity to continue to learn in a particular field'.

Professor Swanson enjoyed working with people outside of academia and noted that the connections he made with different people and groups sometimes occurred from networking to specific commercialisation projects about which he was contacted on the basis of his expertise or that he had applied for. He was also a member of several public bodies, where he was able to connect with like-minded people around his area of expertise. He explained that sometimes the biggest challenge in working with different people and bodies outside the academy was working out how to communicate with them. He stated that some industries he worked with were more suited to meeting in person, which meant he would repeatedly go back to meet with them to ensure that they were on the same page for their projects. Professor Swanson also enjoyed connecting with others at conferences, which he said were 'absolutely critical for learning new ideas for testing ideas, meeting people, forming networks'.

Professor Swanson's main impacts to date have been books and international and national changes to policy.

Professor Belinda Smith

Position: Professor

Years as an academic: Fifteen-plus years

Gender: Female

Interview phase: Theoretical sampling

Engagement strategy: Writing submissions to inquiries; media interviews; writing for *The Conversation* and other opinion article platforms, websites and social media; writing reports for courts and agencies

Main impacts: Changes to legislation and policy around area of expertise; impact on the community, which can access her research for legal purposes.

Professor Belinda Smith is a female professor who had been a law academic for over 15 years at the time of the interview and had worked at several Australian universities. Professor Smith began her career as a lawyer before coming to academia. At the time of the interview, she had recently moved to a new university and was getting used to not being as well known as she had been among staff at her former university.

She explained that it is often easy for her to achieve impact as her area of expertise is highly topical and comments are often sought by the media. She said having a good relationship with the media had been a key factor in her success as she was often a resource for them, and they were also a resource for her when she wanted to get her research seen beyond academia.

Professor Smith described research engagement as reporting her research back to stakeholders and the agencies with which she often works collaboratively. She discussed some of her research engagement experiences, which included writing submissions to government inquiries and giving evidence at inquiries. She also wrote reports for the courts related to her area of expertise. In addition to these activities, Professor Smith noted that she also gave presentations to departments with which she worked and actively worked on 'managing relationships' with these people, noting that this was key to her research engagement success. She discussed how she worked closely with the same organisations repeatedly as they trusted in her expertise and the value she brought to their projects.

Professor Smith described impact as follows:

I would define it by being a kind of core consideration for some kind of change that happens. So, when there's a policy change, or a guideline change, or law change, they'll say, you know, we heard from all these people about how we should approach this, maybe I was one of them ... I would think that if I've been called upon, and I and my opinions are reflected in the change, I would say that I've had some impact.

She was also adamant that impact was never achieved individually, and that several people and circumstances had to come together to create the resulting impact:

And I never think it's one person who did any of these things. Universities like to see this this in this way, which is just absolutely sort of obscene ... But it's always a group of people that [are] coalescing around an issue or a theme at any particular time. And a group of reports or a group of things that have happened in the community. So, I see myself as one of the voices in those things.

Finally, Professor Smith used her website for the general public to consume, which offered legal avenues for them. She also used Twitter to promote her research but did not use it to write opinions or make comments.

Dr Thomas Murray

Position: Senior Lecturer

Years as an academic: Five-plus years

Gender: Male

Interview phase: Theoretical sampling

Engagement strategy: Internal to law school including attending people's talks, attending conferences and workshops, and reading and reviewing other people's work; presentations to industry external to academia

Main impacts: Teaching impacts

Dr Thomas Murray is a male senior lecturer who had been a law academic for over five years at the time of the interview and had worked at one Australian university and one overseas university. Dr Murray became an academic straight after finishing his law degree and PhD and had not worked outside of academia.

He described research engagement as ‘being collegial ... So that means attending people’s talks, where possible, attending conferences and workshops, and also reading and reviewing other people’s work.’ He noted that although most of his engagement to date had been within his own law school, he was slowly being expected to do more engagement outside the academy, which included presentations to the industries associated with his area of expertise and a grant on which he was an investigator. He described impact as:

Roughly speaking if you said someone’s research [is] having a lot of impact ... I would think you meant has it been cited in a court ... You know, referenced in the past government submission. Has it shaped law reform, something like that?

Although he understood how the university and government described impact, he had a different understanding, based on his experience of impact:

So, research impact for me is writing something that ... for me that the impact I want to have is to write something that colleagues read, that they get something out of that they feel like they benefit from having read. And that ideally, that they engage with.

He explained that he saw citations from academic papers as a useful metric of impact but noted that he had not yet been cited much. He, like other participants, wondered whether that was due to his area of expertise, stating that he did not work in ‘high impact areas of law’, but mainly in theoretical areas. Dr Murray said he felt a bit ‘mystified’ about impact and how to achieve it. He was concerned that he would not have enough impact for promotion panels and for government grants that ‘want you to have impact ... that is measurable’.

Dr Murray talked a lot about his teaching and research, which took up most of his time. He also had several administrative/service roles at his university, some including mentoring of students, which he enjoyed. He admitted to enjoying research the most but felt his true and most direct impact was in teaching undergraduate law students. He said teaching was very rewarding for him as ‘it’s the biggest contribution I make to society’. Like other participants, he noted that teaching impact was difficult to quantify: ‘So teaching is interesting, because I think often the impacts

are difficult to quantify and measure difficult to observe.’ Dr Murray also used some of his research – mainly frameworks – to inform his teaching.

Ms Ilana Bolingford

Position: Researcher

Gender: Female

Years working in universities: Fifteen years

As constructivist grounded theory is co-constructed between the participants and the researcher, it is important to also include my own profile in this chapter.

As someone who has worked in the higher education sector for a long time, I originally began this PhD with an interest in the government’s development of policy relating to engagement and impact. In a previous role, I was heavily involved during the beginning stages of my law faculty’s strategic approach to the government’s proposed engagement and impact agenda from 2016 to 2018. I conducted research into the ways the United Kingdom had dealt with its Research Excellence Framework to develop some frameworks for how we could begin to approach the new assessment. It was at this stage (late 2016) that I began my PhD, so I began with an idea of what research engagement and impact were (from a policy perspective) and had some preconceptions about the directions the PhD would take.

I developed several research engagement and impact stories for marketing purposes and for the Engagement and impact assessment in 2018, where my interest continued to grow as I realised that even after the assessment had occurred, the university had not developed sufficient ways to capture impact. I also noted that the academics with whom I worked were still not sure of what was meant by research engagement and impact, with several still confusing the terminology. By this stage, I had already conducted my pilot interviews and was part-way through my full study interviews and was seeing similar things come up from my participants. Daily, I was seeing the issues that the law academics with whom I worked had in relation to research engagement and impact that helped me have a better understanding of my participants’ experiences of research engagement and impact. It also enabled me to be able to speak confidently about research engagement and impact with the participants. Finally, my experience working in this space allowed me

to have an insider view and a thorough understanding of research engagement and impact experiences of law academics.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the co-constructors of the data – the 14 participants and me as the researcher. It presented the vignettes of each of the participants and explained their individual experiences of research engagement and impact. The next chapter will discuss the findings of this thesis.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of this thesis, which used constructivist grounded theory (CGT) methods to develop the substantive theory. This chapter responds to the research question: *How do Australian law academics experience research engagement and research impact?*

The findings of this thesis were developed from analysing the data that was co-constructed between myself as the researcher and the 14 participants. I have named the substantive theory 'Navigating Research Engagement and Impact: A Grounded Theory Exploration of Australian Law Academics' Strategies and Experiences'. I chose this name because it represents the overall experience of the participants navigating their way through various barriers, bureaucracies and policies while employing their own strategies to achieve research impact.

First, I will present the theory and explain the phenomenon. Second, I discuss each of the seven categories of experience that inform the substantive grounded theory. The seven categories – Negotiating Law school and university culture; Prioritising time; Being an expert; Contributing to change; Planning for impact; Engaging and translating; and Cultivating impact through teaching and learning – represent the core elements of the findings. Third, I discuss the relationships between the categories, which are complex and multifaceted. I then conclude the chapter and introduce the final chapter of the thesis.

5.2 The grounded theory

A constructivist grounded theory signifies a mutual 'construction' of data between participants and the researcher. It is a methodology that seeks to understand and capture the tacit meanings actors place on their actions in their own world, as constructionists see participants' voices and views as integral to the analysis (Charmaz, 2008b).

The aim of this thesis was to construct a substantive theory of the law academics' experiences of research engagement and impact. It sought to understand the lived experiences of the participants, delving into their professional worlds to seek answers to the phenomenon. The resulting grounded theory revealed how Australian law

academics' experiences with research engagement and impact were intricately entwined within their academic and institutional environment. Their experiences were consistently influenced by the culture of their law school, their university and government policies, all of which affected the opportunities and barriers they encountered. They encountered collective challenges, including time constraints and workload-related challenges, which left them with limited energy and time to devote to research engagement and impact activities. Their recognition as experts, both within and beyond academia, stood as a key element of their journey, driven by their contributions in teaching, research and activities outside academia. Through these activities, such as policy submissions and contributions to teaching and curriculum design, they not only made an impact but also played a part in effecting positive change. Building relationships with stakeholders, meticulous planning and strategic thinking became indispensable tools as they grappled with a perceived lack of control in achieving research impact. The achievement of research engagement and impact was also facilitated by effective communication strategies and the translation of their expertise, often involving interactions with various stakeholders, the legal profession, and the media. Furthermore, integrating research into their teaching, sharing personal experiences and guiding students in their learning and career development proved to be significant components of their overall impact. Collectively, these elements defined the complex landscape within which Australian law academics navigated their journey towards research engagement and impact.

The seven categories that eventuated from the co-constructed interviews and data analysis provided an insightful glimpse into the realities of Australian law academics' experiences of research engagement and impact. These categories present a holistic view of the participants' experiences of research engagement and impact in Australian law schools, one that is grounded from the voices of the participants. The process of coding the interview data, memoing, and construction of the properties and categories that eventuated are discussed further in Chapter 3 at 3.6.2.2 *Focused coding*. This thesis presents the first original grounded theory about Australian law academics' experiences of research engagement and impact.

The experiences of the participants are shaped by several elements including university and law school culture and processes, personal values, technology, reputation, and higher education policy. The seven categories are experienced in quite complex ways, with the relationships between the categories informing, supporting, or overlapping

with each other. The categories were not always experienced by all the participants, and sometimes they were experienced differently by various participants.

The theory presented here, *Navigating Research Engagement and Impact: A Grounded Theory Exploration of Australian Law Academics' Strategies and Experiences*, is a substantive theory in that the findings are relevant to the participants, the researcher the time-period and the phenomenon itself. The theory represents multiple and collective voices and experiences, which is more meaningful than the individual experiences in themselves. Table 2 summarises the seven categories as experienced by the participants.

Table 2. The seven categories of experience

No	Category	Description
1	Negotiating law school and university culture	The participants experienced research engagement and impact though navigating the often-bureaucratic university environment. This included dealing with the culture of their law school, university and the higher-level policies mandated by the government that informed how they experienced opportunities and barriers for research engagement and impact.
2	Prioritising time	The participants experienced several barriers to pursuing research engagement and impact activities due to workload and lack of time.
3	Being an expert	The participants experienced research engagement and impact though being experts. They were recognised as experts in academia through their teaching and research, and outside of academia through their research, which included engagement and impact activities.
4	Contributing to change	The participants experienced impact through research engagement activities such as writing submissions and influencing policy. They also contributed to academic change through teaching and curriculum design contributions.
5	Planning for impact	The participants experienced research engagement and impact through the development of key relationships with stakeholders. They often felt impact was not something they had any control over, which often meant planning and strategising to retain a sense of control. They were also reliant upon the expertise of others and of policy-makers to achieve impact.
6	Engaging and translating	The participants experienced impact through engaging and translating within and beyond academia. Often participants used their expertise and knowledge to inform student learning, and to engage with stakeholders and media.
7	Cultivating impact through teaching and learning	The participants experienced impact through teaching and learning. They did this through translating their research into their teaching syllabus and using their experiences and backgrounds to inform student learning and career development.

This chapter first presents a discussion of how the participants defined research engagement and impact based on their lived experiences. It then presents discussion on each category and its properties. In keeping with constructivist grounded theory principles, quotes from participants are used throughout to represent the participants' voices and ensure the category and its properties are grounded in the data. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the relationships between the categories.

5.3 Defining research engagement and impact

This section introduces the participants' experiences of research engagement and impact, which includes a discussion of how they defined research engagement and impact and how they experienced this phenomenon. At the start of the interviews, participants were asked to define how they understood research engagement and impact, and to explain any experiences they had. They were asked to define these activities from their own personal experiences rather than what was expected by the government or their universities. This section also includes a brief discussion of academic impact and how the participants experienced this.

The following sections highlight some activities the participants viewed as experiences of research engagement and impact. Throughout this chapter, experiences were often described as 'engagement work', 'impact work' or 'impact activities'. These descriptions will now be discussed further to articulate how the participants described and experienced these statements.

5.3.1 Describing research engagement and impact

This section discusses how the participants described and understood research engagement and impact. Engagement was described as a 'necessary precursor to impact' (Professor Paul Miller), while impact was described as 'influencing or introducing change' (Professor Belinda Smith). Although several participants described research engagement and impact as the 'same thing', some viewed them as separate activities, while others saw both exercises as ultimately entwined. Even participants who felt they were different sometimes struggled to unravel the concepts. When asked whether she viewed research impact and engagement as different things, Professor Sharie Kemp said:

Yeah, I think they are. So how do I define them – that's an interesting question. So, impact I think is something that – I guess to me – is something that is measurable in the sense that I did this research, and I can show say that x number of media outlets reported on it, or we were quoted x number of times in the law reform inquiry and so on, so it's a measurable way of demonstrating how we've – I was going to say how we've engaged. [Professor Kemp]

It was noted across the interviews that defining research engagement and impact was difficult as it frequently meant different things to different people and in various contexts. Some even said their universities had not been clear about what constituted research engagement and impact, which made the task of describing it even more difficult. Across the participants, research engagement and impact were generally thought to be two distinct activities, with the former being activities undertaken by the academic (such as submissions or talks) and the latter being the outputs or results from these activities (such as changes to legislation or changes to business practices) that stemmed from the former activities taking place. This was put succinctly by Dr Hannah Kirby: 'So I think the impact really is in some ways what consequences our academic work ... has in the real world.'

The former Australian Research Council Engagement and Impact Assessment (EI) (2018) also helped some of the participants to understand research engagement and impact expectations more effectively, as they were able to base their assumptions on the impact assessment narratives that arose as part of the EI assessment. In the interviews that took place after the EI, participants were better able to describe research engagement and impact – for example, Dr Thomas Murray explained impact as: 'I would think ... has it been cited in a court. Has it been... referenced in a past government submission. Has it shaped law reform, something like that', while Professor Belinda Smith described it as 'a kind of core consideration for some kind of change that happens'. Conversely, Professor Daniel Swanson still ultimately saw them as the same thing leading to his work being 'adopted' or 'taken up' by people outside academia. Being cited, making societal or legislative changes, and having work taken up by stakeholders and the legal profession were consistently discussed by participants as evidence of their impact.

5.3.2 Engagement and impact work

The participants experienced several different types of activities as what is described throughout this chapter as ‘engagement and impact work’. These types of activities fell outside the standard activities of academics, which included teaching, research, and service (or administration).

The activities or work mainly discussed by participants included writing submissions and reports, being on external committees and boards, media engagement and knowledge translation, providing expertise and advice on matters and doing talks or workshops. There were also several other activities discussed that were experienced by fewer participants, including social media engagement and opinion pieces, judicial and legal practitioner training, consultancies with stakeholders and international impact (usually through committees).

Several participants also discussed writing articles for non-expert audiences through the popular online research news platform *The Conversation*; this is mentioned several times throughout this chapter, as it formed part of the participants’ experience of knowledge translation.

5.3.3 Academic research impact

Academic research was another area where participants experienced research impact. Academic impact in and of itself fell outside the ARC definitions around research impacts ‘beyond academia’, and often included internal or self-serving impacts such as publication citations from publishing in prestigious journals. Interestingly, ERA shaped research quality assessment within academia, which in turn led to perceptions of what constitutes quality in academia. From the perspective of the participants, quality publications often included those that led to high ERA rankings for their universities such as Scimago Quartile 1 publications and other prestigious Australian law journals they were encouraged to publish in (see for e.g. Smyth, 2009a). Therefore, publishing high quality research in prestigious journals had led some of the participants to view being cited by other academics as very important and impactful. These participants viewed contributions to the legal literature as important to informing new ways of thinking about legal issues. Being cited by judges or international case law was viewed as the impact pinnacle of publishing top quality papers and books. Notably, several of the participants

discussed how their universities were moving away from publishing in legal trade journals read by the legal profession, which understandably produced barriers to impact for some of the participants.

5.3.4 Summary

This section examines participants' experiences of research engagement and impact based on the Australian Research Council definitions and university expectations, as well as their experiences outside of these official definitions. Participants were encouraged to describe all their experiences in their own words, allowing them to discuss aspects beyond the government's parameters. This section offers an overview of how Australian law academics perceive research engagement and impact. The following section introduces the first category of the substantive theory: Negotiating law school and university culture.

5.4 Category 1: Negotiating law school and university culture

In this category, the participants explained that they were often prevented from undertaking research engagement and impact activities by the institutional culture of their law schools and universities. This was revealed when participants talked about how they must align their research and publication strategies with that of their law schools and universities. This level of expectation bordered on feeling managed and lacking in autonomy to pursue individual research directions.

This foundational category also highlighted the cultural and often in-built practices of law schools that prevent or inhibit law academics from achieving research engagement and impact, namely university management expectations, high levels of bureaucracy and process, lack of publication freedom and lack of autonomy in research freedom. Additionally, some participants felt like outsiders and that they did not belong to or fit into their law school social structures, often due to their background and how they came to academia. This affected their confidence in approaching other academics for collaboration, and consequently their potential for impact. Some participants also felt that more could be done to ensure law school environments were more cohesive, encouraging collaboration between siloed research areas throughout the school, thus improving research strengths and opportunities for research engagement and impact.

This category also discusses how the participants experienced the cultural, in-built norms of their law schools and includes the properties: *Dealing with bureaucratic processes and university expectations*; *Being managed*; *Feeling like an outsider*; *Disincentivising and discouraging non-academic work*; and *Applying for grants and funding*. These properties informed the overall experience of the participants around law school culture. Although this category has a slightly negative tone, it was written this way to best represent the participants' experiences honestly. The purpose of this category is to understand that a lot of the challenges faced by participants were due to institutional pressures, bureaucracy and workload.

Negotiating law school and university culture shaped the lived experiences of the participants as law academics, influencing their entire experience of research engagement and impact. This foundational category hence informs each of the categories of experience throughout this study.

5.4.1 Dealing with bureaucratic processes and university expectations

In this property, *Dealing with bureaucratic processes and university expectations*, the participants experienced the negative aspects of dealing with bureaucratic processes and university expectations. Bureaucratic processes included time-consuming and often unnecessary paperwork, and slow processing of grants and funding contracts, which often frustrated the participants who had worked hard to obtain partners for grants and consultancies. In addition to this, participants' expectations were shaped further by government-level higher education policy and processes that filtered down into university-level and school-level expectations. The process of how these filtered down into performance measures for individual academics was explained by Associate Professor Katherine Mason:

I think every university now is affected by its expectations for ERA, which then filters down through benchmarking ... down to the individual academics ... as academics, we have set benchmarks against which we are expected to perform. Those benchmarks are going to be informed by what the ARC is looking for, under the ERA ... [Associate Professor Mason]

Subsequently, research assessment exercises influenced several of the discussions with participants, who discussed how these practices had negatively affected their

experiences as academics, particularly in relation to their academic freedom and autonomy as researchers. Dr Laura Glover explained that she spent two years working on a report for a Royal Commission, which she claimed would produce extensive impact, yet her university would not count it towards her publication 'points' under the research assessment exercise:

I think they should be giving points for submissions ... The criteria could be the same, they could still have to have original research. So, the peer review question is one that comes up often and with the report to the Royal Commission for example that went out to two professors for peer review before it was published. It was thoroughly reviewed. It was reviewed by external professors; it was reviewed by the Royal Commission who are judges mostly. We got extensive feedback on that draft report before it was published. It was deep, extensive original research, it was a contribution to new knowledge, it was peer reviewed. It should be ERA rateable. [Dr Glover]

Dr Glover stated that she felt something was seriously wrong with a system that would not count highly impactful work as 'ERA-rateable'. She also felt that the stringent focus on publishing in highly ranked academic journals and with academic publishers needed to change in order for academics to have impact:

[The] government says on one hand we want you to have impact and on the other hand [it] disincentives us from doing impactful work. Not completely, but the examples I've given you are examples of perverse outcomes ... of a system that needs ... amending. But possibly not overhauling, but it wouldn't be that hard to add in categories of publications which are still at a high academic standard so ... original contribution to knowledge – tick. Externally peer reviewed – tick. You know all of those things that go to ensuring that work is of a high academic quality can still be associated with an output that's done with an agency that is not an academic journal and is not an academic book publisher ... it just needs to change. [Dr Glover]

As well as feeling negative about the implications of research assessment exercises on academic research freedom, some participants also felt pressured to conform to

their university's research goals. Although the participants at the professoriate level mostly noted feeling that they were not burdened by their universities' strict publishing and research-related goals, the more mid-level to junior-level participants discussed a constant feeling of being audited and forced to align their research goals with those of their law school and university. The experience of the professors of feeling less 'pressure' and more 'freedom' is discussed further in the category *Being an expert*. Often the professors felt they were more trusted and valued, and hence described this as feeling as if they had 'made it' in academia.

Several of the participants explained that they felt pressured to do research in areas that aligned with what their law school expected, which varied between law schools. For example, Professor Hao Lee explained that even though he had mostly had positive experiences, there was a time when he was being forced into an area of law that he did not research in, due to working with a dean who did not understand his sociolegal research: 'he kept trying to drag me into black letter areas'. Eventually, as a professor, he no longer felt pressured to do research in areas that were not of interest to him. Professor Paul Miller highlighted a similar experience, seeing other academics being forced into narrower research fields to fit constantly changing university expectations. Professor Daniel Swanson said he had experienced this narrowing of research and put it down to the university taking government policy too far: 'I think they have an expectation by the current government, maybe any other government might have, that the research has to be targeted for a goal. And I find that quite narrow.' Professor Swanson also explained that expectations changed really quickly and were often linked to changes in government: 'So, it's responsive to bureaucratic demands.'

Participants also discussed how the bureaucratic demands of their universities often left them time poor, which prevented them from having time in their workload for research engagement and impact activities. A reduction in professional administrative staff had seen some of the participants absorbing this work, which included booking rooms for events and organising and running their own events without any administrative assistance. Dr Thomas Murray explained how the decrease in administrative staff had 'shifted the burden' onto academics:

And, for me, the biggest obstacles I face day to day are the lack of administrative support that I get from the university. Just the lack of

institutional support broadly ... the paperwork seems to grow every year, the number of applications and forms we need to fill out to do something really simple, like book a room seems to increase. And the amount of support we get in doing that seems to decrease ... So, things like organising conferences, or workshops, not to speak of funding for travel, are very difficult. They're very difficult things to get any help with. They're not things that academics are trained in and just things we're expected to do as part of our role. [Dr Murray]

Professor Mohammed Aaiz had also experienced this, stating that the bureaucracy had gotten much worse over time:

The way administration works from the centre through to the schools and the faculties has become far, far more bureaucratic and with it has come an awful lot more administrative demand ... [Professor Aaiz]

Further to these administrative demands, other participants noted feeling frustrated about the slow and often bureaucratic processes involved with managing grants and consultancies. Associate Professor Julian Henson explained that he felt very frustrated by the amount of time it took for grants to be signed off so work could begin. He said this was also often seen by external stakeholders as one of the negatives of working with academics, which in turn limited his, and other academics', prospects of working with industry partners and other external stakeholders:

Universities are ... not very agile in their dealings with industry. I mean individuals can be, departments can be, universities as a whole can't be ... And the timelines and multiple approval steps that you need to go through to do anything can put off the external stakeholders. [Associate Professor Henson]

On top of the bureaucracy within the university, he also explained that the whole funding process, including applying for and being successful for government funding, was overly cumbersome: 'I don't want to wait two years to get approval from the government to do it. And then eight months to put the grant application in. The success rate is [also] so low.' These barriers discouraged participants from applying for grants due to the slow processes and very low chances of success.

5.4.2 *Being managed*

In this property, the participants experienced *Being managed* by their universities, which often left them feeling negative. The participants were asked during their interviews what the most negative aspects of research impact and engagement were for them. Dr Thomas Murray responded that he felt that universities managed and controlled academics and that the Engagement and Impact assessment² was just another way to do so: 'I think in general, the way modern universities manage, and control academics has a negative impact on research productivity.'

Being managed included experiences of feeling audited and also feeling forced to change publication directions. Even as a full professor, Professor Hao Lee explained that he had experienced being managed and continued to feel 'managed': 'I mean, there's this constant ... environment of audit, you know'. He clarified that he had to complete paperwork every year on his progress and was constantly being told he did not fill it in correctly. He stated that he would much rather just get on with his research rather than deal with completing unnecessary paperwork for very little benefit. Similarly, Professor Daniel Swanson explained that this micro-management 'audit' culture depended on university and law school management. He said that having a head of school who was supportive was very important, particularly for early career researchers who often felt forced into complying with management expectations in order to stay employed. Professor Swanson said that in the past he had either felt supported or completely undermined by management: 'It depends upon who's in charge of management and what they value, and how their approach is.' As someone who had worked in several law schools, he said it frequently came down to whether what he was doing aligned well with the ethos of the university management. Like Professor Swanson, Dr Murray stated that research agendas often revolved around the agendas of the dean and head of school. Dr Murray said he did not currently feel overly pressured to publish in particular journals. However, he said the leadership focus in his law school had been to get academics to publish less in trade and professional journals, or those with a narrow scope and low readership. His law school had also told its academics to publish more

² Refers to the ARC Engagement and Impact Assessment exercise 2018 now disbanded.

internationally, which Dr Murray explained was problematic for some of his colleagues:

So, for instance, if you work on Australian constitutional law, that is a complaint that they [colleagues] have, that they get told that they need to publish for an international audience ... they say, and I think rightly ... well, I don't work on an international legal issue. Why would anyone who's not interested in Australian constitutional law or Queensland's evidence law be interested in what I have to say? [Dr Murray]

These expectations around publishing led to some early and mid-career researchers such as Dr Jason Matthews inevitably accepting that they must comply with what the university expected of them, even if it could potentially limit their research impact opportunities. This experience regarding changing personal publication strategies to fit the direction of his law school's research assessment strategy was experienced by Dr Matthews. Although he discussed that he was happy to do the work that was expected of him, he also noted that he had been quite disappointed with his impact to date and had mostly experienced impact as academic impact (publications). Previously, he had written papers for the legal profession and, due to formerly working as a lawyer, he had an idea about how to approach and engage with this audience. However, his university had told him to no longer publish in professional journals as it affected its rating for research assessment exercises. He therefore had to change his strategy to publish in high-quality law journals, thus limiting his access to potential audiences where his work would have had some impact. He explained how his university's research performance strategy constantly influenced his publishing directions and consequently his lack of research impact:

But for instance, three years ago we were told ... that we should be trying to publish more internationally ... and I did. I published an article in the United States. And then ... we were told we should publish less [internationally], and we should publish in ... a list of eight Australian law journals ... basically what we were told was that a survey of law schools and you know rankings had revealed that the top-ranked ERA law schools had an overwhelming number of publications in [those] eight journals. And they were basically eight upper-tier Australian journals [A and A star].

... in the last several years I switched my research very heavily towards publications in A star and A journals, particularly A star ... which has meant I've published fewer articles, but probably of much higher quality but also very much articles for an academic audience, and I suspect that they're not very widely read. [Dr Matthews]

Overall, these experiences of *Being managed* left several participants feeling as if they had no choice in their research directions and outputs. The fear of being 'audited' left many with no option but to comply.

5.4.3 Disincentivising and discouraging non-academic work

Some participants experienced their universities as *Disincentivising and discouraging non-academic work* in order to perform better in the research assessment exercise. Several participants expressed that they felt outputs that could be counted towards the research assessment exercise were all that their universities cared about. This focus on research assessment exercise-rated outputs often came at a price – with the participants being too time poor to explore non-academic, more impactful work outside of academia. Professor Jane Lambert highlighted that the pressure to prioritise academic outputs over more creative and possibly impactful activities was discouraging. She expressed frustration at having to focus on research outputs rather than pursuing work aimed at non-academic audiences.

That's frustrating as I'd love to do it [create infographics based on research] but on the other hand it's like another whole world, another career or whatever ... but you couldn't count it for work and have an output ... [Professor Lambert]

The importance of having research assessment exercise-rateable outputs was discussed by several participants in the study. Dr Laura Glover experienced having to make the hard choice to give up her weekends to focus on her research impact activities as her normal working hours were taken up by teaching and academic research publications. When asked whether she felt she should be focusing on just publishing more articles rather than dedicating time to her research impact activities, she said:

I have to [focus on publishing more articles]. My job depends on that. If I don't publish – if I don't have my points, my ERA points – then I'm in trouble professionally. So, you don't have any choice. [Dr Glover]

She also stated that preparing submissions and reports for government had somewhat hindered her career stating: 'The choice to do other more impactful research is taken at the risk or to the detriment of your academic career – it's bizarre.' She recounted a time when she had spent two years preparing a report and recommendations for a Royal Commission, that while impactful for policy and law, did not enhance her academic record. As a result she noted:

So, my report to the Royal Commission will have significant impact in policy and law but minimal impact for me personally ... in academia and the problem is that this provides disincentives for academics to do that work. [Dr Glover]

Similarly, Professor Paul Miller felt these policies disincentivised and discouraged academics from doing impactful work:

I think that recent research policy in a sense, and workload policies and what have you, is militated against a concentration of research, which may have immediate impact with or in the community of which the university operates nationally or locally. [Professor Miller]

The main problem faced by participants was that they felt there was a lack of support from their universities around attending to research engagement and impact activities that were not reportable for research assessment purposes, providing little internal incentives to pursue these activities. Although this was often not formally said by management to the participants, it was reflected in the processes and policies that limited the types of research the participants could do to achieve their 'ERA-points' as Dr Glover succinctly put it.

Overall, these experiences of *Disincentivising and discouraging non-academic work* left several participants unable to do research engagement and impact activities, instead choosing to focus on activities that would be valued by their law schools and universities through their performance reviews.

5.4.4 Feeling like an outsider

Some participants experienced *Feeling like an outsider*, which influenced their overall experience as law academics. The experiences discussed in this property were mainly felt by those who had come to academia after a career in another profession. This property explains how these participants experienced their law school culture from either an individual personal perspective, or from a whole of law school perspective. For example, Dr Naomi Long discussed her individual personal experience of feeling like an outsider in her law school, while Dr Thomas Murray explained that often an entire law school can operate in an incohesive manner, which in turn disrupts the culture of that law school. This lack of cohesion and sense of belonging affected the participants' overall experiences of research engagement and impact. This was because a sense of belonging informed positive experiences such as collaboration and mentoring opportunities, which led to possibilities for research engagement and impact. These various, yet similar experiences will be discussed below.

Dr Long's experience of *Feeling like an outsider* was discussed in relation to institutional belonging. As someone who started off in roles outside of academia before becoming a sessional academic and then an ongoing academic, she experienced what she articulated as 'feeling like a non-person'. She described her experience as being ignored by academics in her law school, who pretended not to know who she was, even when she had been a sessional for a couple of years. She said that even after five or six years, they would still not know her name. She explained: 'Sessionals are generally, at least in my experience, treated as outsiders and almost as non-persons.' This experience left her feeling as if she did not fit into her law school, even as a fully tenured academic. In addition to this, Dr Long felt that her knowledge and experience outside the university were not valued and that anything she had done or achieved outside the parameters of the university was not seen as important. She explained that she was unsure why she had experienced being treated differently but wondered whether it was due to her background outside of academia and joining the law school as a sessional academic. She frequently felt that she was viewed by others as someone who was not a true academic as her research workload was 'very minuscule' compared with others. She explained that in

her law school there was a 'disproportionate focus on research', which meant those with less research workload were not considered to be true academics:

I would still pass myself in some respects as an outsider, like I don't necessarily identify as what people might think of as a true academic. And that's not so much ... me. That's more, I think, reflecting how I feel I'm perceived ... It's probably also partly because of research and the sort of disproportionate focus on research and because I'm teaching, I sort of feel that my credibility is diminished a little bit because of that. [Dr Long]

Dr Laura Glover similarly experienced feeling like an outsider as, like Dr Long, she felt her experience working in policy for many years was not valued or recognised in academia. This meant she essentially had to begin her new career as an academic from scratch, as several of the articles and reports she had developed in her former role were not considered relevant for her academic research track record:

I felt a little bit undervalued when I first came here as I didn't have a traditional academic background ... when I first transitioned from public policy to academia, I had to think very carefully about how to market myself to academia. And it was a struggle to step across that line as the sort of research I did as a public policy-maker wasn't recognised in academia because as a public policy-maker you generally don't put your name on things. [Dr Glover]

This lack of recognition left her feeling like she had to essentially work longer hours and on weekends to develop her research track record and still pursue her research engagement and impact activities. She explained:

And it's taken about six years to start establishing the sort of ... you know despite the fact that I'm in my [age omitted] I'm still an early career researcher. And getting a track record established ... I try very hard to push back on the working the weekend, but you know that doesn't work, sometimes. [Dr Glover]

In addition to these experiences of personally feeling like an outsider and undervalued in academia, others noted how the law school culture and environment itself contributed to a lack of belonging, which affected opportunities for

collaboration, mentoring and growth. Some participants discussed that there was siloing in their law schools, meaning expertise was not well spread across the school. Dr Long noted her disappointment that there were not easier ways to connect with the ‘phenomenal’ professors in her law school:

It feels to me that it would be really efficient for people to be kind of a well, you know ... sitting on the coat-tails of the different professors and ... pushing but also being pulled through different chains of research that really concretises our expertise in different areas. But it doesn't really work that way. And there's quite limited connection between the professors who have phenomenal expertise and experience and then the lower-level academics. [Dr Long]

Dr Long explained that most people in her law school just did their own thing, producing an almost individualistic culture that she felt was not overly efficient when it came to achieving success as a group:

I find the culture like ... to me ... every single academic is like their own small business. And they're trying to do their own thing in their own space in their own research field ... It's very inefficient. A lot of a lot of phenomenal brains trust work being done for no benefit, which seems a bit crazy ... But it also means we completely dilute our expertise as a school or faculty. [Dr Long]

Like Dr Long, Dr Thomas Murray felt his law school was ‘fractured’ as it did not engage in any common projects to achieve success as a group: ‘[I] think our ... the law schools, culture is a tiny bit moribund at the moment. There's a sense in which we're all sort of fractured and atomised and don't really engage with in any kind of common project’. He also noted seeing more people writing and fewer people reading and engaging with the work of others, which did not help to develop a more cohesive culture. Like Dr Long, he observed the siloing of particular research expertise in research groups, while other academics preferred to work alone, contributing to an individualist culture.

These experiences informed how these early and mid-career researchers experienced research engagement and impact – without collaborating with more senior academics, they were often left to figure out, on their own, how to approach

industry or to collaborate on grants. Reputation is an important part of achieving research engagement and impact success, hence often collaborations help junior academics to make a name for themselves through being associated with high-profile research professors. This lack of belonging, feeling like an outsider and lack of cohesion contribute to an individualistic culture where every individual feels they have to make it on their own in academia.

5.4.5 Applying for grants and funding

In this property, *Applying for grants and funding*, the participants experienced having to apply for grants and funding as an expectation of their roles as academics. Grants often required applicants to show impact outside of academia, which was articulated within the grant application itself for public-funded grants, and for industry grants and consultancies. This process of articulating potential impact for grants was important for the government to see – which is quite different from university expectations, which are more focused on publications and reputation (as discussed earlier in this chapter). These conflicting university and government processes left participants feeling frustrated with the whole experience of applying for grants and managing their successful grants, as they felt the university only cared about making money and increasing its reputation while caring very little about the outcomes of the research and potential for impact outside of academia.

Some participants noted frustration around how their universities managed successful grants, including the amount of overheads charged on projects that left participants unable to compete for grants in the not-for-profit and community group spaces. Professor Belinda Smith discussed her experience about being priced out of this type of research due to her university pricing on commercial grants and consultancies, and how she attempted to beat the system: ‘So, I find myself trying to get money, find money that I can do that work, without charging them the ridiculous proportions that the university suggests we should be charging.’ She highlighted that several of the organisations with which she wanted to do research essentially could not afford to work with her. This, in essence, prevented her from having research engagement and impact with the community and not-for-profit groups where she felt her research could have an impact. Professor Jane Lambert similarly felt frustrated about her university’s approach to funding:

So, what frustrates me is that you know most law academics are engaged one way or another with the profession or policy makers or law making but it's all a public good that we're kind of working towards rather than something you can make money out of. [Professor Lambert]

This drive to make money and operate more as a business than a publicly funded body left some participants frustrated. Professor Mohammed Aaiz said that in his 20 years in the academy, he had noticed a growing tendency for the university to view itself more as a business enterprise than a public institution that was subject to giving back to the public. He felt like this needed to change, especially in relation to the 'grant factory' approach he had seen some universities take in order to obtain the bulk of the government's research funding and to increase their reputation. He explained that university research offices were hiring a lot of people to help 'churn out' grant applications to get as many in as they could. He noted that this neoliberal, business-focused approach to obtaining funding had especially affected the workload and morale of junior staff: 'I think it has impacted people, particularly I would say the junior and middle levels of the academy.' He said the whole process now is so competitive that it has become almost 'gladiatorial':

I'm not too sure about funding anymore, it's a circus, it's a real circus and the effort people, including me, put in and don't get up ... I have had many successes but also many failures and I was determined to another one next year but I'm not so sure I am going to seek out these huge efforts to go into these sorts of circus-like arenas [Professor Aaiz]

As someone who had experienced having to apply for grants over a 20-year career in academia, Professor Aaiz felt it was an unnecessary burden on law academics, as he felt the funding system was more set up for the natural sciences. He also said that some of his most impactful work probably did not need all that funding. In addition to Professor Aaiz's comment around universities' factory-oriented approach to obtaining grants, Professor Belinda Smith experienced the other side of this: having very little post-award grant support or administrative help, leaving her to feel that the university was only concerned with obtaining the funding, not with managing it:

So, one thing I would say too about universities is they're very front heavy. So, they have all this pressure to get grants, which is fine. But then when you get the grants, there's a real lack of support post management grants. [Professor Smith]

All this extra workload and bureaucratic processes left the participants feeling, as Professor Aaiz put it, 'quite jaded'. However, several of them noted that the practices around funding could be reformed. Both Professor Aaiz and Professor Lambert discussed that they felt universities needed to focus on the research itself and the outcomes (or impact of that research) rather than the continued focus on money and reputation. Professor Aaiz suggested a way forward:

So maybe there should be a greater emphasis on the way in which small amounts of money can be used in the most efficacious manner to lead to good outcomes. For some enterprises that don't require a lot of empirical work, that could effectively mean nothing. I think we think it's the only way we can do good research but I'm not sure that's the case in the social sciences that we have pots of money. You could be very efficacious in the way you use little bits of money and still produce good stuff. [Professor Aaiz]

The participants experienced *Applying for grants and funding* negatively, with most unhappy with the overly cumbersome processes, high levels of bureaucracy, timeframes, and low success rates. As Professor Aaiz said, it is overly burdensome for law academics who do not require big pots of money to produce impactful grant outcomes. Several participants noted that they felt the whole system was broken and needed to be amended.

5.4.6 Summary

All participants within Australian law schools encountered the challenge of *Negotiating law school and university culture*, which was a shared experience. Many participants had to grapple with extensive bureaucratic processes and strict university demands, which often hindered their ability to effectively engage and make an impact. The cultural dimensions of their work also played a significant role, as participants felt they were being closely managed and frequently experienced a

sense of isolation or a lack of cohesion among colleagues in the law school. Additionally, the participants expressed frustration with the grant application and funding processes, highlighting a pressing need for systemic change across the higher education landscape to facilitate academics in their pursuit of meaningful research engagement and impact. Notably, the comments on university culture revealed an underlying theme of time management and allocation, reflecting a common concern about time utilisation and the need to make deliberate choices about how to invest their time. This aspect will be the primary focus of the next section.

5.5 Category 2: Prioritising time

In *Prioritising time*, the participants experienced time as a limited resource, which affected their ability to pursue research engagement and impact activities. Although some participants wanted to seek out research engagement and impact activities, many were prevented from doing so due to highly unbalanced and inflexible workloads that failed to reflect the often serendipitous and time-consuming nature of engagement and impact activities. This was compounded by frustration that this extra work was not recognised or valued by universities as it had yet to be reflected in workload, performance reviews or promotion. The participants felt a lack of autonomy and were constrained by the values and performance standards expected by their university, which sometimes conflicted with their own values and what they wanted to achieve from their work.

This category discusses the lived experiences of how the participants prioritised their time to meet competing demands as law academics. *Prioritising time* covers the properties of *Prioritising valued work*; *Questioning workload*; *Balancing workload*; and *Structuring work week*.

5.5.1 Prioritising valued work

When *Prioritising valued work*, the participants explained that they must direct their time to the work expected of them in their roles as academics, including teaching, research, and service. Participants generally observed that, in their roles as law academics, there were no incentives or performance measures for them to be undertaking research engagement and impact activities that included things like writing submissions, engaging with the legal profession through seminars and

translating their research for non-expert general audiences in places such as *The Conversation*.

The participants consistently highlighted feelings of disempowerment and a lack of autonomy in their work, and often referred to quantified neoliberal measures of productivity, including things like student surveys on their teaching, metrics around their publications and how much income they were bringing into the university. Several of the participants felt disempowered to pursue tasks such as research engagement and impact, and other activities that they felt were important to their career progression. A number of participants valued having social impact through their research but felt prevented from doing it due to over-extended workloads, often full of teaching tasks, meetings, administration, marking and several other low-value, time-consuming tasks such as booking rooms for events or filling in forms.

Most participants took the view that they should prioritise the work valued by their institutions and recognised in their performance reviews and for promotion, as this work was a requirement of their role. Nevertheless, some participants chose to prioritise both their standard work and their research engagement and impact activities, finding that this came with a sacrifice to personal time. As Dr Hannah Kirby explained, it would be more efficient and less time-consuming to stick to working on tasks on which she would be assessed. She admitted spending a lot of her personal spare time working on research engagement and impact activities as she could not find the time to fit this into a regular working week. She expressed frustration that she was doing all this extra work, while others were doing the bare minimum, focusing only on their standard workloads without consequences:

I think there are really two types of academics. So, there are ones that are very interested and engaged in things like engagement with community and would do it anyway and there's maybe another category who are just ... maybe this is a bit of an exaggeration ... but they are at two different ends of the spectrum. So, you have ones who are very engaged who do it anyway, who are doing lots of stuff anyway – doing lots of research and teaching – and they'll just do it anyway ... And what about those people who are not very engaged or ensuring their work has impact – will their behaviour be really modified by this or is it just extra work for those already doing extra work? [Dr Kirby]

Sacrificing weekends was often the 'cost of having impact', as Dr Laura Glover explained. She expressed a similar experience to Dr Kirby in that she valued doing research engagement and impact activities, which meant choosing to work weekends. She said: 'Everyone is very busy! But this is the thing though – if you want to have impact it's a busy life. You feel like you've got a full workload but then another inquiry has just kicked off.' Dr Glover said that due to very short turnarounds on activities like submissions to inquiries, she often did not have the luxury of putting this work off for a week or two, or the flexibility in her workload to reprioritise other tasks. This meant working weekends to pursue impactful opportunities.

Although Dr Kirby and Dr Glover chose to do the additional work that came with research engagement and impact activities, as they both personally valued having research engagement and impact success, other participants recognised the importance and value of pursuing work tasks esteemed by their universities, such as publishing in top-ranking journals and teaching. These participants discussed the reality of needing to do certain tasks first, as these tasks were expected by their university. Dr Naomi Long explained the reality of how she prioritised her work:

There are all these things that are essential [such as teaching and marking], both because, you know, you've got deadlines and that kind of thing, but also because they're part of your [performance review] and completing those necessarily has to be a priority. [Dr Long]

The often-inflexible nature of some tasks, and a lack of resources, led participants like Dr Long to choose to prioritise the work valued by their institutions over their own valued work. This was explained by Dr Long:

The workload is so high that it prevents me from engaging in impact and engagement in broad terms that my research allocation is low to start with. So that factors into that anyway, but the remaining workload means that there are all these things that are essential ...
... it's not a lack of interest drive, ability, any of those things. It's more just a lack of time. I've got things in my workload that have to be done. And I can't even necessarily meet them all as the way I'd like to let alone extra stuff. [Dr Long]

These feelings of being overwhelmed and having to choose between meeting management expectations or doing interesting and impactful work were echoed throughout the interviews. Although frustration was experienced by all the participants at some levels, some were adaptable to the expectations of their universities and actively chose to put these expectations first. Dr Jason Matthews chose to prioritise publishing in venues his university advised him to publish in, which aided in strengthening the publishing profile of his institution. Most of the strategy around publishing profiles was determined by research assessment exercise performance standards, with academic publishing benchmarks determined by the need to achieve these performance ratings. As Dr Matthews explained:

Certainly, ERA stuff has had a very big impact because [university] very much directs its research around what it thinks will boost its ERA ratings ... So, if [university] tells me that they can see my value as publishing in top-tier academic journals, well that's what I came to do. And it happens, it largely fits into what I like to do anyway. [Dr Matthews]

Some participants, although fulfilling the standard expectations of their universities, had ideas on how the work valued by the university and the work they valued as academics could potentially meet in the middle. Professor Jane Lambert said she felt publishing was an area where the university could create more balance and place value on research engagement and impact work, while still adhering to research assessment exercise and other performance standards. She said she would find it easier to pursue research engagement and impact activities if her outputs in this space could be counted towards her research performance: 'It would be really nice if ... instead of having to publish five articles a year that I only had to publish three articles a year and have two decent engagement outputs a year.'

In addition to publishing, participants also prioritised teaching, which they explained involved much more than showing up to class and delivering lectures. Teaching often involved many hours of preparation, lectures and tutorials, student consultations, managing sessional staff, marking, and managing student misconduct. It also involved keeping up to date with changes in the law that were relevant to the subject being taught and keeping on top of technology and the pedagogical resources required for the subject.

Although teaching was consistently recognised by participants as a priority, several participants said they would much prefer to be prioritising their own research, as they saw this as more important for their academic careers. Having a better balance of research seemed to be a theme echoed across the data, with participants expressing how much they enjoyed doing research. This enjoyment often extended to research engagement and impact activities, with several participants choosing to sacrifice their available time, including weekends, to pursue this work, even without institutional incentives, as discussed earlier in this property.

Finally, some participants did not value doing engagement and impact activities as they felt these activities were totally outside of what they wanted to be doing with their time. Dr Thomas Murray explained that although he felt in awe of some of his colleagues who pursued research engagement and impact, he simply did not have the time or passion as he valued other things more:

So, I think if I didn't have a family ... and I was passionate about something, then I could see myself making contributions outside of work hours, which I think is a lot of what a lot of my colleagues do ... you know, if you're really passionate about ending solitary confinement, you find the time , to work on that outside work hours, but for me that's not an option at the moment. So, it's just not something I do a lot of. [Dr Murray]

Dr Murray noted that he placed a much higher value on doing well with his teaching and spending time with his family outside of work.

In this property, *Prioritising valued work*, we have seen the participants reflect on the differences between what they value and what the university values. Rather than being simple agents of the university, some participants chose to go beyond the expectations of the university by pursuing their own research engagement and impact agendas, placing themselves at the forefront of social and legal change. Others chose to prioritise their required work, placing value on their personal lives or other academic goals rather than societal impact. Regardless of the route participants took, all participants experienced extensive and overwhelming workloads that placed enormous pressure on them to try to prioritise and fit in everything required of them. The next property, *Recognising research engagement and impact in workload*, goes further into this lived experience of time and workload.

5.5.2 Recognising research engagement and impact in workload

In this property, the participants questioned why research engagement and impact activities were not considered part of their standard workload. The need to have research engagement and impact work recognised in workload and valued by their university was felt by most participants in the study. Although some participants did the extra work required without any internal university incentives, others felt it was impossible with their current workloads. Participants were generally concerned about burnout across the board, with most feeling they were already stretched to their limits.

The participants felt that their universities did not value research engagement and impact due to the activities not being included in workload structures or recognised in promotion. This led to diverse views on whether it was worth prioritising the extra work for research engagement and impact without any added benefit or recognition. Dr Naomi Long compared this experience to constantly having to do a cost-benefit analysis of her daily workload. As she explained, 'You're constantly having to weigh up, do a cost-benefit analysis of every moment you spend doing work tasks, going, "What's the benefit?", "What's the cost?".' Some participants even felt they had to justify to themselves the time spent on activities they could not count in their standard workloads, as Professor Jane Lambert explained: 'You couldn't count it for work and ... have sufficient outputs to justify the amount of time you spend on it.'

It was acknowledged by the participants that research engagement and impact had become increasingly important for research assessment exercises and in grants; however, this importance did not appear to have been translated to academic workloads activities. One of the participants who chose to pursue engagement and impact work said she had paid dearly for this. As discussed previously in this category, Dr Laura Glover, explained how her academic research track record had been affected by the time she had dedicated to preparing a Royal Commission report:

I've paid an enormous cost for doing that ... at work in terms of my publication record, especially as an early career researcher who's only been here for six years ... So, there are inbuilt disincentives to doing that sort of high-impact work... [Dr Glover]

Most participants felt that time was the biggest cost in pursuing research engagement and impact work specifically – time taken away from doing the work valued by the university and for promotion. When talking about time, several of the participants discussed it in terms of their workload priorities, which included statements around ‘lacking time’ and being ‘time poor.’ Often, participants felt they had no extra time in a standard working week to pursue anything other than what their workload allowed for. Some participants overtly chose to stick to their standard workloads and refused to do any extra research engagement and impact work, as Dr Thomas Murray described: ‘I’ve occasionally been asked to do it [engagement and impact activities]. And I’ve mostly refused, because of lack of time.’ Associate Professor Julian Henson, on the other hand, took a different approach by seeking out space in his workload to pursue his research engagement activities. ‘I get allocated teaching, I do it. I’ve projects that I work on, I do them ... I’ve reached my 20% admin [service], so that’s it. I’m not doing any more.’ Associate Professor Henson said he often blocks out time in his calendar for engagement. As he explained, ‘I’m on a number of practitioner committees. They’re normally on a Monday, so I try to block out Monday from teaching.’ This blocking out time ensured that Associate Professor Henson did not do more than his standard workload.

Although some participants had strong approaches to how they managed their time, generally time was often experienced negatively, with participants feeling frustrated by the ‘extra’ work their institutions expected of them on top of their standard workloads of teaching, research, and service. Most participants felt that if their university wanted them to undertake this additional research engagement and impact work, then it needed to form part of their standard workload allocation. Recognising the significant time investment required for research and engagement and impact work, Associate Professor Katherine Mason highlighted the importance of accounting for this in academic workloads:

Because academics are already time poor and good quality engagement takes time ... so, if universities now just expect our academics to step up ... and be able to engage at high levels, with the media, with the public, with industry, with profession, et cetera, we have to recognise that in workload. [Associate Professor Mason]

This constant pressure to pursue research engagement and impact activities led some participants to either feel that they were not doing enough or that they were doing too much and may burn out. Being burnt out was a major concern for participants who were working more than standard hours to do their research engagement and impact activities. Generally, the potential for burnout was felt across the board, even by those participants who were not doing research engagement and impact activities. Some participants who were doing the extra work felt resentment towards colleagues who chose not to pursue research engagement and impact work, as explained by Dr Hannah Kirby:

So, you have ones who are very engaged who do it anyway who are doing lots of stuff anyway doing lots of research and teaching and they'll just do it anyway. Then you have the kind of people who are just wanting to get through and tick the boxes but aren't necessarily going to put in lots of extra effort. [Dr Kirby]

In addition to opening the flood gates for an 'us and them' culture where 'us' comprised the people doing the impact work and 'them' the people doing the standard workload, the overall feelings of frustration often compounded further, leading participants to feel anger towards their institutions, and to perceive that the extra work they were doing was not worth the time or energy they had invested.

It was clear that the participants wanted research engagement and impact activities to be recognised in workload and for promotion purposes. The participants discussed that it was currently impossible for most of them to pursue this extra work without experiencing major burnout. In addition to this work being recognised, several participants also wanted a more balanced workload to pursue more interesting work. This will be discussed in the next property.

5.5.3 *Balancing workload*

In this property, *Balancing workload*, the lived experiences of the participants were examined to reveal how they balanced their work. The discussions with the participants of this study suggested that workload balance affected their abilities to pursue research engagement and impact activities. Some participants described feeling that their workloads generally favoured teaching, with many of them regularly doing more than the standard teaching allocation, which Dr Laura Glover explained

could consume up to 'four days a week'. This made it hard for participants to balance their duties, often feeling that they needed to work weekends or longer hours to maintain their research profiles and stay on top of their work.

Several participants discussed balancing their workloads to ensure they were not going to burn out; however, most of the participants felt that workload balance was largely outside of their control. Many participants reported having high teaching loads that went above their 40%, two-day-a-week allocation. Although some of the participants were happy with their workload allocations, others talked about wanting to have some control of or input into the allocation balance, particularly to undertake more of what they enjoyed doing. During the interviews, Professor Belinda Smith was asked what this balance would look like to her. She said her ideal scenario would be more time to do research or 'have a different balance in my daily work'. Other participants also mentioned wanting more research allocation than they currently had. There was an overall sense that the participants wanted a more balanced teaching workload, yet most were realistic that teaching was important for the university, both in terms of money and in terms of reputation and reach.

Constant pressures and lack of workload balance appeared to be a real concern for several participants, who often had to work weekends to fit everything in. In managing this, some participants refused to take on any more work than their allocation allowed for; however, others felt pressured to do extra work on weekends to ensure they maintained even their core workloads of teaching, research, and administration. As Dr Glover explained, working weekends was often a necessity. She said of her workload, 'Well, it's supposed to look like two days teaching, two days research and one day admin, 40/40/20.' Dr Glover expressed worry about not getting her research done, especially as someone new to academia who was struggling to build a successful research track record. She said that although she tried to squeeze in her research days during her standard working week, she regularly ended up doing four days of teaching work (on a 40% allocation). This left her feeling that she had little choice but to continue to work weekends to fit even her core work in.

Balancing workload could be even more difficult for participants who did not have the standard 40/40/20 allocation. For example, Dr Jason Matthews explained that his teaching load was much higher recently than it had been in previous years, and Dr Naomi Long said her 20% research allocation limited her ability to do any

research engagement and impact activities in addition to maintaining a ‘somewhat steady’ research profile. When the participants had higher teaching or administration workload allocations, it often meant other activities, including research engagement and impact work, were deprioritised in favour of keeping on top of core work such as research and teaching.

Some participants were happy with their workload, although this tended to be those at the professoriate levels. Professor Hao Lee explained that although he was happy with his workload now, it had been much harder when he was an early career researcher. He discussed the importance of pushing back on teaching and extra duties early on to avoid being the one who said yes to every demand of the law school. As someone who spent a vast amount of his time mentoring junior academics, he saw the benefit of having a more balanced workload. He explained, ‘You know, I’m very fortunate. I’ve got a good distribution of workload ... I suppose, ... I think that’s important, for people to be able to achieve these, impact, and engagement goals.’ The next property, *Planning work*, discusses how participants plan their work based on their semester or trimester schedules.

5.5.4 Planning work

The property *Planning work* explains the lived experiences of the participants planning their daily and weekly working weeks throughout different semesters. The academic working week was often planned around teaching commitments, on semester or trimester-based schedules. This led to participants having to fit their other work tasks in around teaching.

During the interviews, all participants were asked to describe a ‘normal working week’. Most responded along the lines that answering that was ‘tricky’ and dependent on many things such as teaching allocations for each semester or trimester. As Associate Professor Katherine Mason explained, ‘So as an academic you kind of have different times of the year ... and your normal working week looks different during different times of the year.’ All participants in the study noted that their constantly changing working weeks affected the work they were planning and prioritising daily. In fact, all participants discussed how their semester- or trimester-based workloads changed the balance of the work they did each week. The lack of a consistent yearly structure did not appear to be a negative for all participants, with some noting that having heavier teaching in one semester meant having more time

for research in the next semester. This allowed for them to plan their daily tasks and weekly tasks accordingly, based on their semester workload. Some participants noted a heavier service load during some semesters, then having less service in others, which helped them to structure their time and work balance a bit better than if they were doing everything.

Due to his heavier teaching workload during his 'teaching semesters', Dr Thomas Murray said these weeks tended to have a bit less room for movement: 'Especially during teaching semesters, I just do what I need to do to get through the week.' During his research-intensive semester, he said he had a bit more room for movement but not enough to allow for anything other than his standard workload. It was during his research-intensive semesters that he kept up with his research and continued to produce the quality outputs required by his university.

As discussed above in section 5.5.3, it appeared to be evident from the discussions with the participants that teaching generally took preference, with some stating they structured their work schedules around their teaching commitments. The inflexible nature of teaching meant everything had to fall into place around it. Activities the participants had to work in around their teaching schedules included reading, catching up on new articles and cases, writing, meeting with students, preparing conference papers and presentations, and catching up on correspondence. Some participants had full days where they were not teaching, which allowed them to prioritise their research and service duties and pursue external engagement activities such as taking part in external committees. Professor Sharie Kemp, who had an 80% administration role, managed her work by fitting tasks in whenever possible, often outside normal work hours. She described her approach to planning her work week as follows:

I'm not the sort of person who has dedicated research days and dedicated academic senate days for example. I just manage my diary and fit things in around each other. And it works out pretty much that I think I do get about 0.4 for research ... I wouldn't say that I work normal office hours.

[Professor Kemp]

Several participants noted that they often worked weekends as required, throughout different semesters, being dependent on what work they had going on. Some said they worked most weekends, while others just worked weekends as they needed to.

Dr Laura Glover admitted that she tried to push back on additional teaching load, as she was already working most weekends. Similarly, Associate Professor Julian Henson said that despite his efforts to avoid working on weekends, he often found himself doing so: 'I try not to work weekends, but I'll probably end up doing a little bit of work most weekends.' He countered that this depended on how far he was into the semester and whether he was teaching in that semester. Professor Hao Lee was the only participant who talked about teaching classes on weekends. As he was mostly research-intensive through the year, he was also required to teach an intensive course online and in person. The intensive course required him to teach on four weekends a year, and to meet online with students after this. Although he considered this his busy period, he admitted that he was mostly free to pursue other more enjoyable tasks such as research throughout the rest of the year.

In addition to planning their working weeks around teaching and other commitments, participants with caring responsibilities noted the added stress of having often unpredictable obligations arise. Dr Thomas Murray explained that he was never sure whether he would need to drop everything to look after his child: 'It's about having these obligations that are not predictable that can take up a lot of your time. And they are hard to shape your work life around.' Dr Murray was the only participant who spoke about how caring responsibilities could completely throw off any planning and structure.

5.5.5 Summary

Prioritising time was experienced by all participants of the study as it related to their everyday working lives as law academics. Time management and workload in general cast a shadow of negativity over their experiences, leaving most participants feeling disempowered and lacking the autonomy to pursue more meaningful tasks related to research engagement and impact. Instead, their time was often consumed by prioritising tasks aligning with their university's values and workload expectations, encompassing teaching, research, and administrative service. A number of participants expressed a concern that their workload was disproportionately weighted towards teaching, leaving less time for research-related activities. Despite the inherent frustration, the participants remained proactive in their efforts to balance and alleviate their workloads. This discussion is intrinsically connected to the subsequent section, which explores the concept of expertise as

more than just academic recognition but as a means to employ academic knowledge for beneficial purposes, both within and beyond the confines of academia.

5.6 Category 3: Being an expert

In *Being an expert*, the participants experienced the unique facets of their expertise as a pathway to having research engagement and impact. For the participants, *Being an expert* was not just about 'being known'; it was also about utilising their expertise for beneficial purposes inside and outside of academia. Beneficial purposes included participants wanting to make a difference in the world, through their research expertise and tacit knowledge. The participants experienced being an expert through engaging with various stakeholders, including regulators and law reform bodies governments and parliamentary bodies; civil societies and community groups; the legal profession; the tech industry; the media; university students; and other academics. For the participants, some of the activities that were undertaken as experts included writing policy submissions, writing opinion pieces and articles through avenues such as *The Conversation*, providing expert comment on articles being written or recorded by journalists, providing research knowledge to inform industry or practitioner processes, and disseminating research for public consumption through avenues such as repositories and via social media. Internal expertise in the academy revolved around being an expert on a particular topic which led to grant and publication collaborations with other academics.

This category, *Being an expert*, discusses the properties of *Being known* (sub-properties *Being known within the academy*, *Being sought out*, *Being a repeat expert*, *Promoting self-expertise*), *Making connections*, *Being a member of groups*, and *Having insider knowledge*. Notably, most of the avenues of providing expertise revolved around transactional relationships with stakeholders.

5.6.1 Being known

The first property presented, *Being known*, was experienced by all participants and informs the overall experience of being an expert. *Being known* is a key property of the category *Being an expert* and includes being known inside and outside of the academy for academic expertise. Throughout the data collection, participants talked about being known as being recognised and vice versa. These terms will be used interchangeably throughout but refer to the same experience.

Being known related to the participant's reputation and identity as an academic expert in a particular field of law. It was not always about being known by those outside of academia; indeed, being known within academic spheres was experienced as an important component of this property. Being known was also about being respected and valued as an academic by the participant's law school and university. This was experienced by the participants who were associate professors and professors due to their experience and tenure.

The participants experienced being known through people coming to them for advice, knowledge, information, comment, or review. They were known for their expertise in particular fields that enabled policy-makers and stakeholders to seek out their tacit knowledge. Being a reliable resource and having a good reputation led to increase in demands for their time, which is discussed in the sub-property *Being sought out*. *Being a repeat expert* also discusses how the participants form trusted relationships with key stakeholders, who then offer them repeat work. For example, Professor Jane Lambert discussed how she continued to work with the same agency for many years due to her reputation as an expert on their business: 'So, I'm sort of a known ... they know that I'm interested and sometimes I'm quite critical of [their work] but I'm also broadly supportive of their mission in the world.' Being supportive of a stakeholder's mission was key to continuing to work with the same group over time, rather than just on single projects.

This property also covers the sub-property *Promoting self-expertise*, which was experienced by some of the participants who used their academic reputation through social media platforms and other public knowledge translation mediums such as *The Conversation* to have research impact. Being known within the academy was important to the participants in terms of their teaching and research expertise, and the value they added to their institutions. This is discussed further in the next section.

5.6.1.1 *Being known within the academy*

For some participants, being known within the academy was their only experience of being known, which informed their experience of being an expert. *Being known within the academy* covers being recognised for academic and teaching expertise, being known for adding value to their law school and being known for grant expertise.

Being recognised as an expert by other academics was seen as important, especially in the early stages of the participant's academic career. This was due to the need to collaborate with other academics on papers and grants, so it was important for participants to gain a reputation as an expert in the eyes of other academics. Professor Mohammed Aaiz explained that with time and reputation, one becomes more recognised within the academic community: 'I think perhaps once you've reached a certain level and you've got a certain degree of reputation, the academy already sort of knows you.'

Although being recognised was seen as important, some participants did not overtly acknowledge that other academics viewed them as an expert. Being recognised as a teaching expert had recently been experienced by early career researcher Dr Naomi Long, who was shocked to see an academic from another university presenting on some of the work she had done and referring to a photo of her in his presentation. As she explained, it is often easy to forget that others may view you as an expert:

He's actually had a photo of me and stuff I was doing up on his presentation ... which kind of caught me off guard and so I guess there's things like that where I forgot, obviously people in this space know I'm doing something. [Dr Long]

Being known as someone who added value to their law school was also important to the participants, particularly around career progression. Some participants noted that once their law schools trusted them to do the required work, they gave them more freedom to pursue their own research agenda. This freedom led to the ability to pursue different research directions and ultimately more time for other research engagement and impact activities, such as media opportunities, writing submissions and reports to government inquiries and training the legal profession. Some of the participants described this as feeling like they had 'made it' as an academic, as they were trusted by their department heads to do their work and pursue their own research goals and agenda without the constant micromanaging and audit they experienced as more junior academics. Professor Aaiz explained: 'When you get to a certain level you are in effect left alone to do your research and do it how and when you want.' This 'freedom' was also experienced by Professor Belinda Smith, who said that as a tenured professor she did not feel like she could be kicked around

much, and she felt less pressure to publish where her university told her to. Notably, she also expressed how her law school trusted that she would do her job well as they acknowledged the value and expertise she brought to the university. This was similarly experienced by Professor Daniel Swanson, who felt he could be fairly independent and autonomous. He explained that due to the prestigious grants he was on and the money he brought into the university, the management at his university left him alone. This recognition was mostly experienced among the higher-level participants at the associate professor and professor levels. These participants experienced academic freedom and trust as tenured experts.

Another area where participants were recognised within the academy related to their research expertise in grants. This included the university being aware of the participants' expertise and ensuring that they were made aware of any grants or bid opportunities that came up in their space. For example, Professor Smith said her university would often inform her of grants coming up that related to her expertise, which saved her time and energy as she did not have to search for grants herself. She explained how this saved her time:

You know, it's great to have to not worry about that stuff, just to be able to have a resource, who can say, what's the rule on this and the person knows ... and also, to have someone know you really well what your research interests are, that they're just throwing things your way in terms of opportunities to apply for things and so on ... [Professor Smith]

However, being known – or more 'unknown' – was also experienced in the negative. Professor Smith noted that she felt unknown in her new university as no one there knew what she did. She said this often meant more footwork for her to find out about grants and opportunities. This was a world away from her previous experiences of being well known as an expert at her former university. She explained, 'I've got less of a profile there, fewer people know about what I'm up to, and so that will grow, but it's very new.' This experience of not being known was also experienced by Dr Jason Matthews, who claimed that very few interesting grant opportunities passed his desk, as his research was not in a topical area. He worried about his career progression as a senior lecturer as he had not yet been on a grant. Several participants said that research areas and topic fit often drove grant success, research engagement and

research impact, making it more difficult for those in niche or less topical areas such as Dr Matthews.

In addition to being known and recognised as an expert in the academy, the participants also experienced being sought out for projects and collaborations inside and outside the academy due to their expertise. As discussed above, often projects required certain skills that the project team may not possess, which led them to seek out this expertise. This is discussed more below under the next sub-property.

5.6.1.2 Being sought out

Being sought out is another sub-property of *Being known*. This sub-property is about people (either internal or external to the academy) coming to the participants for advice, knowledge, comment, or review. Sometimes participants experienced this individually and sometimes collectively, based on the reputation of their research groups. Both experiences led to developing connections with key stakeholders and better research engagement with the right audiences. Frequently, participants were sought out for their unique skills in a particular area, as Dr Hannah Kirby explained:

I've actually had people ... from Australian government departments and the civil servants who are supporting the parliamentary committees ... get in contact with me out of the blue about issues because they found that I was the only person ... in Australia who'd been writing about a particular thing. [Dr Kirby]

Internally within the academy, the participants were sought out for the expertise they could provide to projects, which often involved being approached to be part of interdisciplinary grant teams, formed across faculties. They were approached to be on these teams due to being known and well regarded in their specific research fields. Often participants were approached by teams that were lacking the expertise that only they could offer. Similarly, the participants explained that they sometimes sought out other academics who could lend specific expertise on their projects and grants. As Professor Jane Lambert explained, the process of being 'sought out' regularly involved determining what skills your current project team was lacking and then connecting with people who had these skills, even if it meant paying them. She noted a recent experience where she realised, she needed a different skillset for a project's translation:

I realised that I didn't have the skills so I would have to collaborate with someone and even to do that – I have talked to people about the possibility of collaborating and sort of talked about different ideas but it's really time consuming to do proper ... translation of something ... I think that has an impact on things like these ... translation and engagement things cause often you may need to collaborate with somebody or hire a research fellow with particular skills or whatever who will be a co-author on some of those things. [Professor Lambert]

As well as being sought out internally, the participants were also sought out and approached by external stakeholders via email, through in person events and on social media. Phone calls were used once a report had been established between the participant and the stakeholder. Collective and individual pursuits to engage with stakeholders were often pursued similarly, with individuals writing submissions and papers to engage with those who had either already reached out to them, or those with whom they wanted to form a connection. Often participants were invited to advise stakeholders on law reform and other policy changes. This included invitations to expert panels and committees, which in turn (once the relationship was formed) led to consultancies and submissions to inquiries in areas of expertise.

Associate Professor Katherine Mason, in her capacity as an academic lead, developed a research group to promote collective research expertise within her university. She said the group first started out writing submissions to parliament together, then got started on collaborative articles. She explained that it did not take long for the group to get a reputation, which led to being sought out: 'We started to see governments come to us, we started to see judges come to us seeking out our views and seeking out our research.' By pooling the collective expertise of her law school, she developed a profile for the group as the experts in their research area. This led to better connections with the profession and industry for the academics in her group and more opportunities for research engagement and impact. This was similarly experienced by Professor Sharie Kemp, who discussed the impact of her research group during her interview. Professor Kemp considered being known as a collective group experience, with the reputation of her research group at the forefront of her experiences of being sought out. Professor Kemp spoke very highly of the

work that had been produced through people in her research group, leading to international impact.

Participants also experienced being sought out as individuals based on their own expertise. Some participants noted that being sought out was not always something they wanted, particularly when it was from unsolicited public inquiries. For example, Professor Daniel Swanson said he received many emails from people asking ‘trivial legal questions’ based around his expertise. He used to feel annoyed about this as he explained: ‘[I felt it was] a bit belittling because they treat you like a plumber. Come on, you know, unblock their pipes and things.’ However, he noted that his response had changed over time and now accepts that his responses could be useful to the public as they have clearly reached out to him for his specific expert advice. He said he still responds to these queries where he can. This was similarly experienced by Professor Paul Miller, who said he was constantly being sought out to provide legal expertise to the public as well as to the legal profession. He recalled judges calling him for advice on cases during court session breaks. Being someone who was known to be easily approached and with a positive and resourceful reputation meant a participant was more likely to be sought out.

Media engagement was another area where reputation, not just as an expert but as someone who was reliable and willing to talk to media, often led to repeatedly being sought out for comment. As Professor Smith explained, she liked her media contacts to know that she was reliable and helpful:

So, I would always say speak to these three or four people. So, I try to ... if I’m not the resource for that sort of talent, I would certainly refer them to other people. So that that would encourage them to call me again, so that they know that I’m not going to be just self-serving and try to, you know, be the story. [Professor Smith]

Reliability and being trusted as an expert were important to developing relationships with various stakeholders. The next sub-property discusses how these relationships develop into repeat work.

5.6.1.3 Being a repeat expert

The sub-property *Being a repeat expert* captures the participants’ experiences of having previous relationships with stakeholders who then call upon the participant

to provide further expertise. This sub-property explains the phenomenon of continuing to work with stakeholders once the initial project ends. It is about being on trusted and familiar terms with the stakeholder and doing repeat work for them.

For example, Professor Jane Lambert explained that being interested in and supportive of a stakeholder's work had led to her continued work with them. She explained that although she is quite critical of their work at times, she is also very supportive of their mission. Being familiar with their work and their issues meant she could efficiently provide clear evaluations of their work, as she explained: 'They sort of know that I am one the academics who is interested in what they are doing and who has done work evaluating what they are doing over the years.' In turn, Professor Lambert used her expertise and trusted knowledge of the stakeholder's practices to continue working with them on various projects. In essence, she brought her expertise to them but also became an expert on their practices and the work they did. The level of trust that she developed with the stakeholder over the years meant that they happily continued to work with her. This led to further research impact for Professor Lambert as she continued to find solutions and provide advice to them, leading to changes in regulation and internal practices.

Having solid and trusting relationships with stakeholders also helped Professor Belinda Smith to obtain further funding as part of a transactional relationship of her time and expertise, and their money. She said there was little competition for her in obtaining this stakeholder's work due to being so intimately connected and familiar with their work. She was frequently the first academic contacted to provide expertise, as she explained: 'They'll often ask me as the first person to do that, because I'm doing this other thing for them. So, it is bit cosy, and sort of not very competitive ... but that's the beauty of having a relationship with someone.'

The concepts presented in this property show that a core element of *Being an expert* is also about the relationships that develop from these connections with stakeholders and how these relationships can strengthen and grow over time, leading to a form of familiarity and expertise of stakeholder practices. Overall, being helpful and supportive of stakeholders was of fundamental importance to participants when they were doing repeat work for stakeholders. However, this altruistic motivation was often muddled by more egotistic forms of expression through self-promotion and self-branding. Some participants connected *Being an expert* with explicit promotion of self-expertise. This is discussed in the next sub-property.

5.6.1.4 Promoting self-expertise

For some of the participants, being an expert also included self-promotion through maintaining an online presence and expert persona. Most self-promotion activities included promoting their work through social media, particularly Twitter (now known as X) and LinkedIn. Certain activities were undertaken by participants to spread the influence of their explicit expertise with avenues such as writing for *The Conversation* and other similar mediums, which they viewed as important to growing an online presence as an expert. Self-promotion often led to making connections with the stakeholders of research through social platforms, which then expanded into offline collaborations (this is discussed further in section 5.9.4.1). Some of the participants discussed the various ways they promoted their own expertise and personal brand. Social media platforms were the obvious choice for promotion of research work and for marketing oneself as an expert. Although outside the realms of traditional academic work, research engagement via social media has become more important for reaching broader audiences, especially industry professionals and those outside of academia. For example, Dr Hannah Kirby highlighted the value of Twitter for academics in promoting their work and connecting with relevant audiences to enhance their online presence:

I think Twitter is really useful for academics to engage on their work. Twitter is actually full of academics, and I think if you actually look at who uses Twitter or accounts which have large numbers, you'll probably find a lot of people who are journalists or in news, academics, people in government. It's not really that representative of society as a whole. But these are the kind of groups that if we want to engage with for research impact or engage with for engagement – Twitter's actually ... you'll be reaching the right type of audiences. And yeah, I found Twitter to be quite useful for that purpose ... and to some extent engaging with ... broader publics too, but I think Twitter has been good. Facebook less good. Something to do with the different dynamics of the different platforms. [Dr Kirby]

Although some participants such as Professor Jane Lambert used Facebook to garner interest in their public-facing articles written for online publishing platforms for

non-expert audiences, other participants who regularly used social media preferred to use Twitter and LinkedIn as these platforms felt more 'professional' to them. Associate Professor Julian Henson noted that he often felt indebted to LinkedIn as it had helped him make several important connections. He explained his process of promoting his work through the various platforms:

I've set up a couple of websites ... where I post some basic thoughts and comments and things. And that flows through into social media. ... that's been quite helpful because, the regulators and policy-makers ... they take it in, and they'll ring me up ... but they won't comment publicly on it.
[Associate Professor Henson]

He described his approach to social media, viewing it primarily as a professional publishing platform to connect with the right audiences: 'It's a professional publishing platform. I don't generally browse Twitter and LinkedIn, but I post material there ... just to try and reach people.'

Other participants felt that using social media platforms to make connections was not something they wanted to pursue. For example, Professor Belinda Smith said she only used Twitter to put her papers 'out there'. As she explained, she did not use it often to voice her opinions or converse with people. 'I don't ... really respond [to people]. Usually, I get a lot of comment[s]. And I don't even engage with that. Usually, I just chuck stuff on there. That's what I do.' Similarly, Dr Naomi Long found the whole experience of self-promotion quite overwhelming, especially with her already heavy workload. She likened being an academic to running a small business, with numerous tasks needed to stay afloat:

Every single academic is like their own small business. And they're trying to do their own thing in their own space in their own research field. But with that comes all of the almost administrative aspects of running a small business, because you've got to brand yourself, and you've got to make your own connections and your own networks and your own impact and your own engagement and your own everything. [Dr Long]

Some participants chose to seek out already established forms of self-promotion and knowledge translation, like publishing platforms for non-expert audiences such as *The Conversation*. However, the experiences were not always positive, with some

participants struggling to be published while others felt the news focus defeated the original purpose of promoting topical research. Although it was often viewed as a positive experience in working with the other forms of media to translate their research for the public, some participants, such as Dr Long, felt a bit let down by the whole process. Dr Long said: '[My] engagement has been a little bit limited, like I've tried to, at times sort of get something into *The Conversation* and haven't really been successful.' She believed this was due to the over-saturation of people trying to publish in the same outlets. These outlets were often over-burdened and under resourced, which meant, as she explained, that they could essentially pick and choose who they wanted to work with and the topics on which they wanted to publish. Some participants had moved away from publishing in *The Conversation* for more strategic reasons. Professor Belinda Smith admits she used to write regularly for *The Conversation* but felt it had become more 'news-focused':

It's not running [a] research agenda anymore. It's running a news agenda. And I don't think the university should be paying for that to be the case ... I thought *The Conversation* in its first model was just really great because it really was research led, and it was helping to translate research out to an audience rather than spin, you know, the spin cycle of media. [Professor Smith]

Professor Smith no longer chooses to publish articles in *The Conversation* but said she was keen to grow her online presence and work with other outlets such as *The Guardian* in the future.

The four sub-properties of *Being known* (*Being known within the academy*, *Being sought out*, *Being a repeat expert*, *Promoting self-expertise*) considered the processes that take place around *Being known* as an expert in academia. These included experiences that allowed for the participants to be known within their own university and academic spheres, mostly in the grants and teaching spaces. Additionally, participants experienced *Being sought out* by others based on the expertise and skills they could provide. Finally, they experienced *Promoting self-expertise*, which often included strategically using social media to promote their academic expert personas. Although there is some overlap between the properties in this section and the following section, it should be noted that, for example being sought out for expertise often led to the experience of making connections which in

turn led to opportunities for research engagement and impact. The next property discusses the experiences of the participants in making connections with stakeholders through their known expertise.

5.6.2 Making connections

The participants experienced *Being an expert* through making connections with stakeholders. It was interesting to note that making connections and building solid relationships with stakeholders through collaboration regularly provided the participants with research engagement and impact success. It was through making connections with the relevant stakeholders of their research that participants were enabled to develop and implement changes, sometimes with stakeholder involvement in changes to practices and regulations. This formed a pathway to impact for the participants who contributed their expertise and time to an important change. For example, Professor Daniel Swanson explained that he contributed his expertise in a particular area of law to an international organisation with which he had made connections by drafting up a policy that he said was ‘now used globally’. This enabled him to form a pathway to impact in this international regulatory space, in addition to gaining a reputation for this work internationally.

The participants made connections through multiple avenues, including through other academics who introduced them to their connections; through social media and the broad connection base this allowed; through academic, industry or practitioner conferences; through external committees; through engaging and participating in events and talks where industry or the legal profession were in attendance; and through communities of practice. When asked how these connections started, Dr Naomi Long explained:

Sometimes I just reach out to someone, so sort of like cold [call]. I don’t actually call them you know, cold call, like, email kind of thing. But usually, it’s been because someone’s known someone, I’ve known someone ... and so on ... I guess it’s networks. Someone makes the connection. And then we take it from there. [Dr Long]

Similarly, Professor Jane Lambert explained her experience of making connections as engaging with people to find solutions to like problems:

People who were doing research and others in the regulatory agencies were really interested in finding new ideas, so they try to engage ... somebody knows somebody – and you kind of get the connection.

[Professor Lambert]

Proximity was important to some participants in making connections while others were happy to connect online or via hybrid formats. Dr Long noted that, although COVID had changed the conference and general landscape of making connections, she had continued to make connections with those in proximity to her, and she also connected with people interstate and overseas through hybrid conference formats via Zoom. The participants found conferences to be one of the easiest and most effective ways to connect with others and to form new collaborative networks. As explained by Professor Swanson, conferences and connecting with people nationally and internationally was key to research engagement and impact success:

‘Conferences are critical... for learning new ideas for testing ideas, meeting people, forming networks, etc. Absolutely essential. Getting out of Australia ... is key.’

Conferences were one way participants made connections with others without any help from their university, as opposed to social media and *The Conversation* which were heavily influenced by university and personal reputation. There was a sense of autonomy around making their own connections at conferences, with participants choosing when and how to make connections with those they had met through networks and conferences. Associate Professor Julian Henson reiterated the importance of others making their own connections with people, stating that they must be open to having conversations with people and be confident in contacting people they did not know to make these connections. He said some of his colleagues had admitted that they found this intimidating, especially as they did not know how to go about it and had not had much experience engaging with people outside of academia, or with other academics outside of their own law schools. Associate Professor Henson said a good way to tackle these feelings was to just go to conferences as a participant to meet with people. Showing up and just talking to people had been the key to his success:

I go to conferences and seminars just as a participant to get new ideas and talk with practitioners and academic colleagues about research ideas.

I go and visit people just to have a chat with them about what they're

doing. So, I don't just stay at the university and expect people would come to me ... I think it's, so it's all about thinking about different audiences for your work. Who are you trying to reach? Who you're trying to influence ... and then, you know, being open to have conversations with people ... to go out and talk to people. [Associate Prof Henson]

Sustaining these developed connections was also important to the participants. Associate Professor Henson explained that once he had made connections, it was then important to make the effort to sustain them over time. He took people to coffee, caught up with people off campus and set aside half to one day a week to build his relationships with people. He recognised that these people were also busy and never expected that they should come to him.

In addition to building relationships, making connections also often included a transactional or mutually beneficial relationship with one or more connections. Not every connection or relationship included funding, particularly those with community groups that often did not have the money to fund academic work, and the media who solicited academic comment without any monetary transactions. However, as Professor Belinda Smith explained, being a resource to media connections was just as important a relationship as working with industry partners. Professor Smith provided her knowledge and expertise to the media through comments on their stories, developing strong connections with media that were often mutually beneficial. Indeed, sometimes the importance of being a resource to a particular organisation and working together for mutual benefit was the end goal. Professor Smith provided a strong example of this where she explained that she saw herself as a resource for the community and the stakeholders with whom she worked: 'I see myself as a resource for them, and they see me as a resource, you know, in that way, I think they're also the resource for me. So, it's a very good relationship.'

Building these connections often led to making connections with other similar organisations, in turn leading to further opportunity for research engagement and impact over time. The next section discusses how the participants experience membership as an expert. *Being a member of groups* and feeling a sense of belonging to those groups was expressed by several participants as a pathway to having impact.

5.6.3 *Being a member of groups*

Several of the participants experienced *Being a member of groups* as a recognised, tangible form of their expertise. Membership was often viewed as prestigious, impactful, and important for recognition of the expertise and value the participants brought to a particular discipline or field. The participants experienced being a member of groups through being invited onto various external committees and practitioner networks such as national committees, research groups, delegations, practitioner committees, international consortiums, international working groups, international networks, international research groups, communities of engagement, boards, review panels and community groups. Dr Laura Glover explained that being a member of groups often led to broad-ranging impact:

There's a capacity to have very broad-ranging impact if you belong to the right bodies which aren't just academics talking to each other. I think it's important to belong to organisations that belong to a broader range of practice, public policy, academics, like we really do have a place at that table. [Dr Glover]

Similar to Dr Glover, Professor Hao Lee viewed being a member of a research strategy group for a body regulating legal practice as having 'broader impact'. Through being a member of the group, he obtained some work annotating research. This work then led to further projects with the group, where he was known as a 'founding academic member'. It was his connections to this group that led to him undertaking a big project that helped shape his career and ultimately led to broad impact in the legal profession space. In his own words regarding his impact, he said, 'I think I've done a few things like that where ... it's kind of introduced a, something of a cultural shift.' Although Professor Lee's impact work was undertaken overseas, he used this experience to continue to work in this space, including in Australia where he had worked for several years.

Some participants noted the importance of being in international groups, which was especially important for those who were doing research into international legal issues. Professor Sharie Kemp discussed how being on international committees, for example, helped her to better find collective solutions to international legal problems. Professor Kemp then used these solutions at a national level. She

noted the importance of being on these groups to make change and have impact: 'My group has been particularly fortunate to ... sit on some of the major national committees where policies are set in this area.' By sitting on these groups, Professor Kemp and her team were able to influence and drive the direction of discussions, leading to the development of high-level solutions and change. The next property is about the experiences of participants who have formerly worked in regulation or policy areas prior to coming to academia and how this benefited their research engagement and impact experience.

5.6.4 Having insider knowledge

Having insider knowledge is the final property of *Being an expert*. It explains the aspects of the participants familiarity with previous employers, who they now engage with as stakeholders. Insider knowledge included being intimately familiar with the work and processes of the stakeholder, which formed an element of expertise for the participants.

Several of the participants had worked outside of academia in policy, regulatory agencies, or the legal profession, and hence had a unique understanding of how these agencies and businesses operated. This led to participants being able to strategically plan research engagement and impact work for timeliness and to fit the nuances of a particular department. In fact, the participants spoke about the familiarity they had with former departments for which they had worked for similar agencies. They understood themselves to be somewhat of an insider, feeling almost like they had an obvious advantage over their colleagues when it came to understanding the expectations of a department and how to reach that department. For example, Dr Laura Glover explained that as someone who worked in policy before coming to academia, she had a clear understanding of policy-makers' time constraints, which helped her better 'plan for impact'. She was also very aware of how policy-makers relied on the work of academics, which meant they were often grateful to receive work from academics that was useful and provided the information they needed: 'I have a deep understanding of what they need, how fast they need it, at what level of detail they need it and what language they are more comfortable with.'

Ensuring work would be read by policy-makers was another advantage some of the participants had, especially those who understood what policy-makers wanted

to read. Dr Glover acknowledged that her insider knowledge had enabled her to have research impact through her government submissions as she focused on timeliness and clear, jargon-free submission writing. She knew that if she submitted something that was too long, unclear, or untimely, her work would simply be ignored by the policy-maker, who would set it aside and read the next submission. Using her insider knowledge had been advantageous to her achieving impact, particularly as someone new to academia. Rather than applying her academic expertise, Dr Glover had used her insider knowledge or insider expertise to reach the right people at the right time and with the right content, to obtain research impact. Similarly, Dr Hannah Kirby experienced working for a regulator in Europe before coming to academia. She felt her experience in working for this regulator had helped as she was quite familiar with how they operated and what their expectations were. Although she recognised the differences in Australia compared with Europe, she still felt that having this insider knowledge was extremely beneficial to her research engagement and impact work such as submissions undertaken as an academic in Australia. Overall, she felt her insider knowledge had prepared her for how to approach these agencies as an academic, in turn contributing to her research engagement and impact success.

Participants who had formerly worked in the legal profession also had a clear understanding and familiarity with the issues faced by law professionals. For example, Dr Jason Matthews talked about how he often wrote papers specifically targeted for the profession to read. As a former lawyer, he understood what other lawyers would be expecting from professional papers and wanted to continue connecting with other lawyers:

It was easier for me to write an article in [a professional journal] because I was a practitioner and I had ... so I was [still] practising. I had some feel for the sort of article that audience would reach for. [Dr Matthews]

Not all participants experienced *Having insider knowledge*, with the majority of participants forming connections with stakeholders through other methods, including through conferences, events, and personal networks. This was discussed in section 5.6.2.

5.6.5 Summary

All participants experienced *Being an expert* in various ways. Acknowledgement of their expertise, both within and beyond the academic realm, was an integral facet of their research engagement and impact experiences. These varied experiences of *Being an expert* encompassed a broad spectrum, involving the establishment and sustenance of professional connections, the recognition and visibility of their expertise leading to opportunities for impactful contributions, and the rising significance of self-promotion – particularly through social media platforms. This category consistently highlighted the multifaceted motivations driving their actions, including the desire to be of value and to make a meaningful contribution to society, as well as transactional motivations. The discussion in this category connects with the subsequent category, which explores how law academics contribute to instigating change through a plethora of activities such as submissions, inquiries, expert advice, guidance to legal practitioners, policy drafting, media engagements and a range of conventional academic writing practices.

5.7 Category 4: Contributing to change

In this category, *Contributing to change*, the participants explained their experiences of contributing to societal and legal change through their work as academics. The word ‘contributing’ was used by the participants to describe their experiences, which often involved working with others to produce change and, finally, have impact. The participants generally experienced contributing to change collectively, which relied on people coming together to grapple with an issue and collectively come up with a solution. The interviews uncovered how the participants contributed their knowledge and expertise to the change. This involved various activities, including submissions, inquiries, expert advice, advice to legal practitioners, drafting policies, media interviews and many traditional forms of academic writing. Changes in practices, culture, consciousness, and policy were all thought of as impact by the participants, particularly when their work was ‘taken up’ or ‘adopted’ by policy-makers and other stakeholders or implemented in some way. In addition to this, change within the academy was also acknowledged by some of the participants as integral to their experiences of research impact. The multiple forms of change and experiences of research impact are discussed in the properties

Being part of the change, Making submissions, Shaping how things are done and Academic change (see below).

5.7.1 *Being part of the change*

The first property of this category is *Being part of the change*. The participants discussed how being ‘part of the change’ process led to what they labelled as ‘impact’. Associate Professor Katherine Mason succinctly described research impact as a focus on the effects of change:

Research impact I think is where an academic’s research affects the direction of public debate, industry ... activity, professional activity, or government policy, activity [or] legislation. [Associate Professor Mason]

For example, the participants experienced writing submissions and responding to government inquiries using their expertise and knowledge to provide advice to policy-makers in order to effect change. Once they had undertaken these activities, the participants generally felt it was up to policy-makers to implement and drive change, turning the submissions and recommendations into new or revised regulations, policy, and law. Participants described the process of change as often beginning with, or being initiated by, a stakeholder and ending with the stakeholder or policy-maker implementing the advised changes. The participants’ part in the process was in the middle, which involved providing information and expertise to the stakeholder to solve their problem (for industry stakeholders) or to solve a societal problem (for policy-makers). Most of the participants did not initiate the process of change, although they often understood what change was required from their research into the issues at hand. The participants did not see themselves as the initiators or drivers of change, but rather as informers and advisers. For example, Professor Paul Miller suggested that the drivers of change typically lie outside the university, with academics playing a supporting role:

Well in many respects of course academics cannot drive change – they’re really on the sidelines – they can certainly inform it, they can help the change makers to better understand the position, they can research into the past to see what, for example, the law was. They can look at social, political, and economic changes, which might inform a change to the law,

but they can't [drive it] – ultimately the drivers of change, in the legal sense, are really outside the university. They're the politicians and to a limited extent they may be the profession – the judges ... who have some influence on this. [Professor Miller]

Participants also explained that engaging with policy-makers in a legal adviser capacity was an ultimate factor in the process of change. Professor Miller described the process of being part of the change as research engagement. He said he had been a part of committees and delegations over the years that had made significant changes to the law:

My first sort of you might say engagement, which led to change was engagement in the professional society – law society – where I was on a committee for about 20 years – 19 years to be exact – which brought about changes in the practice of conveyancing law ... and I was member of a number of delegations over the years that met with attorneys and met with policy-makers looking at new legislation or proposed bills or whatever like that and the committee being involved in the modification of contracts based upon changes in the law. [Professor Miller]

Indeed, as Professor Miller explained, he was at the forefront of these changes through being a part of these committees, playing a pivotal role as a legal expert and adviser. Similarly, Professor Daniel Swanson experienced being a legal adviser to change through contributing to policy change on a global scale, drafting new policy around his area of expertise for an international organisation.. Professor Swanson said he viewed changes to policy as impact, specifically when someone of influence such as policy-makers adopted or used his work. Others, such as Professor Belinda Smith, viewed research engagement, as a legal adviser to change, as being part of the changes to policy and law, ultimately leading to impact:

So I write reports, sometimes for courts and coronial, inquest and so on. And that leads to giving evidence, and sometimes that leads to impact as well, through either the report that the coroner makes or through media engagement with the inquest, and so on. [Professor Smith]

Although most forms of change discussed revolved around legal policy and law changes, some participants also highlighted another form of intangible change, which led to changes in how people thought about a particular issue – or a ‘change in consciousness’ or ‘influence’, as one participant put it. This was often achieved through more traditional mediums such as academic articles, blog posts, opinion pieces and articles in online publishing for non-expert audiences, and through comments and discussions on other people’s articles and posts. Professor Hao Lee explained some of the research he undertook to determine how barristers behaved and how his work had introduced changes to the legal profession’s culture: ‘I think I’ve done a few things like that where ... it’s kind of introduced something of a cultural shift in the way those things operate.’

Although some participants, such as Professor Lee, experienced their research introducing cultural changes or influencing thought or opinion, others experienced change through more standard policy and regulatory changes, such as the writing of submissions to government inquiries. The next property discusses how the participants experienced contributing to change through making submissions to public inquiries.

5.7.2 Making submissions

The second property of the category *Contributing to change* is *Making submissions*. Several of the participants discussed their experiences in making submissions to government inquiries and the process of having impact through these submissions. In addition to having impact, submissions also included an element of collaboration, usually with other academics but also with industry partners or researchers. Submissions were viewed as a stepping-stone by some to more fruitful research impact activities, utilising their expertise further through committees and expert evidence panels. Others viewed the submission itself as impact, especially when parts or sections were used to inform law reform.

The participants wrote submissions to various entities, such as the Tasmanian Institute of Law Reform, Victorian Law Reform Commission, the Productivity Commission, and the Australian Law Reform Commission. The participants also entered submissions to government and Royal Commission inquiries and provided expert oral evidence to inquiry committees when asked to do so. The submissions were usually solicited responses to requests from policymakers and reform bodies –

although, as Dr Hannah Kirby noted, she also wrote ‘unsolicited’ submissions to reform bodies in her area of expertise. She discussed that it was much easier to do this with a contact in parliament, otherwise the submission would likely to be lost down the ‘black hole’. She felt that with the amount of work required to write a submission, it was best to either have a contact or to submit directly to public inquiries.

The participants disseminated their knowledge on their areas of expertise through writing submissions to inquiries. As law academics, they had a ‘keen’ interest in writing submissions, as this was one of the ways they felt they experienced impact – by producing knowledge and advice that could then be used to make changes to legislation. There was almost a sense of responsibility in relation to writing submissions to legal issues that came up in an area of expertise, with participants feeling compelled to submit advice. As Associate Professor Katherine Mason explained, she ‘actively’ got involved in writing submissions as she felt that her research needed to be communicated to the government and the public. Others focused on the impact of their submissions, with Dr Laura Glover noting the importance of submissions in driving change and achieving impact as legal experts: : ‘And when an inquiry comes up in your specialist area, I think these are really powerful mechanisms to make that change and to have impact.’

Submissions were often targeted by the participants based around their expertise and research interests. Although some participants felt compelled to write submissions to effect change for altruistic reasons, others also thought about writing submissions more strategically for research impact. Dr Glover noted that although she felt quite passionate about using her expert knowledge to make change through submissions, she also strategically planned to lob submissions. As someone who had formerly worked in policy, she had an ‘insider’ understanding of what policy-makers were looking for in submissions. Dr Glover said she ‘kept her eyes open’ for submissions that came up in the areas in which she researched, as she felt submissions were an easy and obvious way to have impact. She said this was because it was easy to determine whether policy-makers had used her submission in their final report as she would often be cited. She explained her strategic impact process from submitting to an inquiry to being cited:

The Productivity Commission ran an inquiry into [omitted] and that's core really to my research and interests, so we drafted a submission to that inquiry. The submission was very targeted, but the attached article was sort of representative of our detailed recent research topic and then when the final report from the Productivity Commission was released, they had cited us on a number of occasions. [Dr Glover]

Dr Glover explained that she specifically targeted the Productivity Commission as she knew that Productivity Commission advice was 'often taken very seriously by government and often implemented'. Note that this process of planning for impact is discussed further in the category *Planning for impact*. In addition to planning targeted submissions, others planned out the presentation of their submissions to government and parliamentary inquiries. Some participants sent along articles with their submissions, but others preferred to keep submissions short and to the point as they were aware that policy-makers had little time and required 'short and sharp' submissions to hold their attention. Professor Paul Miller, for example, submitted an article with a submission directly to the Attorney General, noting that the article was essentially a 'drafted bill'. He described the outcomes of this submission as impact, as the article he developed was used in changes to legislation. Professor Miller explained: 'And I would have thought ... that if you can show a direct linkage between a report, a recommendation and legislation it must be impact.'

Research impact from submissions was often achieved collectively. Writing submissions was regularly a collaborative experience, with participants noting that they tended to write them with other academics or researchers. Some participants discussed writing submissions with colleagues from other universities, while Professor Miller, Dr Hannah Kirby, and Associate Professor Mason experienced writing with colleagues at the same institution. Associate Professor Mason explained that her research unit got together to collaborate on writing submissions to government in order to produce stronger, more rounded submissions that highlighted the collective expertise of her team. By working together, the participants were able to quickly pull together robust submissions and meet the often-tight deadlines of government inquiries.

Frequently, one of the goals of submissions was to be involved in more impactful activities such as giving expert evidence, being invited to be part of expert

panels or to provide consultancy services to the inquiry, furthering the potential for research impact over time. Dr Kirby experienced written submissions leading to further opportunities to contribute through giving evidence to the inquiry. She explained that after writing a submission, she was contacted to give testimony before a Senate inquiry. This led to further opportunities for research impact.

In addition to contributing to policy changes through written submissions, the participants also experienced providing direct expertise to stakeholders and industry partners. This is discussed below.

5.7.3 Shaping how things are done

Another way the participants contributed to change was by 'shaping how things are done'. This normally occurred when the participant was working directly with stakeholders on their internal processes and policies, which in turn informed how things were done within that organisation. This also occurred when stakeholders had access – either directly through the participant or through other mechanisms such as open access – to the participants' research that they then used to inform change within their own organisations.

Providing open access to their work was important to participants, as they wanted others to be able to access and use their research to effect change. As Dr Naomi Long explained, she viewed impact as something that could shape how things were done, hence providing access to those who could use her research was pivotal to her impact goals. Dr Long saw access to research as a form of impact, and she wanted community legal centres and law firms to access her work so they might use it to change how they did things, in turn leading to more people in the community benefiting from her research:

And I don't necessarily mean that they would have direct access to the research [itself], but that the people say community legal centres or law firms, or different aspects of law have access to [a part of] it. And that might, you know, ideally, one day shape how they might do certain things.
[Dr Long]

Professor Belinda Smith was also an advocate for open access, particularly in her research space. She said she fought hard to make the regulatory website she developed open access, stating the importance of 'getting your research out there'.

She explained that she made the website open access for lawyers and unrepresented litigants to source information that could be useful to their case. Professor Smith said she often had unrepresented litigants contacting her to say that her website was helpful and to thank her for her work. The website had also led to community legal centres and groups being able to provide quick, relevant information to those who may not be able to afford legal representation.

Although some participants were happy to share their research or provide it via open access for organisations to access and use freely, others worked directly and were often hired to undertake consultancy work for organisations that relied on their specific expertise to make changes and shape new processes. Professor Hao Lee discussed a time he was hired as a research consultant to conduct research into the behaviours of barristers. He noted that it was ‘very alive’ and topical research at the time, and quite controversial. He said his work contributed to significant change in the legal profession that is still a part of the culture today:

So, I think, what I’ve done over the years has pushed in the direction that things would hope to go eventually. I’m not claiming that my work was the key part of that, but I think it was certainly a part of it. [Professor Lee]

He explained that his research has changed how things are done in the profession and in the courts, and how certain processes now operate.

The participants also shaped how things were done through being a part of committees that had some direct influence over policy or industry change. Professor Sharie Kemp and members of her research group experienced this, as she explained:

And the other thing that my group has been particularly fortunate to do is to sit on some of the major national committees where policies are set in this area ... So, sitting on those committees again shows that our research really has a direct impact in that we’re using our expertise on those panels to effect policy and to actually do practical stuff ... [Professor Kemp]

Direct impact and being involved in the actual process to effect impact was important for ensuring that the impact itself could be measured more easily. However, the indirectness of shaping others’ practices and policies often meant participants were unable to successfully claim impacts where they had not been directly involved or

cited. Dr Hannah Kirby noted that having ‘indirect impact’ was often much harder to measure and to prove unless you were somehow involved in the actual process:

Maybe this is a broader point that as there are various kind of indirect ways in which we have impact as a result of our research and sometimes that’s not very easily measurable and sort of not identifiable. [Dr Kirby]

Dr Kirby said she had issues where people had clearly used her work to inform change, yet they had not cited or even mentioned her in their references. This was a problem as she was then unable to track her impact through citations, making it difficult to claim the impact.

Several of the participants experienced their research directly or indirectly shaping industry, stakeholder, and policy processes. In addition to these experiences, others experienced *Contributing to change* through the academy. This will be discussed in the following property.

5.7.4 Academic change

Some participants experienced *Contributing to change* within the academy, which included changes to teaching curriculum and course design, and pastoral care and career support. This was experienced, on average, by more junior academics, who were often new to academia or had significant service workloads, which often included being part of course development and curriculum. Dr Thomas Murray understood that impact was often described as shaping law reform, being cited in court, and being referenced by government submissions. However, he stated that he felt he was a bit outside the impact loop and found it slightly mystifying as a mid-career level academic whose research was highly theoretical. Nevertheless, he stated he felt that teaching 200 to 300 law students each year had the potential for even more change to the law and impact over time, particularly when he had helped shaped the course the students were studying:

So teaching is interesting, because I think often the impacts are difficult to quantify and measure and difficult to observe. And they tend to happen over a longer time horizon than, say, a publication ... or appearance in court ... And in terms of impact, people always talk about impact, but what

greater impact can you have, than teaching a foundational area of law to 300 or more people? [Dr Murray]

Dr Naomi Long had similar experiences, having contributed to course design and development. She was offered a significant service role in curriculum review due to her past experiences outside of academia, working in education. Dr Long felt her work had led to substantial changes within the law course design that had resulted in broader career opportunities for law students and graduates.

So, a lot of those students have very rapidly gone out into the workplace and reported back, like how valued their skills in design are, and the fact that they even know what it is and that they're bringing that into their workplaces. So, yeah, and there's lots of people have picked up really important jobs in these different areas. So yeah, to me, that has been a big impact, much bigger than my research at this stage. [Dr Long]

Dr Long said she set about designing a more flexible law degree that equipped students for the future of legal work, 'and that's all about ensuring their capabilities and skills and competencies ... and it's also about designing flexibility and as many pathways as we can.' In addition to this, Dr Long also focused on pastoral care – interacting and engaging with students and offering them time and support to discuss their futures:

I'm forever getting emails from students, sometimes quite soon after I taught them, then sometimes years later. I had one just again, and just a few days ago, from someone I taught three or four years ago at uni, just talking about the impact of my teaching ... some connection we had around me sitting down and spending time with them to talk through career options or something they were having trouble with, and where they are now and what they're doing. [Dr Long]

Several of the participants noted the impact of students they had taught, going out into the legal profession, and making a difference in the world. Professor Mohammed Aaiz noted that one of his former students was now in a high-level policy position overseas, having his own impact on the legal policy in that country.

5.7.5 Summary

Contributing to change can be broad, and often encompasses much more than writing submissions and articles to government inquiries. The participants experienced being part of the process of change as legal advisers to policy-makers, and part of shaping how things were done in relation to stakeholders and industry partners. Some participants felt contributing to teaching and course development change was just as important as contributing to change outside of academia, as it shaped law graduate outcomes and in turn the future of the legal profession. The category *Contributing to change* captured several of the participants' similar and divergent experiences and feelings about change and having impact. Impact, from the perspective of the participants, was not as clear cut as 'shaping law reform' and was often multifaceted and highly subjective. Change in and of itself could sometimes be easy to measure and link to works, but it could also be very difficult to measure – either due to works not being cited or simply because the impact itself was achieved indirectly or across many years and many people collectively. The next category, *Planning for impact*, discusses how the participants felt little control over their impacts.

5.8 Category 5: Planning for impact

In *Planning for impact*, the participants experienced feeling that research impact was largely outside their control, which affected their motivation to pursue and plan research impact, both positively and negatively.

Participants explained they felt powerless over their research impact once they had completed an engagement activity or written a submission, for example. However, some participants strategically planned research impact and engagement goals, regaining a feeling of control over their research impact achievements. In addition to feeling powerless about their research impact, several participants noted frustration and confusion around the definitions of impact, the uncertainty around what constituted impact and how to record and manage impact. This also contributed to feeling powerless as they had no real say in the definitions of research engagement and impact (which were often not aligned with their experiences) and struggled to articulate and prove that they had actually achieved research impact. Other participants felt their work, often highly theoretical, was outside the 'loop' of

what the universities and government constituted as impactful work, often leaving them feeling that they may never achieve the research impact expected by their universities and the government. Still, some participants were hopeful that their research would achieve impact over time. Finally, several participants discussed how they often depended on others for impact, describing research impact as a collective rather than an individual experience. These experiences will be discussed through the properties of this category: *Planning research engagement and impact*, *Feeling powerless in achieving impact*, *Depending on others for impact* and *Being outside the impact loop*.

5.8.1 Planning research engagement and impact

For the participants, *Planning research engagement and impact* was an important part of getting their work seen by those outside of academia. Several participants found this task important to do and often felt obligated to produce some sort of impact outside of academia, especially for their publicly funded research. Some participants noted the importance of planning research engagement for impact, feeling like they at least had some control over their engagement work, as Associate Professor Katherine Mason stated: 'Research engagement is the bit you have control over ... that's what I always tell my faculty members. Research engagement is all the things you do ... in the hope to have impact.' The element of control was often lacking in discussions around research impact. The property *Feeling powerless in achieving impact* discussed this in further detail.

Significantly, some participants used what they called research 'engagement' to strategically engage in certain spaces and with audiences that would enable them to achieve their impact goals. Dr Laura Glover described her experiences of planning her research engagement through keeping up with what was going on in her research space:

Now the thing about having impact – your evidence has to be provided in a timely and palatable way, and by palatable I don't mean skewed. I mean it has to be accessible to those who are making the changes to law, policy, medical practice, whatever it may be. So, the way you speak about your research, who you speak about it to, who you engage with about your research and again timeliness – you've got to keep up. You've got to

be aware of what's going on in the big wide world and aligning to some extent the work you do – not everyone probably has to do this but if you want to have impact in the short to medium term then you do need to align what you are doing with what's going on and for me it's on public policy, so I need to keep an eye on what's going on in public policy. [Dr Glover]

Planning research engagement activities also allowed some of the participants to feel in more in control by ensuring they did 'quality' engagement. Associate Professor Katherine Mason said research engagement often involved a 'plethora of activities' that were designed to produce research impact. She noted the importance of doing the best possible: 'So I'd always talk to my academics about, make sure to do the best quality engagement you can ... do the best engagement and impact will or won't work itself out afterwards.' Here, there was a feeling of having control over engagement, but having no control over the impact that may or may not be produced from the research engagement activities.

Several of the participants, such as Associate Professor Mason, noted that although research engagement was needed to produce research impact, not all research engagement would lead to research impact, regardless of how much planning went into it. Prof Paul Miller described his experiences with engagement, noting his understanding that his efforts might not lead to research impact:

It may be engagement directly with your professional community, it may be engagement with some particular part of the professional community, or it may be engagement directly with government. Now in each case the result may be different and may or may not lead to impact. [Professor Miller]

Similarly, Professor Jane Lambert noted feeling that her work might not have impact: 'Of course you can't guarantee impact because that depends on somebody else doing something.' It seemed to be well acknowledged that research impact itself was outside the participants' control, with control being largely in the hands of stakeholders and policy-makers, offering participants a somewhat marginal control over their potential for impact. The participants' experiences around lacking control are discussed in the next property.

5.8.2 Feeling powerless in achieving impact

There was a consistent thread throughout the interviews with the participants: that they often felt powerless or lacking any real control over having research impact. This was often due to several things, such as confusion around what constituted impact (and not being able to have a say in what constitutes impact), the often-lengthy delays between research outputs and impact, which they had little control over, and uncertainty about how to record and manage research impact in order to prove they had actually achieved research impact. In addition to feeling powerless around achieving research impact, several participants noted that they were still hoping for impact. This often correlated with the significant delays between producing a report, for example, and having research impact. Some participants saw research impact occurring over 10- to 20-year timespans while others strategically focused on faster impact through working on topical and current issues. Participants generally felt they had little control over the time lags between producing outputs and having research impact. Professor Paul Miller was asked about the time lags in relation to legal impacts in his interview, as he was one of the participants who experienced this over his career:

Well one thing of course is that legal reforms come very slowly – academically you might see something early on [but] the profession may not be ready for it or may put it aside. [Professor Miller]

This scenario arose for Professor Daniel Swanson who experienced unexpected research impact from a book he had written over 20 years earlier, for the profession. Although he had experienced several other quicker impacts since, he regarded this one as the most direct:

And in fact, research of mine that's probably had the most direct impact would have been ... I wrote a book with someone 20 years ago on [topic omitted] ... It was used by the Australian High Court, quite extensively ... [Professor Swanson]

He remarked that he was not necessarily expecting to have impact when he wrote the book; he was simply 'exploring a question'. This shows that research impact can often be serendipitous and is not always planned for.

Conversely, other participants plan for research impact by focusing on topical issues, in turn controlling the turnaround times for her potential research impact. Dr Laura Glover explained that being part of or belonging to groups in her research area was important for regaining some control over her impact ‘like we really do have a place at that table ... So, you can make sure that your work is having impact’ Similarly, Professor Belinda Smith felt that doing research in more topical areas had helped her engagement to reach more people, hence broadening her ability to have more far-reaching impact: ‘I think that my research area is kind of... of interest, broadly. So that certainly helps with research engagement, people actually are really interested in what you’ve got to say, because it’s topical.’ Like Professor Smith, Dr Naomi Long had experienced some research impact quite quickly as an early career researcher, admittedly due to the topics on which she had previously worked: ‘A lot of my impact ... It’s been mainly around parliamentary stuff, as it so happened with ... the nature of the topics I’ve worked on.’

For some participants, doing research into more topical areas was not possible, especially for those who were doing research on more theoretical legal issues. This led to them feeling outside the impact loop and disempowered, seeing other colleagues achieving their research impact goals but having little or no research impact themselves. This is discussed further in the property *Being outside the impact loop*.

Participants also felt much confusion around research impact and engagement, and what the expectations were from their law school heads, university management and the government. They frequently felt conflicted and powerless, with varying expectations and models around research impact, which often differed between institutions and government. Professor Miller highlighted the widespread confusion in his law school regarding research impact and engagement: ‘I think there’s a lack of understanding of what research impact is and there’s a lack of understanding [about] research impact and engagement – what engagement [is] ... and how it should be measured.’ Professor Miller observed that his law school struggled with distinguishing between academic and non-academic impacts:

I think there’s confusion among academics between academic impact and other non-academic impacts. Academic impact has become quite important because it is a research indicator being judged on the standards

of Excellence in Research Australia (ERA), and in other ways for the purposes of academic workload. [Professor Miller]

This confusion often led to participants viewing academic impact as research impact and vice versa. Some participants explained their impact experiences in terms of publications as academic impact, and submissions for example as non-academic impact, yet others saw these distinct outputs simply as research impact. For example, Dr Jason Matthews defined research impact as:

Citations and references by other academics ... and citations and references by judicial decision makers, would be the two main ways that I would assess research impact. [Dr Matthews]

Similarly, to Professor Miller, Dr Thomas Murray shared a similar experience, noting a lack of agreement in his law school and across his university about what constitutes research impact: 'And there's very little consensus about what a valuable contribution, public contribution would look like,' he explained. This left everyone feeling clueless, leading them to come up with their own definitions to explain research impact. Professor Miller said he felt universities probably had not [at the time of the interview] had enough time to consider how to address and define impact, including the expectations of impact. He explained that could be the main reason for the confusion between academic and non-academic impacts:

So I suspect there's going to be some different views about this, but I don't think that many universities have really thought this through to give some credit for each thing, because research is completely different.
[Professor Miller]

The final element of this property was how participants experienced managing and recording research impact. This had two sub-elements: (1) evidencing impact; and (2) recording and managing impact. Several of the participants felt frustrated when they saw that their work had been used, for example, in government reports without being cited. This meant having to ask for letters of recommendation and evidence of their work influencing the report decisions. Often this was time-consuming and left participants slightly 'jaded' (Professor Aziz's words) with the process of evidencing and recording their research impact. Dr Hannah Kirby explained that this practice of

not citing was a barrier for academic impacts being identified, in addition to being time-consuming. She discussed her experiences with this:

So yeah, and I know as well that some of my work has guided ... EU agencies work but they tend to not cite a lot explicitly so that can be one frustration when you know that you've had conversations with certain agencies and departments and then they produce something which you see some kind of hint of your own work in, but they just don't have a policy of citing so much. [Dr Kirby]

When asked how she felt this would affect the metrics for legal scholars, Professor Aziz said:

Well, I think that its better if they cite ... and if they are not aware of that then they should be made aware of that. And if not then ... getting in contact with the body to provide some sort of official letter ... is another option but of course that's also sort of time consuming for all involved as well. So, if they can be encouraged to cite work when they actually use it that would be ideal. [Dr Kirby]

Other participants felt more frustrated about their internal university processes for managing and recording research impact. Professor Sharie Kemp noted feeling frustrated by having to record and write about her impact, particularly when there was little consensus on impact definitions:

How do you articulate what impact and engagement is? ... How [do] we actually define and record what we do in a way that fully embraces it and gives these external agencies what they want to be able to assess and measure it? [Professor Kemp]

Professor Daniel Swanson experienced similar annoyance at having to write about and record his research impact through his university. In addition, some participants were asked to write their research impact up into case studies for Engagement and Impact Assessment (2018) purposes, with little guidance on the expectations. As Dr Kirby stated, this just created more bureaucracy around impact, needing to constantly be in control and on top of your own metrics:

Making this into a metric, I think I understand why it's been done but there are negative consequences of that, and I think that's something that's been highlighted in the REF processes in the UK that there's been a huge amount of staff hours put into to creating stories or case studies and I just think we're all under lots of pressure and time pressures and that's kind of my big reservation about a lot of this. [Dr Kirby]

This property, *Feeling powerless in achieving impact*, highlighted some of the participants' experiences of lacking control and feeling powerless over research impact. The next property delves further into this lack of control, specifically when depending on others for impact.

5.8.3 Depending on others for impact

The property, *Depending on others for impact*, explains how the participants experienced research impact collectively via working with others or through relying on others to adopt or take up their research. This property also overlaps with the property of *Feeling Powerless* in that the participants felt they did not have any individual power over obtaining research impact, or claiming research impact.

Many of the participants experienced impact collectively, stating that they often worked with several other people to achieve research impact. This frequently included working with academics but also with other people who were called upon for their specific skills, such as designers, research assistants and fellows, and topic experts. However, it was not always about working directly with others: sometimes, as explained below, it was about working indirectly with others to achieve change in the same space. It was often difficult to ascertain who owned or could claim the impact, as Dr Hannah Kirby pointed out: 'There are various kind of indirect ways in which we have impact as a result of our research and sometimes that's not very easily measurable and sort of not identifiable.'

Generally, participants found that universities viewed research impact as belonging to an individual; however, Professor Belinda Smith said this was an 'obscene' way to view research impact: 'I never think it's one person who did any of these things. Universities like to see [impact] this in this way, which is just absolutely sort of obscene.' Professor Smith did not view research impact as something for which she could individually take credit, noting that she saw herself as one of the

many voices of an impact in which she had been involved. 'I would think that if I've been called upon, and ... my opinions are reflected in the change, I would say that I've had some impact.' Although Professor Smith said she did not necessarily always collaborate with others for her outputs, she still saw research impact as a somewhat indirect collective experience:

It takes a village to make a change. And you need the stories of lived experience. And you need the stories of the researchers across different areas. You need the practitioners. These things usually coalesce. And that's why we get change. [Professor Smith]

Similarly, Associate Professor Katherine Mason explained this experience as feeling unsure if she had made a change or if many things had come together to make a change:

The engagement is very easily measurable ... The impact is much more contingent and so is much more difficult to, to know whether you have, whether you have had that impact ... or some other factor has had the impact ... but also, to know whether you know, you would have had an impact but for intervention of some other thing beyond your control. [Associate Professor Mason]

In addition to this, other participants felt like they were depending on policy-makers for their research impact. Professor Sharie Kemp explained her experiences of feeling like research impact was beyond her control:

There have been a couple of times where there have been bills before parliament and you know the last day of the sitting season, they've got five or six matters to debate, and it just isn't enough of a higher priority so it lapses, and it might get reintroduced the next year or it might not. So, I think that probably is the biggest frustration – that you can really work with policy-makers and feel that you've gone a long way to changing the law and then for reasons that are just beyond their control and your control it doesn't work out. [Professor Kemp]

She also discussed how developing policy changes with policy-makers sometimes ended abruptly part-way through, when a political strategy was no longer relevant or when a new government took control:

So, with the best will in the world, you know people will go a long way to developing policy and so on and for whatever reason there will be a change in political strategy so all of that work will be for nothing.

[Professor Kemp]

There was a sense from the interview with Professor Kemp that making change was important and of value to her as an academic, and that having something end without any real outcome, and beyond her control, was quite disappointing. Quite often, her research impacts depended on policy-makers, and she felt powerless to control any real outcomes.

However, other participants experienced disappointment from a lack of research impact. As theoretical or philosophical researchers, this was also often outside of their control. The next property, *Being outside the impact loop*, explains their experiences.

5.8.4 *Being outside the impact loop*

The fourth and final property of this category is *Being outside the impact loop*. Participants who researched in more theoretical areas noted feeling like they were lacking in the research impact space due to impact being more applicable to applied research, and in more topical law areas. Dr Jason Matthews explained his experience with research impact thus far as ‘pretty disappointing’. As someone who researched more in the theoretical and black letter law space, he felt his research impact outside of academia was extremely limited and mostly within academic communities:

So, research impact from my perspective has been pretty disappointing. I mean I would've hoped for a bit more, to be honest. I don't think my research today has had a lot of impact. It's had some. I'm not saying it hasn't [had] some but currently mainly been by small academic communities. [Dr Matthews]

When Dr Matthews talked about his research impact, this was mostly in relation to publications, which informed academic practice and the legal profession. He acknowledged that he might see research engagement and impact differently from how his university sees it. Similarly, Dr Thomas Murray felt he was yet to experience research impact as a theoretical researcher. He accepted that research impact was achieved more by academics who did lots of work outside of academia in more applied legal areas: 'I don't research in high impact areas of law. Because my research is mainly theoretical.' When asked whether the theoretical work was likely to have less impact over time, Dr Murray said, 'Look, in all honesty, I'm pretty realistic about it. I don't think it has much impact of the sort that marketing and to a lesser extent promotions panels can measure.'

Dr Murray had a similar experience to Dr Matthews, noting that he often felt disenfranchised by this, particularly as research impact had become more important for grants and academic promotion. He felt that grant and promotion panels frequently wanted something tangible, some sort of metric they could easily measure and that he could not meet their expectations as his research did not produce that sort of impact:

Roughly speaking, if you said is someone's research is having a lot of impact, I would say ... I would think you meant has it been cited in a court has it been ... You know, referenced in the past government submission. Has it shaped law reform, something like that. So that's how I think of impact and that might be one reason I've had problems ... ticking the impact box when I go for promotions and things ... [Dr Murray]

Although some participants felt research impact was not achievable for theoretical work, others noted the importance of theoretical work in informing or providing a framework for other forms of work, as Dr Laura Glover explained:

I know that not all research is as directly engaged ... or needs to be – some of the more theoretical research can be very powerful as well ... so, I'm also working on... one chapter of the book will be ... it's a little bit more theoretical ... And you know, I'm not sure how much the decision-makers will draw on that particular chapter, not directly but it kind of provides a theoretical framework, which that work could proceed, with

slightly firmer foundations. So, you know I think the theoretical work can be useful and impactful in a slightly less direct way. [Dr Glover]

Some participants saw their colleagues who worked in theoretical areas openly struggling to achieve research impact, noting that the emphasis was normally on topical and applied law areas. Professor Smith, who did not do theoretical research, had not experienced this phenomenon but had seen many of her colleagues struggling due to their research area:

We've got a lot of people who are looking at trusts, contracts, equity, [technical, mundane private law doctrine] ... it's quite complex topics, and they might occasionally be relevant to people in the community, but they're probably not going to hit the news very often or, you know, they may be involved in reviews and so on. But it's not going to be a really topical issue in the community for most people. [Professor Smith]

However, she noted the importance of the work they did – which, as Dr Glover stated earlier, often informed conceptual frameworks for academics and those outside of academia, including the legal profession:

I just think that, you know, we have to be remembering that we need everybody ... it's really important that there are these specialist equity lawyers beavering away and looking at the case reports. I don't think they're any less so. But I do think we have to be comfortable with both [forms of academics]. [Professor Smith]

The feeling of *Being outside the impact loop* was experienced by some of the participants. This, along with feeling confusion over what research impact was and how to measure and record it, became more rather than less relevant as time moved forward. With promotions panels and research funding now requesting academics to explain their research impact, this could lead to a culture that excludes certain forms of research that were still important for informing base-level frameworks or building blocks for applied researchers.

5.8.5 Summary

Planning for impact was experienced by most participants. Research impact in and of itself was viewed positively, with most wanting to have research impact or

hoping their work would achieve impact in time. However, the lack of control over impact, particularly the time lags and general confusion as to what research impact was and what was expected, led to participants feeling frustrated and wanting to opt out of the bureaucratic practices, such as having to record and manage their research impact. Some participants chose to take charge of their research impact by strategically planning for impact, while others chose to do their regular research, unsure about whether they would achieve impact. For the participants who had experienced research impact, all said that research impact was never an individual pursuit – it often included working directly or indirectly with others to achieve the same aim. Some, who were reliant on policy-makers for their research impact, felt disappointed when things did not go as planned, noting that impact was often beyond their control. Finally, a few of the participants felt outside the impact loop, with theoretical researchers often feeling disenfranchised for grants and promotion panels due to their lack of research impact. The next category will discuss the process of engaging with audiences and translating knowledge to non-experts.

5.9 Category 6: Engaging and translating

In *Engaging and translating*, the participants experienced research impact through the process of engaging with audiences outside of academia and translating their research for these audiences. Broadly, this category captured the participants' experience of translating research for non-expert audiences, engaging with media, engaging with community groups and the legal profession through talks and training, and utilising social media and online tools to translate their work beyond academia.

Engaging and translating is experienced through several activities, including writing for non-academic publishers such as *The Conversation*; translating work into submissions for policy-makers; engaging with the media through interviews and translation of academic work for general audiences; engaging with the legal profession through training materials; and through giving public lectures and providing educational resources to those outside of academia. It was also experienced by some participants through using social media to engage with and develop relationships with broader audiences.

The following properties will be discussed: *Translating for non-expert audiences*, *Working with journalists* (includes sub-properties *Preparing for media*

interviews and Compromising with journalists), Translating through talks and training (includes sub-properties Giving talks and Educating and training) and Engaging using social media (includes sub-properties Social media and Open access). These properties cover the participants' lived experiences of engaging and translating.

5.9.1 Translating for non-expert audiences

In this property, the participants experienced impact through translating their work for audiences outside of academia. The participants expressed several processes that they used to translate their research, including avoiding jargon and over-complication, using key messages and take-aways, and condensing information. The participants experienced research impact when their work was used by non-experts to produce societal change or to influence a way of thinking about an issue.

For the participants, avoiding jargon and over-complicated information was imperative to translating academic work to non-expert and general audiences. Although some of the participants explained that they found the process of translation 'challenging', others like Professor Jane Lambert felt she generally wrote 'clearly and rarely used any legal jargon in her work'. She noted that she liked to break things down into digestible information for general audiences and would be interested in understanding how to produce infographics to better translate her complicated work. As discussed previously, several of the participants published articles for the general public in *The Conversation* and other publishing platforms for non-expert audiences. This required them to write clearly and without jargon to help general audiences to understand quite complicated legal terminology. As Dr Hannah Kirby discussed, this was not always an easy process but was important for reaching general audiences:

I think that's often a challenge when writing Conversation articles, I mean a good challenge as well ... but to really force academics to write more clearly, not write very long sentences and kind of explain things in a way that normal people can understand them. [Dr Kirby]

Professor Sharie Kemp also found it a challenging experience as it was important to her to ensure that her message was still accurate. She noted the difficulty in maintaining this accuracy of messaging for which she was translating her work. She

said of this experience: ‘You just have to really think about how you ... convey your message in a way that [is] amenable to anybody. And still accurate – so that’s the challenge.’

Although some participants found the process of translation challenging, others like Dr Naomi Long said she liked the experience of writing for more general audiences as she enjoyed the process of trying to convert things into plain language” ‘What do they say [write it for] a 15-year-old? Yeah, I quite like that. Trying to convert things into more plain language and into a way that anyone can understand.’

In addition to avoiding legal jargon and overcomplication, the participants also utilised methods such as using key messages and take-aways to ensure their work was being understood. This was key to their translation methods, as they understood that providing information that was too deep or technical often left audiences confused, especially when the topic was more complicated. It was also discussed that this method could be useful to capture the attention of more time-poor audiences such as policy-makers when writing submissions. Dr Kirby explained how she used key messaging: ‘[I try] to make key points to whatever is most relevant to [what] that particular audience is interested in.’ She used this process when writing submissions, ensuring that her three key points were all listed on the first page. Due to policy-makers being time poor, Dr Kirby said she used this strategy to ensure that if they only read one page of her submission, they were reading the most important section. The method used by Dr Kirby was also relevant for the process of condensing information, which the participants did to break down their work into digestible information, which they said was more ‘palatable’ for general audiences. Similarly, Professor Lambert explained that she received feedback from some of the regulators she worked with that they did not want to read or look at journal articles written by academics – they preferred the condensed version. Professor Lambert said the regulators advised her: ‘We just want the one paragraph – you know ... we just want you to show us the one-paragraph version of what all the different papers have shown.’ Although Prof Lambert felt her work in the academic space was well written and clear, this experience had shown her that she needed to focus on writing ‘short things’ for non-academic audiences as they were usually received better. This focus on shorter, more succinct work was experienced by several participants when translating their work for non-expert audiences.

The property *Translating for non-expert audiences* discussed the experiences of the participants around translating their complicated legal work for general audiences. The next property, *Working with journalists*, discusses the experiences of engaging with media and journalists to translate work to audiences outside of academia.

5.9.2 Working with journalists

In this property, the participants engaged with journalists via traditional media such as radio interviews and online publishing platforms for non-expert audiences. This property discusses their experiences of working with journalists, addressing the challenges and the benefits of working directly with media to translate academic research for non-expert audiences. This property also discusses two sub-properties of the participants' experience of working with journalists: *Preparing for media interviews* and *Compromising with journalists*. These sub-properties cover the overall experience of *Working with journalists*.

5.9.2.1 Preparing for media interviews

The participants experienced mixed feelings about preparing for media interviews due to the time and energy required. Some of the participants commented on the time it took to set up interviews and the effort required to prepare for the interview, including preparing notes and discussion points ahead of time. Some wondered whether doing media engagement had made any difference or had any impact beyond metrics. Some participants noted feeling concerned that media engagements were not always worth the time they took to prepare. For example, Professor Jane Lambert's experience with media led to her feeling unsure about whether media engagement was worth the time taken away from other activities. She talked about her experience of preparing for media interviews:

I still found it was really time consuming because ... just setting up – you know they'd contact you and you'd have to set up a time and calling back and having a little chat with the producer and ... sort of for me anyway I need 15 minutes beforehand to just focus my mind. [Professor Lambert]

Professor Lambert obtained several interviews following a media release and opinion article with which her university media team helped her. She noted that even with all

the help she received from the media team, the whole experience was still ‘really time consuming’, which echoes the narratives of participants in *Category 2: Prioritising time*. She had since used the experience to continue writing more opinion pieces for general audiences, which she believed gave her some research impact. Although she acknowledged the importance of engaging with media through interviews, she felt let down and frustrated by the experience: ‘It takes so long and then you just sort of end up with these sound-bitey things and they kind of disappear.’ Associate Professor Julian Henson had a similar experience of spending a lot of time preparing for media interviews to have just a ‘tiny quote’ appear in the final article: ‘You know, you can go on and they quote a lot of detail, but most of it doesn’t get used.’ This was often frustrating for participants who had spent a lot of time preparing for very little benefit or potential for engagement and impact on the topic.

Often participants experienced having to prepare responses for media interviews ahead of time as they were aware from their previous experiences with journalists that they may have a specific agenda or angle they wanted to pursue. The benefit of preparing in advance of interviews meant the participants were able to respond based on notes or key points they had made about the topic of the interview, allowing them to be prepared for various questions. Professor Sharie Kemp explained her experience of carefully preparing for media interviews:

I often say at the start [of the interview] ‘it’s all very complicated’ ... and you can see that that’s not what a lot of media outlets want to hear. They want a nice short, sharp line they can use so you have to be careful.

[Professor Kemp]

Similarly, Professor Lambert noted that she was always prepared with her three points and key message before agreeing to be interviewed. She explained:

You know you’ve got to have your three points that you want to get across and that you’re going to say regardless of what questions they ask ... and just getting that into your head that that’s what you’re supposed to do, and that’s kind of what they’re expecting you to do. [Professor Lambert]

This notion of being prepared was also experienced by Associate Professor Henson, who said he received calls from media who often wanted a response straight away,

meaning he did not have time to prepare. This was generally around more newsworthy topics or in relation to commenting on current news items in his area of expertise. He explained this experience of being pressured to respond quickly:

They just want a quick response, not a detailed analysis of what's happened ... and you know, normally you need time to consider things ... it's pretty clear [when] they want some sensational quote or something.
[Associate Professor Henson]

Professor Kemp felt it was better to get back to journalists with a response rather than providing a quick quote and risking being 'misquoted' or 'misunderstood'. As an expert, Professor Kemp was careful about being accurate in the media and was careful with journalists who she felt may want to change the angle of a story. She noted feeling lucky that she had never been incorrectly quoted by media or misinterpreted; and said talking to knowledgeable journalists helped:

For example, if you're talking to people at the *Health Report*, you're really talking to people who get it, who help you ask the right questions ... whereas some news outlets might be a little bit – they wouldn't have the same level of understanding of where we are coming from and might just want a particular take that I'm not always willing to give. [Professor Kemp]

This willingness to change angles and directions of articles was discussed further in the next sub-property, *Compromising with media outlets*.

5.9.2.2 *Compromising with media outlets*

The participants experienced *Compromising with media outlets* as part of their overall experience of *Working with journalists*. This often included having to negotiate with media regarding how articles were presented and on the angle from which they were presented. This involved being willing to negotiate with media who generally had a different viewpoint to the participants and building relationships with journalists to develop more trust and reciprocity. Several of the participants experienced compromising with media through translation of their research for general audiences.

The participants found it challenging when working with journalists and editors at *The Conversation* as they often had clashing ideas on the direction of the article.

Dr Hannah Kirby said she found it quite challenging having her work edited by journalists who had changed the whole argument of her article. She noted that it was useful to negotiate these edits and advise the editors that certain concepts needed to be presented in a particular way. Professor Kemp had a similar experience, noting that sometimes the message she was trying to get across got caught up in the edits: 'That's a really interesting exercise, trying to provide something to the journalists at *The Conversation* and then seeing how they edit your work.' She admitted that sometimes the aspect she thought was least important was the issue the editors honed in on, and said, 'Sometimes you just have to wear that.' Professor Kemp acknowledged that although negotiating the edits was important, compromising on certain aspects of the article was necessary to getting the work published and viewed by non-expert audiences, which was her overall aim. Like Dr Kirby and Professor Kemp, Associate Professor Julian Henson also experienced challenges with media outlets, which he said involved lots of compromises: 'I've had issues with non-traditional legal outlets, while you're trying to reach a non-legal audience, and you can end up going backwards and forwards sometimes.'

In addition to compromising with journalists, some of the participants also used the experience and process of working with journalists as an opportunity to build relationships with journalists and media outlets, leading to better reciprocity and continued engagement and interaction. Professor Belinda Smith explained that having a good relationship with media was important:

It's a to and fro. That relationship that you're building ... that is not just about you being the talent, but [is also about] providing them resources. I always take calls from journalists; I don't always end up into being interviewed by them. But I would never leave them empty handed. [Prof Smith]

Professor Smith had experienced being a resource for media outlets and also helped by providing them with names of other academics who could comment on their stories, which aided in building relationships, as she explained:

So, I would always say speak to these three or four people. So, I try to if ... I'm not the resource for that sort of talent, I would certainly refer them

to other people ... I really try to make sure that they'll get in touch with me again, because I know that I'm a good resource. [Professor Smith]

As discussed in this property and its sub-properties, having good relationships with media was important to participants as it enabled them to successfully negotiate and compromise on the direction of their articles. In *Working with journalists*, participants experienced *Preparing for media interviews* and *Compromising with media* as explicit aspects of working with media to translate their complex research into more palatable formats for non-expert audiences. This included developing key messages in the preparation stage and negotiating the direction of articles to ensure message was retained.

The next property, *Translating through talks and training*, discusses the participants' experiences of engaging with the profession and the community through presenting talks and providing training and education resources.

5.9.3 Translating through talks and training

The participants experienced having research engagement and impact through doing talks and providing training to the legal profession and the community. They engaged with these groups by translating their academic work into presentations and training resources, furthering their potential for impact. Several of the participants presented their work at conferences, which included academic conferences and industry or practitioner-based conferences. Others attended topic-focused events to present their work to community and advocate groups. Often, expertise was a key factor in being able to validly deliver talks and training to these groups. This property discusses these experiences through the sub-properties *Giving talks* and *Educating and training*.

5.9.3.1 Giving talks

Giving talks to community groups and professional audiences was experienced by a number of the participants. Often the participants gave presentations based on their expertise on a certain topic in which the group had an interest. Dr Hannah Kirby discussed this, stating that she experienced research engagement with community groups through presentations. She mentioned that she

often gave talks to community groups and civil societies around her topics of expertise.

Other participants used presentations to open up a conversation with the community and stakeholders. For example, Professor Sharie Kemp said the purpose of presenting to community groups was not just about translating her work. She noted that sometimes it was also about having a conversation with the group to understand the types of issues with which they were grappling:

Engaging with the community or engaging with politicians or engaging with industry is much more of a – I guess a two-way communication. So you're engaging with people and listening to them and reflecting on that in your views and explaining to them what you do. [Professor Kemp]

Professor Kemp explained that, in her experience, giving talks to community groups helped her to better understand her research position and to ensure that she was understanding what the community groups needed from her research. Conversing with these groups also aided her academic work:

When you are engaging with the community, you're actually getting some benefit out of it yourself by presenting things and thinking of how this is informing your own research and how it will inform the way you write and convey in the academic context as well. [Professor Kemp]

In addition to giving talks to community groups, the participants also experienced giving talks to legal practitioners and other professional audiences such as accountants or health professionals. Like Professor Kemp, Associate Professor Julian Henson said his process around engaging with professional audiences was to talk to them directly, to determine what problems they were grappling with. He used this knowledge to generate further discussion: '[This] can lead to new ideas, [further] opportunities to present to law firms or at conferences or seminars.' Participants also experienced better opportunities to engage with the legal profession through giving talks. For example, Professor Jane Lambert discussed how she belonged to a legal community of engagement that consisted of academics, practitioners and judges, and regulatory agencies. The community began after she presented her work to a few judges, and they thought it would be good 'for everyone to hear'. The community led to Professor Lambert presenting her work to all the judges of the Federal Court,

which in turn led to more prospects for engagement with the profession and impact through influence on legal decision-makers.

Conversely, some participants had not given talks to those outside of academia but accepted that it was seen as a requirement of being an academic. Dr Thomas Murray had not experienced presenting to professional bodies or community groups as he had previously 'refused' due to time constraints. He explained that although he had given some public lectures to students and presented to academics, he had never presented to professional bodies. He noted that he would soon have to learn how to translate his work through giving talks, as it was a requirement of a grant on which he was listed. He explained that this would be his first experience of translation through giving talks: 'I haven't spoken to a professional body before, I've mostly spoken to other academics. And so that will involve some translation, but that will be a first for me.'

The participants further experienced translating their work through *Educating and training*, which will be discussed in the following sub-property.

5.9.3.2 *Educating and training*

Many of the participants discussed experiencing translation of their work through *Educating and training*. Although this will be discussed in *Cultivating impact through teaching and learning* (Category 7) from the perspective of translating for teaching purposes, it will also be discussed in this sub-property in relation to educating those outside of traditional academia.

The participants discussed their experiences with delivering professional courses to people wanting to learn more about the law, and more specialised training for lawyers and the legal profession. Professor Jane Lambert noted that she felt 'quite engaged' when setting up and delivering training courses for people in the [omitted] industry. She explained that she experienced impact through translating her knowledge for industry professionals, as the people who took her course later developed their own materials for their workplace around the content, she had taught them:

At that time the [omitted] profession was sort of emerging as a profession, so I was doing a lot of talks for them and sort of helping them to get off the ground and I started teaching a course, a masters level course ... which a

lot of people came and did and it sort of became one of the first things for formalising the training ... and then later on they sort of started all their own stuff so they weren't really dependant on a university anymore.

[Professor Lambert]

It was the experience of people 'taking up' and redeveloping her work into something that worked for their industry that was viewed by Professor Lambert as research impact. Likewise, Dr Laura Glover experienced research impact through translating her research for training and education purposes via running seminars for those outside academia.

Other participants also experienced in-person course training as an avenue of translation, with some wanting to go further to develop educational apps. For example, Professor Lambert had investigated doing educational translation through apps as she had a colleague who was doing some work on apps for legal translation. She felt that this was something law academics should look into, to translate their research for different audiences. Exploring creative avenues of translation was something Professor Lambert was quite passionate about; however, she noted that often law academics did not have the time or the skills to pursue more creative forms of translation.

Training and development for judges was another area where participants translated their research towards legal practice. Professor Smith discussed running training for judges, which she called 'judicial education'. During the training sessions, she noted spending a lot of time talking directly to judges, imparting her knowledge to them. She explained that she preferred to engage with the profession in more hands-on ways – through direct talks and via videos and training resources – rather than by publishing a paper in a professional journal. She also developed training modules and videos for judges so they could test their knowledge garnered from the short videos. Professor Smith experienced translating her work through training resources as a form of research engagement and impact on the legal profession and judicial administration.

The final property of this category discussed how the participants made their research more accessible through social media and through online and university repositories. Open access was also an important element for translating work and making it more available, opening up further opportunities for research impact.

5.9.4 Engaging using social media and open access

In this property, the participants used social media platforms and open access repositories to engage with broader audiences, enabling them to make their research more accessible. This often involved promoting their newly published work, engaging with other academics, media outlets and policy-makers, and commenting on others' posts using social media platforms. Some participants discussed how they went about making their research more accessible through open access platforms such as the Social Science Research Network (SSRN) and university repositories. The sub-properties *Social media* and *Open access* will discuss the experiences of the participants in this property.

5.9.4.1 Social media

The participants experienced using social media such as Twitter (now known as X), LinkedIn and Facebook. There was an overall sense that the participants used social media platforms to engage with broader audiences, enabling their research to be seen beyond academia. Although the main premise for social media use was to showcase their research work, some of the participants also used the platforms to connect and engage directly with stakeholders and policy-makers through direct messaging and comments on posts. This, however, was different from forms of self-promotion (discussed earlier in section 5.6.1.4), such as promoting research events and papers with which they were involved. Connecting with others via social media was more relevant to building relationships with key stakeholders.

One participant talked about his experience engaging with his followers using social media and how he found it quite useful. Associate Professor Julian Henson explained that he used different social media channels to alert his followers that he had published an article and said he found Twitter the most useful for this. He also mentioned that he used social media professionally and not for personal purposes, as he viewed social media as a form of publishing and getting his work seen by others. He explained that he comments on things when he wants his professional views heard:

I see it as ... a publishing channel. So, I comment on things because I'm putting my professional view out there ... I don't generally browse Twitter

and LinkedIn, but I post material there, just to try and reach people.

[Associate Professor Henson]

In addition to using Twitter, he also used LinkedIn to engage online. Associate Professor Henson explained that he had spent a lot of his time building an audience on LinkedIn, mostly comprising industry professionals in his area of expertise. He said he had over 3000 connections on LinkedIn and used the platform to reach his target audience. He admitted that social media helped him reach 'a much broader audience than just publishing articles or books'. His connections through LinkedIn had enabled him to have better access to regulators, who had contacted him through direct messages. He noted that the regulators did not comment publicly on his posts; they made contact in other ways, usually setting up meetings through phone calls. He also used LinkedIn Premium to allow him to be able to contact anyone on LinkedIn: 'So, I'll reach out to people on LinkedIn and ask to take them out for coffee, to have a chat about things.' Associate Professor Henson additionally posted comments and thoughts to his websites that he had set up, which then flowed through to his social media. Overall, he explained that social media has been extremely useful for reaching audiences with which he wanted to engage. Similarly, Dr Hannah Kirby used Twitter to engage with government agencies and noted that Twitter was the best platform for academics to engage with the right people:

Twitter is actually full of academics, and I think if you actually look at who uses Twitter or accounts which have large numbers, you'll probably find a lot of people who are journalists or in news ... academics, people in government. [Dr Kirby]

She explained that she also liked to use Twitter to engage with the broader public who had an interest in her area of research. She did this by posting links to her articles and her opinion pieces for general discussion.

Although many participants utilised social media for engaging with and networking with different audiences, others used it for more simple purposes. Professor Smith explained that although she had a good following on Twitter, she did not use the platform for opinion purposes, only for getting her work out there: 'I just put stuff out there. I don't really put opinion up there very much.' She said she got a lot of comments on her posts but did not engage with the comments. Essentially, she

explained that she only used Twitter as an avenue for reaching different audiences, rather than using it to network.

The following sub-property *Open access* discusses the experiences of the participants in utilising different open access methods to make their research more accessible beyond social media.

5.9.4.2 *Open access*

The participants used various open access methods to make their research more accessible. These methods included posting articles to university and online repositories, posting commentary about their research to websites and blogs, and (as discussed in the sub-property above) posting links to social media to allow people to find their content more easily. Several of the participants noted the importance of making their research more accessible to broader audiences, including policy-makers, regulators, community and advocacy groups, and the general public. Professor Jane Lambert specifically explained that she wanted to have impact on people outside of academia through her work: 'I get sick of writing – why would I just want to write journal articles that nobody reads or only a handful of academics read. I want to have some sort of impact on the world'. Dr Laura Glover also emphasised the importance of making work accessible to those who make changes to the law for the purposes of having research impact: 'I mean, it has to be accessible to those who are making the changes to law, policy, medical practice, whatever it may be.'

As well as publishing their work in online publishing platforms for non-expert audiences where, as discussed throughout, they could reach non-expert audiences, the participants also published their pre-print publications to repositories such as university repositories and online repositories. Professor Paul Miller explained that digitisation had helped make academic research far more accessible. He said there was more capability to find things online now via search engines, and that people were much more adept at using the internet to find things:

Years ago, you would have had to go to a library to look up the indices and that type of thing – I think now the research is far more accessible to the public and to the profession and the government. [Professor Miller]

Similarly, Dr Jason Matthews explained that people used to access academic work by visiting libraries and reading hard copies of journal articles at the library. He said, 'In the old days your average library might only have a small number of journals.' Now journal articles are accessible even for those without subscriptions via pre-prints and repositories. Dr Matthews explained that the only reason he published his articles in online repositories was to reach a wider audience. He mentioned that he saw this as a broader practice of getting his research published, particularly when there were delays in publishing with traditional journals. These delays meant that his more important research would not be published in a timely manner, hence potentially affecting the readership and reach of the paper.

As well as online repositories, participants also set up websites to disseminate their research. Making her research project's website open access was extremely important to Professor Belinda Smith, who said she felt quite strongly about research being open access. She explained that she had fought hard to make the website she developed open access, stating the importance of 'getting your research out there'. She noted that she made the website open access to enable lawyers and unrepresented litigants to source information that could be useful for their case. Professor Smith explained that she often had unrepresented litigants contact her to say that her website had been helpful for their case, and to thank her for the free information she provided to the public.

Along with repositories and websites, some participants also felt that the internet and search engines had allowed for publications and other material posted online to become more permanent, allowing for increasing numbers of people to reach the content over time. Associate Professor Julian Henson explained that he focused on ensuring his publications were being indexed by the right databases, which then flowed into them being picked up by Google searches. Overall, Associate Professor Henson felt that publications – especially those that were open and accessible – had the most research impact over time as they had the ability to reach anyone with access to the internet.

Although the participants published via open access for different reasons, the outcomes meant their work was much easier for those outside of academia to access, providing potential for better research engagement and impact.

5.9.5 Summary

Engaging and translating was experienced by several participants in this study. Although the participants noted feeling that translation could often be challenging, they were able to mitigate this through working with media and journalists when publishing articles outside of academia for general audiences. Although working with journalists was sometimes difficult due to differences in opinion, most participants saw the benefit and were therefore happy to compromise so long as their work was reflected correctly. Furthermore, the participants experienced *Engaging and translating* via giving talks to community and the legal profession, and through providing education and training resources based on their research. Participants experienced impact when their translated work was then taken up and used by people outside of academia for professional purposes. Finally, participants used social media and open access to make their research more accessible to general and non-expert audiences, thus increasing their chances of having research impact.

5.10 Category 7: Cultivating impact through teaching and learning

In *Cultivating impact through teaching and learning*, the participants experienced developing their research impact opportunities through the lens of teaching and learning. Some participants experienced having impact through influencing the learning experiences of students, while others experienced impact through mentoring staff and students, or through translating their research and experience into their teaching curriculum. The success of others (including others research engagement and impact successes) was viewed by the participants as the metric of this impact experience.

Often, participants viewed teaching and learning as a continuum: teaching others, but also continuing to learn from others, including mentors. Academia in a sense was experienced by the participants as a continual journey in learning and teaching, which led to having an impact on students and other academics. Learning was also experienced through engaging with those outside of academia, with the knowledge garnered from these interactions used to inform and shape the participants' research directions and research impact opportunities

This is the first category where impact or research impact will be discussed outside the parameters of what the government purports it to be, considering the broad experiences of how the participants viewed and experienced research impact in teaching and learning. This was experienced through research-led teaching, using fieldwork and research experiences to inform teaching and curriculum design. It was also experienced through mentoring, where academic experiences were imparted onto the mentee, leading to better opportunities for research engagement and impact. This category covers the experiences of internal-facing impacts rather than external impacts outside of academia. The experiences discussed in this category also shaped how the participants learnt from others, which then informed their experiences of research impact holistically. This category explained the lived experiences of how the participants cultivate impact through teaching students and learning from others. The following properties will be discussed: *Teaching as impact*, *Translating knowledge through teaching*, *Mentoring* and *Continuing to learn*.

5.10.1 Teaching as impact

In this property, the participants discussed their experiences of research impact through the lens of teaching students in a university context. These experiences of impact sit outside the Australian government's view of 'research impact' in that they must contribute to society beyond academic research. While the government places significant emphasis on research being intrinsically linked with impact, the participants in this study were resolute in articulating their impact experiences, regardless of whether they were directly related to research. Their narratives comprehensively encompassed a range of impactful experiences, including those arising from teaching and mentoring, thus acting as a potent critique of the official understanding of research impact. As Associate Professor Katherine Mason mentioned in her interview, the definition should encompass all facets of impact including teaching:

We talk about research impact and engagement ... but if we talk about impact and engagement at a broader level ... we should not underestimate the teaching ... Some of the greatest impact we will ever have is having an impact on the 400 LLB students that come through the door. And when people talk about what sort of impact you can have as an

academic, I think often we forget the impact that we have ... through our teaching. [Associate Professor Mason]

Although research was often experienced by the participants as the task they like doing the most, they also openly acknowledged the importance of teaching for the university. Universities needed to teach, to draw income from students, which enabled them to function. As Dr Hannah Kirby explained, teaching was extremely important to the university, for good reason: 'Teaching in some ways is perhaps even more important than research as a function of the university because without the students we don't really exist as a university.' Teaching was experienced by most of the participants as more than just something to get through each semester. While it was not the part of their job, they enjoyed the most, there was a sense of responsibility towards ensuring students were taught well and had a good experience in their studies. As Dr Thomas Murray iterated, teaching was a primary responsibility of an academic: 'In terms of impact ... teaching is our primary responsibility. And it's something that we should take very seriously. And so, I see that absolutely as part of my vocation.' Although Dr Murray enjoyed teaching and found it rewarding, he said he also found teaching exhausting and challenging:

It's the biggest contribution I make to society. I think teaching ... 200 to 300 students every year – [I'm] responsible for their education in an area of law. And that feels like a privilege and a burden. I find that rewarding. But also, very draining. [Dr Murray]

There was a strong feeling throughout the participants' interviews that teaching was mostly considered an enjoyable experience, with some participants noting the excitement they felt when teaching. Teaching students was often viewed as challenging yet important to the development of the legal profession. Professor Mohammed Aaiz particularly remarked on feeling a 'huge degree of satisfaction' from seeing students 'forge their way'. He discussed the experience of having a former student come back to talk to his current students about his career: 'He's just one year out of law school yet he's doing these fantastic things that he's effectively created himself.' One thing Professor Aaiz said he enjoyed most about teaching was hearing from former students about something they had learnt in one of his classes

and how they were now applying these skills this in real life. Prof Aaiz experienced impact as the success experienced by current and former students:

[Teaching is] surely our greatest legacy as it's so direct. It's so person to person. The book might be picked up by some people and I get people writing to me saying they loved it, but I get more from students saying ... 'this inspired me, and this is what led me to where I am.' [Professor Aaiz]

Associate Professor Julian Henson had a similar experience to Professor Aaiz in that he saw his teaching impact through the things students had learnt from him in class and relied upon in the work they did. He discussed how he stayed in contact with several former students, remaining aware of how his and others' teaching had informed their careers. Keeping on top of alumni destinations was discussed by several participants as important for informing teaching impact metrics. Most of the participants noted that university record-keeping of alumni destinations was not as good as it could be. Professor Sharie Kemp suggested that one way of maintaining better records could be to keep in touch with alumni and keep updated records of what alumni were achieving to better track these metrics:

The students we engage with go off and do amazing things, which have huge impact and that's really, really important ... At one stage we had a lot of people coming in from the South Pacific nations and some of those people are now judges and members of parliament and so on ... [it's important to keep] a really good record of what they're achieving.
[Professor Kemp]

As well as tracking alumni destinations, other participants considered alternative forms of impact metrics, such as surveys. Dr Murray said the impact of teaching was difficult to quantify as it happened over a longer time period, unlike other forms of impact like publications or court/inquiry appearances:

Teaching is interesting, because I think often the impacts are difficult to quantify and measure... difficult to observe ... It would be interesting, for instance, to survey students five years after they studied with you to see what they learnt from the course, whether they retained anything. Even if

it was just a sense of you as a teacher that was positive, I'd view all of that as an impact of success. [Dr Murray]

Equipping students with the knowledge they needed to succeed as law graduates was seen by the participants as an important part of their responsibility as academics. Several of the participants saw themselves as more than lecturers, adopting an almost pastoral care element with students, akin to mentoring. Dr Naomi Long said she saw her role in teaching as equipping students for future success by teaching in ways that supported the future of the legal profession. She explained that in her role as an academic, she had a significant administrative component, which involved developing the curriculum for the law degree. Dr Long said she designed the courses and curriculum to ensure students had the capabilities and skills required for the current and future legal workforce. She noted that she spent a lot of time designing the course to have multiple pathways for students, such as Masters and micro-credentials, mentioning the impact these pathway options had on student careers: 'Those things can have a massive impact on students' options and where they ended up.' In designing and adding these additional options for law graduates to undertake, Dr Long felt hopeful that the work she had done was setting students up for success: 'My goal in teaching was to sort of equip students with the capacity to continue to learn in a particular field ... And trying to support individuals to be the best they can be.' Dr Long talked about the feedback she had received from students that the skills they had learned from her classes were highly sought after and valued in their workplaces:

So, a lot of those students have very rapidly gone out into the workplace and reported back, like how valued their skills in design are, and the fact that they even know what it is and that they're bringing that into their workplaces ... lots of people have picked up really important jobs in these different areas. So yeah, to me, that has been a big impact, much bigger than my research at this stage. [Dr Long]

The next property considers how the participants experienced translating their knowledge through their teaching. Like Dr Long's experience, this often involved some elements of course design, including in-class examples and real-world assessments based on research and fieldwork experiences.

5.10.2 Translating knowledge through teaching

In this property, the participants discussed their experiences of impact through imparting their own knowledge and research into their teaching curriculum, design, and methods. Participants experienced this as a form of impact through teaching and learning outcomes and student success.

Several of the participants experienced teaching and research as circular, in that they taught what they researched, but they also obtained ideas for their research through their teaching. In this way, teaching and research were often viewed by the participants as interconnected. This interconnectedness was experienced by most of the participants, with some noting examples where they used their teaching experiences to inform their research. The interconnectedness of Dr Long's research and teaching allowed her to easily translate her research into her teaching. She explained that she felt quite fortunate to have teaching and research that intersected, as some of her colleagues were forced to teach in areas where they had little expertise or interest. Dr Long noted that her service role also overlapped as she was designing curriculum in the same space she was teaching and doing research in: 'So, all three are just completely kind of interconnected.'

This circular pattern of teaching and research was also driven by the participants' topic expertise and how they used this expertise to inform their teaching syllabus, including assessments and in-class examples. Professor Mohammed Aaiz experienced *Translating knowledge through teaching* by exposing his students to real-world examples from his fieldwork. He mentioned that it often felt a bit experimental, checking to see whether students understood the examples he offered up. He stated that this regularly gave meaning to what he studied, wrote about, and taught:

It [teaching] really helps me think about what it is I'm trying to write about and research about because the presentation, the impact, is in a way tested with these young minds and if they get or they don't get it then that says something about what I am doing. [Professor Aaiz]

Similarly, Associate Professor Julian Henson highlighted that he experienced teaching, engagement and research in his field as being connected. He said he had met with former students to ask them about the issues with which they were grappling in legal practice and realised that his research and teaching were linked:

And all that fits into the research that I'm doing, the research that I'm planning to do ... and it also fits my teaching ... the students, current students give me ideas for things, and I test out ideas on them. So, yeah, I see them always being linked. [Associate Professor Henson]

Although several participants noted the benefits of using teaching and testing things out on students to inform research, Dr Thomas Murray felt differently. He said it felt selfish to him to use his research in his teaching as it was not always relatable to his students. He felt that research-led teaching was quite self-serving:

So, for me, it's important actually not to teach my research, because I see that as a sort of a self-interested or self-serving kind of research-like teaching. And I think research and teaching have a more nuanced interaction than that. [Dr Murray]

However, he noted he was not against using some of his background knowledge to structure a course and a syllabus. He used his knowledge as more of a 'framework' for the syllabus rather than using it to impart knowledge onto students or test out his research ideas, as he explained:

As someone who does legal theory and philosophy, I think that often I bring that approach to thinking about problems to areas of law that don't necessarily need any more philosophical engagement, but I just try to use that as my way into the topic. [Dr Murray]

He stated that although he did not like to use his research in his teaching, he was not averse to developing research ideas through his teaching: 'For me, sometimes interesting research ideas come out of teaching, that can be a benefit of teaching.' Dr Murray therefore used his teaching to inform his research.

In addition to the impact experienced through translating their research knowledge through teaching, the participants also experienced mentoring as impact from facilitating the success of others. Mentoring also encapsulated the feeling of continuing to learn from others, mainly more senior academics. This mentoring will be discussed in the following property.

5.10.3 Mentoring

This property discusses the participants' experiences of mentoring students and other academics. There was also an element of being mentored, which led to participants continuing to learn. The process of mentoring others was important to the experience of having impact, as it related to the personal satisfaction the participants gained from helping or influencing others to achieve success. Mentoring of students was mostly experienced as pastoral care – wellbeing and career development – while mentoring of staff included passing on knowledge and helping them to develop their publishing and research career track records. This in turn led to better opportunities for research impact for the mentee, particularly from being involved in grants and collaborations with other academics and being introduced to their collaborator's professional networks. These experiences are discussed further below.

Mentoring of students was experienced by the participants in ways such as spending time with students to discuss their career options, including discussing options outside of law with them. Professor Hao Lee discussed how he felt it was very important for students to be aware of the different career paths on which their law degree could take them and encouraged them to think beyond their law degrees: 'There's ... [a] range of other stuff out there, which they don't see, and so my role is to try and open them up and saying oh there's all these other possibilities for you out there, which you can do.' Other participants experienced mentoring students around their career development. For example, Dr Naomi Long experienced mentoring revolving around teaching and helping students with their career planning: 'I have spent a lot of time either in really comprehensive email conversations or face-to-face conversations with students about different career options.' Dr Long found this a valuable experience for both her and her students as she loved to see them succeed. She said she was delighted to receive emails from past students that she viewed as evidence of the impact of her teaching.

Yet mentorship was not only experienced through helping students – it was also experienced by helping other academics achieve success. The process of collaborating with more junior academics on papers and grants was experienced by several of the participants, who viewed this as a form of impact, as Professor Lee explained: 'I believe in collaborating and mentoring junior colleagues as much as

possible ... that is a way in which you could have impact, by the way you relate to other people.' Similarly, Professor Aaiz said he spent time helping junior academics with grant development as there could often be a two-way benefit. He said he enjoyed helping them 'find their feet' in the world of research grants. He had been asked to come on grants with several junior academics and had really enjoyed working with them, 'and I'm riding on their coattails, and they say they are riding on my coattails so it's a win-win'.

Another area where the participants experienced providing mentorship to colleagues and other academics involved approaching people outside of academia. Associate Professor Katherine Mason discussed the importance of giving mentorship to junior academics, particularly around how to approach the legal industry and judges for research engagement purposes: 'the direction and the mentorship that you give them around how to do that as a junior academic is really important'. She also highlighted that offering training and support in approaching media and the legal profession was of key importance to providing good mentorship to junior academics to allow them to engage well outside of academia, and eventually to achieve impact in their own right.

Passing on workplace-based experience to others also formed part of the participants' mentoring experience. For example, Professor Lee mentored his junior colleagues on pushing back and saying no, as he felt many of them were taking on too much work, which could prove detrimental to their long-term career goals. Professor Lee explained that he had one colleague who wanted a research career, yet she was constantly being asked to take on more teaching, including a new course that was going to take her away from her research. He told her to start saying no to things. 'And I just said this is crazy. You know? You're never going to get your research done if every year you've got a whole new course.' He also noted that mentoring was not the same as a supervisory role, as it is more collegial, collaborative, and demonstrative in nature. He discussed connecting with colleagues through demonstrating the ways they could do things and passing on his knowledge and experience of the academic landscape to them.

The participants also discussed how important it was to have good mentors, which then shaped a person's experiences as an academic and formed a framework for mentoring others. This experience of being mentored was also relevant to the property *Continuing to learn*, where the participants experienced learning from

others. Professor Lee said he came from a background of supportive mentors, which helped him to understand the requirements of being a good mentor. He explained that he had always benefited from having great mentors: 'I've always benefited from great mentors, so ... what you get you pass on.' Dr Murray, as a junior academic, said he felt fortunate to be a recipient of good mentorship from senior academics. He explained that this mentorship was not always direct – sometimes it was just advice, which he found extremely valuable:

It's not necessarily direct, you know ... it's not sort of, let's co-author this or I'm going to harass you till you submit this article. It's more just people's reflections and advice on what makes for a satisfactory academic career and how to navigate promotion requirements or expectations. [Dr Murray]

Dr Murray also found it incredibly valuable to be told when something he had done was wrong, as it helped him to learn and do better, which then had an impact on his own career. He had experienced good mentorship through his current dean, who had offered him insightful advice around his career and planning for his promotions and research.

Mentorship was experienced as a form of teaching and learning impact, which included mentoring others, but also being mentored, and learning from more experienced people. These experiences often informed and influenced the participants' own approaches to impactful teaching and other forms of impact.

5.10.4 *Continuing to learn*

The property *Continuing to learn* discusses the participants' experiences of learning from others. The skills and information they obtained through learning from others were then used to inform their own teaching practices, contributing to their experience of teaching, and learning as impact. In addition, participants also experienced learning from others outside of academia, which then shaped their research direction and potential for impact. Both experiences will be discussed in this property.

Continuing to learn was experienced both internally (within the university) and externally (through others outside of the university). Internally, participants experienced several different forms of learning, which included professional training and development in areas such as working with media and writing for *The*

Conversation or other similar outlets for non-expert audiences. These skills were relevant to ensuring participants were engaging with media and publishing their work for a more general audience. Although Professor Jane Lambert found the media training her university offered really helpful, she also discussed wanting to learn more about developing her own infographics and apps to inform her research outputs, as she said she had noticed that using design elements was ‘how things were going’. However, she felt that it may not be possible to teach those skills to the average law academic:

I suspect that's more about having somebody available to help with some of that stuff cause that's quite specialised skills. I'm not sure that they are skills that you can train the average law academic to have. There'll be some who have it already but I'm not sure that it's something that can be easily done. I'm sure there's training about how to use that sort of stuff.

[Professor Lambert]

She felt that if someone could help her set these up, it would not be too difficult for her to do on her own with some training. She noted feeling excited about the training opportunities that research impact and engagement priorities might offer: ‘If all this impact and engagement talk means that some more resources and ideas and training become available to help with that then that's good.’ Professor Lambert was one of the participants who enjoyed and wanted to continue to learn new skills.

In addition to professional development, the participants also discussed learning from other academics and from students. Dr Naomi Long said this was akin to realising that everyone could be an expert in something, which you could learn from. She especially noted viewing the students she taught as experts in their own right:

And while I might have expertise in what I teach, it's really important to draw on the expertise of everyone in the room as well, because they will all have really valid expertise as well, even if they've just come from high school. [Dr Long]

She said she often used her in-class discussions to inform other aspects of her teaching, utilising the elements some of the students had put forward. Dr Long also discussed the importance of learning from other academics, especially from those in

other disciplines. During her PhD studies, she had to quickly learn a methodology that was often used in another discipline. Although she mentioned that she was still not an expert in the methodology, she acknowledged that learning from others in another discipline and knowing who to talk to helped her immensely:

I'm not an expert, but I've definitely learned a lot about methodology, particularly about using some of those digital things and about some IT stuff and co-design and different ways we can scrape data and what's possible and who might be able to do that and who we can speak to and different software products. [Dr Long]

As well as learning through other disciplines, some participants felt they learnt a lot from people within their own discipline. Dr Thomas Murray said he enjoyed learning from others and often attended colleagues' seminars and talks, and ensured he read and reviewed others' work, which aided his learning experiences:

So, my experience has been ... it's a positive demand of the job to learn from others. And, for me, the best way to do that is usually to attend a workshop or presentation. Or to engage in some kind of formal training ... So that's been my experience that ... a lot of it is self-driven. There's no pressure really applied to do it. I do think it's an important part of the job. [Dr Murray]

Professor Smith felt similarly to Dr Murray; she was quite self-driven to review papers and read others' work. She said she even enjoyed reading her students' research papers as they quite often had ideas or ways of thinking about things that she had not considered. She explained:

I love reviewing papers because that's where lots of ideas are. I'm going to really enjoy reading the papers that come out because they're going to be long form papers, 1000 papers from my research group in ... what students think there. So yeah, I think students at [university omitted] law school are really smart, too. So yes, of course you learn from them. [Professor Smith]

Professor Smith also noted that collaborating with others was another form of learning that, similar to Dr Long's experience, was often about learning things from other disciplines that could be useful in her own research. In her experience,

Professor Smith felt that she continued to learn from everybody, both internal and external to academia.

Externally, the participants experienced learning from those they engaged with outside of academia, which included stakeholders and study participants. Professor Daniel Swanson discussed his experience in translating his work to a level where non-experts could understand it, which he said was quite a difficult task. He said that talking to stakeholders often helped him learn even more and to better understand how to translate things:

I've worked with [omitted] in the past and [I'm] doing a lot of work at the moment with [omitted] ... I find that really interesting, rewarding, challenging] ... I learn a lot from it actually. I learn a lot from translating stuff to a level where non experts can understand. It's quite a difficult task to do it properly and I often realise I don't understand things. It's like writing a textbook for a student – same sort of thing. And the other thing is talking to people to whom the research is relevant, I often learn things that I didn't know. It can shape my research. [Professor Swanson]

As well as shaping his research, he said he also enjoyed working with people outside of academia as they taught him a lot: 'They force me to rethink my ideas. They give me directions that I wouldn't have thought of before.' Professor Smith had a similar experience working with people outside of academia, including with her study participants. She recalled interviewing people for a longitudinal study and how she had learnt so much about their lives and about the phenomenon she was researching. Throughout the many years of her research into their lives she often had lightbulb moments when they gave her ideas for her research that she had not even thought about:

I obviously learned ... is there anyone you don't learn from? And I learned, through people that I interview[ed] through our research projects. All the time, they're saying things, I think, oh God, I hadn't thought of that. [Professor Smith]

5.10.5 Summary

The category of *Cultivating impact through teaching and learning* was experienced by most of the participants in this study. Impact through this lens was often viewed as an extension of someone else's success and the potential for their impact on the world. Metrics were noted as difficult to observe and capture, with participants wanting better and more sustained reports on alumni destinations and tracking of alumni success. This category was experienced across a broad depth of experiences, including through teaching impact, translating knowledge through teaching, mentoring, and continuing to learn through others. These broad experiences highlight a new way or approach to thinking about impact in terms of how it is experienced by law academics.

This is the final category of the substantive theory *Navigating Research Engagement and Impact*. The next section discusses the multifaceted and complex relationships between the seven categories.

5.11 Relationships between the categories

Grounded theorists sometimes represent categories through 'concrete images', diagrams, maps, or other visual aids to help explicate the developing theory. Charmaz (2006, p. 118) states that, 'Diagrams can enable you to see the relative power, scope, and direction of the categories in your analysis as well as the connections among them.'

In this study, the relationships between the categories are complex. Although several of the categories overlapped or supported other categories, this was quite difficult to present via a diagram, due to the intricate and subtle connections between the categories and their various properties. Therefore, I opted for a table to help explain the relationships between the categories. I have also included a description of each category, which provides a discussion of how each category **informed**, **supported**, or **overlapped** with other categories and finally a column mapping the relationships. I chose to map the relationships via the terms informed, supported, or overlapped as I felt these words were the most useful to describe the complex connections. **Informed** meant relationships that underpinned or were foundational to other categories of experience. For example, *Negotiating law school and university culture* informed *Prioritising time*, as it underpinned the policies and processes that

then informed the participants experience of time, as a barrier to achieving research engagement and impact. Additionally, *Prioritising time* informed all other categories of the study as having time, or lacking time was foundational to experiencing research engagement and impact.

Supported meant relationships that required the support or occurrence of another category to exist. For example, the category *Being an expert* supported the categories of *Engaging and translating*, *Contributing to change* and *Cultivating impact through teaching and learning*, as the participants needed to be recognised as experts to experience these categories. *Being an expert* is thus integral to experiencing research impact through expertise on many different levels.

Overlapped meant relationships Where categories intersected in content but offered different perspectives on the participants' experiences. For example, both the categories of *Engaging and translating* and *Cultivating impact through teaching and learning* involved the participants applying their research outside of traditional academic contexts. However, while *Engaging and translating* focused on how the participants used their expertise to communicate with broader audiences, *Cultivating impact through teaching and learning* centred on integrating research into educational settings (including internal and external to academia). Thus, although both categories dealt with the dissemination of research, the participants approached each from distinct contexts.

Table 3. Relationship between the categories

No	Category	Description	Relationships
1	Negotiating law school and university culture	This category informed the experiences of all the categories as the daily lived experiences of the participants as academics were often defined by culture. This included the culture of the university they worked at, the culture of their law school and the higher-level policies mandated by the government that informed the cultural practices of academics in the Australian higher education ecosystem.	Informed all categories of the study. Foundational to each category of experience.

No	Category	Description	Relationships
2	Prioritising time	This category was informed by <i>Negotiating law school and university culture as time</i>, as the participants experienced it, was essentially informed by the practices and processes within their universities, and how their law schools interpreted and applied these practices to workload policies. <i>Prioritising time</i> also informed all other categories of the study as each participant's experience of research engagement and impact was affected by workload and a lack of time.	Informed by <i>Negotiating law school and university culture</i> Informed all categories, as time was a key factor of the participants' lived experiences of research engagement and impact.
3	Being an expert	This category was informed by <i>Negotiating law school and university culture</i> and <i>Prioritising time</i> as workload policies and a lack of time affected the participants' experiences of research engagement and impact. This category supported the categories of <i>Engaging and translating</i>, <i>Contributing to change</i> and <i>Cultivating impact through teaching and learning</i>. This is because the participants needed to be recognised as experts to experience these categories. <i>Being an expert</i> is thus integral to experiencing impact through expertise.	Informed by <i>Negotiating law school and university culture</i> and <i>Prioritising time</i>. Supported the categories <i>Engaging and translating</i>, <i>Contributing to change</i>, <i>Planning for impact</i> and <i>Cultivating impact through teaching and learning</i>.
4	Contributing to change	This category was informed by <i>Negotiating law school and university culture</i> and <i>Prioritising time</i> as workload policies and a lack of time affected the participants' experiences of	Informed by <i>Negotiating law school and university culture</i>

No	Category	Description	Relationships
		research engagement and impact, including making change. This category was supported by <i>Being an expert</i>, as expertise was required to experience this category. Participants used their expertise to write submissions and influence policy. This category overlapped with <i>Planning for impact</i>, <i>Engaging and translating</i> and <i>Cultivating impact through teaching and learning</i> as several of the experiences were similar yet discussed through a different lens. For example, several participants explained how they contributed to academic change through the lens of teaching.	and <i>Prioritising time</i>. Supported by <i>Being an expert</i>. Overlapped with <i>Engaging and translating</i>, <i>Planning for impact</i> and <i>Cultivating impact through teaching and learning</i>.
5	Planning for impact	This category was informed by <i>Negotiating law school and university culture</i> as university policies and strategic directions around impact affected the participants' experiences regarding achieving impact. It was also informed by <i>Prioritising time</i> as lacking time affected the participants' experiences of planning for research engagement and impact. This category was supported by <i>Being an expert</i> as the participants required their academic expertise to develop key relationships with stakeholders. Sometimes their expertise was a hindrance to achieving research impact as their area of expertise was not topical enough to experience much research impact. They were also reliant upon the expertise of others and of policy-makers to achieve research impact. This category overlapped with <i>Contributing to change</i> as the process of planning for research	Informed by <i>Negotiating law school and university culture</i> and <i>Prioritising time</i>. Supported by <i>Being an expert</i>. Overlapped with <i>Contributing to change</i>.

No	Category	Description	Relationships
		impact was discussed in both through different lenses of experience.	
6	Engaging and translating	This category was informed by <i>Negotiating law school and university culture</i> and <i>Prioritising time</i> as workload policies and a lack of time affected the participants' experiences of finding time for engaging and translating their work beyond academia. This category was supported by <i>Being an expert</i> as expertise was required to engage and translate work, maintaining credibility as an expert. This category overlapped with <i>Contributing to change</i> and <i>Cultivating impact through teaching and learning</i> as all categories had similar experiences of research engagement and impact through their individual lenses. For example, the property of <i>Educating and training</i> was experienced in this category as teaching those outside of academia. Similarly, translating was experienced through the <i>Cultivating impact through teaching and learning</i> category as participants used their knowledge to inform student learning.	Informed by <i>Negotiating law school and university culture</i> and <i>Prioritising time</i>. Supported by <i>Being an expert</i>. Overlapped with <i>Contributing to change</i> and <i>Cultivating impact through teaching and learning</i>.
7	Cultivating impact through teaching and learning	This category was informed by <i>Negotiating law school and university culture</i> and <i>Prioritising time</i> as workload policies and a lack of time affected the participants' experiences of <i>Cultivating impact through teaching and learning</i>. This category was supported by <i>Being an expert</i>, as expertise was key to achieving	Informed by <i>Negotiating law school and university culture</i> and <i>Prioritising time</i>. Supported by <i>Being an expert</i>.

No	Category	Description	Relationships
		teaching impacts over time and for being acknowledge for relevant teaching expertise. It also overlapped with <i>Engaging and translating</i> as the participants often translated their research into their teaching syllabus and used their experiences and backgrounds to inform student learning. It also overlapped with <i>Contributing to change</i> as the experiences of having made academic change and teaching change were discussed in both categories. Although the content is similar, the context of experience differs between categories.	Overlapped with <i>Engaging and translating and Contributing to change</i>.

The foundational category of this study, *Negotiating law school and university culture*, informed all the other categories because the culture and policies within each law school and university environment were fundamental to the participants' overall experience of research engagement and impact. The lived experiences of the participants were heavily influenced by how their own law schools operated within the university and broader higher education structure. The core values, policies and processes of each university influenced the way law schools went about their procedures, including workloads, strategy, teaching and research. This, in turn, affected how the participants experienced research engagement and impact, which included opportunities for and barriers to research impact.

As discussed above, *Prioritising time* also informed all other categories of the study as workload and time shaped the daily experiences of the participants and often affected their ability to experience research engagement and impact.

In addition to the foundational category, several categories overlapped or supported other categories. As discussed above, *Being an expert* supported several other categories as expertise was required to experience the other categories. The overlapping categories included those where processes and planning led to experiences of research engagement and impact. These included *Planning for impact*, *Contributing to change* and *Engaging and translating*.

These findings will be discussed further in Chapter 6 with regard to the literature around the findings and resulting GT.

5.12 Conclusion

This chapter presented the body of the findings through seven categories of experience. It also discussed the substantive theory, *Navigating Research Engagement and Impact: A Grounded Theory Exploration of Australian Law Academics' Strategies and Experiences*, and presented a discussion of the relationships between the categories of experiences. The final chapter will provide a deeper examination of how these findings relate to current theory and practices.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 provided an in-depth examination of the study's findings, while this final chapter critically assesses the significance of these findings. The primary contribution of the research lies in the development of a grounded theory comprising seven distinct categories of experience. This grounded theory inquiry explored how Australian law academics strategically navigated the academic landscape to boost their research engagement and impact, addressing time-management challenges and establishing themselves as experts sought after by various stakeholders. Their influence extended to shaping legal policies and industry practices to adapting curricula, all while playing essential roles as educators and mentors, thereby fostering an environment characterised by continuous learning and progress. The seven categories that underpinned the grounded theory, as discussed in Chapter 5, exhibit intricate multifaceted interconnections and conceptual relationships among them. The seven categories were interwoven with participant quotes to ensure that the voices and perspectives of the participants were reflected in the substantive theory, thus anchoring the theory in the empirical data.

This chapter presents an overview of how the thesis findings contribute to knowledge in this field and to academic practices. First, this chapter will present the key findings of this study and overview of the categories. Second, the chapter will return to the recent literature around research engagement and impact to situate the new grounded theory and discuss the contributions of the new theory to knowledge and practice, including suggestions on how law school practices could allow for fewer barriers and more opportunities for research engagement and impact. Third, the chapter will discuss future directions, identifying avenues for further investigation. This chapter will conclude with final reflective thoughts about the research.

6.2 A grounded theory of law academics' experiences of research engagement and impact

The aim of this study was to find out how law academics in Australia experienced research engagement and impact. The findings responded to the

overarching question '*How do Australian law academics experience research engagement and research impact?*'

Two main objectives were identified for this study: (1) contribution to knowledge and theory around how law academics experience research engagement and impact; and (2) contribution to academic practices, including how law schools can better incorporate processes that enable opportunities for research engagement and impact.

The final outcome of this study is a substantive grounded theory titled *Navigating Research Engagement and Impact: A Grounded Theory Exploration of Australian Law Academics' Strategies and Experiences*, which was developed using Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory method. It is the first grounded theory that specifically examines law academics' experiences of research engagement and impact from an Australian perspective. The study delved into the strategies and experiences of Australian law academics as they navigated the intricate terrain of academia, aiming to maximise their potential for research impact. The participants often encountered difficulties in managing their time due to heavy workloads, which raised concerns about burnout. Their expertise was in high demand from a range of stakeholders, including policy-makers and other academic disciplines, highlighting their potential in achieving real-world impact. The participants also made contributions to change by engaging in government inquiries through submissions and adjusting curriculum to meet changing demands in the legal profession. To plan for their impact, they heavily relied on building relationships with stakeholders, often collaborating with practitioners and policy-makers.

Additionally, they emphasised the importance of engaging with non-expert audiences and effectively translating their research to reach a broader audience as a crucial pathway to achieving impact. This was done through traditional and social media and online publishing platforms and repositories. Finally, the participants played a pivotal role as teachers and mentors. They leveraged their research to enhance teaching and learning experiences for both students and colleagues, fostering a culture of continuous learning and development. The resulting grounded theory has seven categories of law academics' experiences of research engagement and impact:

- *Category 1: Negotiating law school and university culture.* This category explored how law academics negotiated their way through academia and their

law school and university culture. It uncovers how the participants experienced opportunities and barriers for research engagement and impact.

- *Category 2: Prioritising time.* This category explained how the participants experienced time as an academic. Structured workloads left very little spare time to pursue research engagement and impact activities, often leading to participants working weekends and feeling like they would burn out.
- *Category 3: Being an expert.* This category situated law academics' experiences within a collaborative, transdisciplinary environment, where they were often 'sought out' by other academic disciplines, policy-makers and the legal profession for their legal and regulatory expertise. Being an expert was integral to experiencing research impact through expertise.
- *Category 4: Contributing to change.* This category explored how the participants felt they were contributing to change and having an impact. Areas such as legal policy change through writing submissions to inquiries were discussed by several participants. Other participants noted changes they had made to their teaching and curriculum, resulting in impact through teaching.
- *Category 5: Planning for impact.* This category explained how the participants planned for impact by pursuing research engagement and impact activities through relationships with stakeholders. Often participants relied on others, including other experts and policy-makers, to achieve research impact.
- *Category 6: Engaging and translating.* This category explored how participants experienced research impact through engaging with others beyond academia, translating their research for non-expert audiences. Participants used their expertise to engage with stakeholders and the media, and to inform student learning.
- *Category 7: Cultivating impact through teaching and learning.* This category situates the participants as teachers and mentors to students and colleagues, while exploring how they continued to learn and grow through others. They translated their research into their teaching curriculum and viewed teaching and mentoring as important impacts in research and teaching.

The study also provided new knowledge to better understand the lived experiences of research engagement and impact from the perspective of Australian law academics. This included 'how' they experienced research engagement and impact

holistically and 'what' they viewed as impact. Examples include experiencing research engagement through practitioner and academic conferences and events, and research impact through writing submissions to inquiries, being cited in court judgments and providing advice to regulatory bodies around their practices. Finally, the study provided an account of law academics' experiences not only of research engagement and impact, but of academia itself, and how the social, cultural and policy implications of academic life inform the opportunities for and barriers to research engagement and impact. Law academics' experiences of research engagement and impact are complex and multifaceted, and often influenced by their universities' approaches, policies, and processes.

6.3 Revisiting the literature

In this section, I provide a brief overview of relevant research conducted in the research engagement and impact space since I conducted my preliminary literature review. I have only included research here that looks specifically at the experiences or perceptions academics have around research engagement and impact, in line with the findings of this study.

As per constructivist grounded theory methods, once the initial preliminary literature review is completed, the literature should not be reviewed again until completion of the data analysis in order to approach the data analysis *tabula rasa* (Charmaz, 2014). I conducted the preliminary literature review prior to completion of my Confirmation of Candidature in order to identify the main gaps in the literature around academics' experiences of research engagement and impact. At the time, just a few studies had been conducted, mostly from the United Kingdom, where research engagement and impact had taken off in the higher education sector after the first Research Excellence Framework (REF) assessment had taken place in 2014. There were also a few studies conducted in Australia that assessed academics' perceptions of impact, with the study by Doyle et al. (2015b) finding that HASS discipline academics viewed 'research impact' in the same way they viewed 'academic impact'. At the time of the preliminary literature review, several UK studies had considered how the science and some social science disciplines viewed and experienced impact (for example see: Bastow et al., 2014; Chubb & Watermeyer, 2016; Hammersley, 2014; Murphy & Sage, 2015; Smith & Stewart, 2016). However,

there were no studies at the time of the preliminary literature review that had (1) specifically investigated law academics' experiences and perceptions, (2) investigated Australian law academics' experiences of research engagement and impact, and (3) investigated academics' lived experiences of research engagement and impact through a grounded theory approach.

Since the preliminary literature review, a number of new studies have been published in the area of research engagement and impact that will be discussed in the sections below. Additionally, there are several studies that look more broadly at the policies surrounding research engagement and impact (Bandola-Gill, 2019; Gunn & Mintrom, 2021; McKenna & McKenna, 2021; Nelson & Lindsay, 2023; Reed & Rudman, 2022), the metrics (Shucha, 2021; Weatherall & Giblin, 2021), knowledge creation and translation (Antonyuk et al., 2022; Fecher & Hebing, 2021; Knight & Mitchell, 2023; Kump et al., 2023; McKenna & McKenna, 2021) and expertise (Antonyuk et al., 2022; Bandola-Gill, 2019; de Jong & Balaban, 2022; Hall et al., 2019; Knight & Mitchell, 2023; Kump et al., 2023; McNamara, 2018; Powell et al., 2018). Notably, several papers focus on collaborations and interactions, or the process of how academics engage (de Jong & Balaban, 2022; Fecher & Hebing, 2021; Johnson & Orr, 2020; Jordan, 2022; Kelly et al., 2021; Knight & Mitchell, 2023; Kondakci et al., 2021; Kump et al., 2023; McKenna & McKenna, 2021; McNamara, 2018; Nightingale & Vine, 2022; Powell et al., 2018).

This study is original, and to date the first study of Australian law academics' experiences of research engagement and impact. It is also the first study of law academics' experiences of research engagement and impact undertaken through a constructivist grounded theory lens. The substantive theory of '*Navigating Research Engagement and Impact: A Grounded Theory Exploration of Australian Law Academics' Strategies and Experiences*' stands alone as original research that was shaped and co-constructed by the 14 participants and the researcher to produce a theory that is reflective of the phenomenon. As noted by Charmaz (2006b, p. 166), it is important to 'analyse the most significant works in relation to what you addressed in your now developed grounded theory.' This section therefore addresses the most significant and similar works to this study (in either method, context, or types of participants), situating the study within the growing, yet still sparse literature around academics' experiences of research engagement and impact. The literature discussed here will generally have

been published between 2018 and 2023, which is in line with revisiting the new literature published since the preliminary literature review.

Three similar studies (Golhasany et al., 2021; Kondakci et al., 2021; McNamara, 2018) referring to academic experiences around research engagement and impact produced similar findings, with some notable differences. For example my study found that personal values and professional priorities often clash, with the majority of the participants from early career to professoriate wanting to pursue more research than they currently have time for, while prioritising aspects of their work that the universities expect them to do. Kondakci et al. (2021, p. 375) found in their study that early career researchers were more often 'excessively focused' on research when they did not have tenured roles but felt conflicted as they wanted to focus on all their tasks including teaching and community service. The participants in my study were all in ongoing (tenured) roles, which changed the experience and the ultimate focus of their professional priorities.

The study by Kondakci et al. (2021) also similarly found that academics viewed teaching as impactful, having both short- and long-term impacts that were not easily quantifiable. The participants in the Kondakci et al. (2021) study preferred 'value-driven and non-quantifiable criteria in assessing the impact of their teaching' (p. 375). Like the participants in my study, they viewed teaching as one of the most important impacts academics have on society.

The participants in the Kondakci et al. (2021) study felt undervalued and that a lot of the good work they were doing was 'not recognised' by their universities (p. 376), particularly when it was not research or reputation focused. Like my participants, it was also recognised in this study that most assessment exercises were designed for the science and medical disciplines, where outcomes are much more easily quantified. The participants in the Kondakci et al. (2021) study found it frustrating that everyone was assessed and evaluated in the same way, regardless of differences between the disciplines. This phenomenon was also discussed in great detail by Golhasany et al. (2021), where Iranian social science and humanities researchers felt there were higher level (government) knowledge-translation processes in place that favoured the technical and engineering sciences, disregarding the needs and audiences the social sciences required to obtain research impact. The participants in this study stated that, 'due to the different nature of the effectiveness of research in humanities and social sciences, a different

knowledge transfer structure should be designed for effectiveness' (Golhasany et al., 2021, p. 16).

Participants in the Kondakci et al. (2021) study felt they had little choice about the areas in which they did research, which impeded their academic freedom and led to a narrowing of research. Interestingly, my participants did not feel that their research topics and freedom to choose what they researched were at all affected. They did, however, note that certain topics were more 'impactful', and hence said that if they did not research in those more topical areas, their impact beyond academia would likely be limited. This was specifically discussed by the participants in my study who did research in 'black letter law' areas that are jurisdictionally focused, or theoretical research. Some of my participants did note, however, that they had been forced to change where they published, which led to better rankings for their university but less engagement with areas like the legal profession, hence affecting their opportunities for research impact.

Additionally, my study focused on the 'micro' experiences around research engagement and impact, which is law discipline specific and grounded in the participants experiences. The study by Kondakci et al. (2021) looked at the wider landscape or through a macro lens of research evaluation assessments and how these inform academic practices, whilst the study by Golhasany et al. (2021) considered the issues around knowledge transfer and mobilisation for the social science and humanities discipline.

The 2018 study by McNamara investigated the experiences of law academics following on from the UK's first Research Excellence Framework (REF) assessment in 2014. McNamara (2018) reviewed law case studies and developed surveys in order to better understand the process and the 'how' of engagement, rather than the outcomes of the impact. By exploring these questions through an engagement lens, he was able to 'better understand how law academics engaged with UK governments' (p.448). He also aimed to investigate 'how engagement occurred, how productive it was, what facilitated or hampered engagement, or about interactions with government.' (p.448)

Interestingly, McNamara found that most interactions with government were based on 'long-standing relationships', not dissimilar to the findings of my study that suggest making connections and pursuing long-term relationships with stakeholders was key to having research impact over time. McNamara (2018, p. 452) also found

that although government sought out academics for expertise, this was more often than not in relation to specific needs or projects 'at any given time' that required academic expertise. He noted it was rare that an academic would start interactions with government based on a single 'output' from another study. Indeed, it was stated that expertise was often viewed cumulatively by policy-makers, who considered an academic's trajectory around a topic, rather than on individual outputs or discoveries (Bastow et al., 2014). Similarly Golhasany et al. (2021, p. 17) found that expertise and impact often went hand in hand with the tacit knowledge of more experienced researchers often used for knowledge-translation activities. McNamara (2018) aptly named this phenomenon 'researcher impact' (based on expertise), rather than 'research impact' (based on outputs): 'A person is approached to apply their skills and expertise to a new problem because of their standing in a field rather than a piece of research that is of interest to policymakers' (p. 453). This is similar to the findings of my study, where academics were approached by policy-makers or other key stakeholders based on their knowledge and expertise; however, dissimilar to the above study, my participants also experienced research engagement with policy-makers through submissions, which often referred to one or more studies conducted by the submission team. The submission process is unique to Australia, where policy-makers call upon experts to provide written or oral evidence and recommendations for legislative or policy changes. This process, whereby experts are able to engage directly through solicited submissions, mobilises connections between the academy and the government that are not often possible or as easily accessible in other countries. Hence, the experiences of Australian law academics are different in that the processes of the Australian government are often quite dissimilar to those of other countries, which in turn aids a better overall experience of engagement with policy-makers through the submission process.

McNamara (2018) refers mostly to experiences of research engagement, or what several papers refer to as 'productive interactions' (Barker et al., 2011; De Jong et al., 2014; Doyle, 2018; McNamara, 2018; Mitchell, 2019; Williams, 2020; Williams & Lewis, 2021). The term 'productive interactions' was coined by Spaapen and Van Drooge (2011); it refers to the process of what occurs between researchers and stakeholders as opposed to focusing on the outputs of these relationships. As a conceptual framework, this is relevant to my study, where participants often struggled to produce or evidence outputs of impact due to the non-linear nature of

their work, time lags and, as noted by Spaapen and Van Drooge (2011, p. 211), 'because impacts are the consequences of multiple causes'. The participants within my study experienced impact being the product of multiple causes and effects which included planning for impact through research engagement activities such as submissions, working with or for stakeholders on relevant projects, or belonging to external organisations that had oversight of policy or practices they wanted to influence. My study participants also found that research impact was dependent on others and not normally an individual endeavour. Often impact was the indirect coalescence of several research engagement activities (by many people) which resulted in change.

Several papers, such as those highlighted above, are now moving towards focusing on the 'how' rather than the 'what' of impact. For example, a paper by Knight and Mitchell (2023) developed a model that argues for tacit knowledge rather than explicit knowledge, to focus on the actions of knowers of knowledge (tacit knowledge) rather than the outcomes produced by this knowledge (explicit knowledge). As the authors note, 'It is an important implication of multiple interactions within our model is that it shifts the focus of research impact away from an outcome to a recurrent, processual happening' (p. 340). A focus on collaborations and engagement/interactions with stakeholders was prominent across the literature, with several authors hoping to reframe how impact is assessed. As Knight and Mitchell (2023, p. 346) state, 'We are advocating for a greater focus on supporting and developing relationships where the tacit knowledge and knowing reside.' This is particularly relevant to the way my study participants experienced research impact, as they most often perceived impact as the process or the pathway to the impact, the tacit knowledge handed down through teaching and the knowledge they imparted through working with stakeholders. Usually, the focus was not on the outcomes of this process (such as legislative change) as it was difficult to comprehend if their own work or the work of several people culminated in societal change.

This section briefly discussed three similar studies to situate my study and the substantive theory of *'Navigating Research Engagement and Impact: A Grounded Theory of Australian Law Academics Experiences of Research Engagement and Impact'* within the literature. The section revealed that there is still a major gap in the literature regarding law academics' experiences of research engagement and impact, as to date only one UK study has been undertaken that investigated law

academics' engagement experiences with government (McNamara, 2018), and one has provided reflections on why institutional support is needed to support law academics who wish to pursue public policy engagement (Dougan & O'Brien, 2019). My study fills this gap as it gives a holistic, yet general overview of Australian law academics' lived experiences of research engagement and impact.

6.4 Contribution to knowledge

In this section, I will discuss how my substantive grounded theory *Navigating Research Engagement and Impact* contributes to knowledge and ongoing discussion in the research engagement and impact literature regarding academics' experiences and perceptions of impact.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, few studies have been conducted that investigate academics' perceptions and experiences of research engagement and impact (Barnsbee, 2020; Brauer, 2023; Chikoore et al., 2016; Golhasany et al., 2021; Kondakci et al., 2021; McNamara, 2018; Smith et al., 2020a; Watermeyer, 2012). There are, however, several studies (some noted here) that investigate broader concepts of engagement and impact at a policy or university level, often through a theoretical lens (Gunn & Mintrom, 2021; Mitchell, 2019; Brendan Thomas O'Connell et al., 2020; Wróblewska, 2021). There are also studies, even in law, concerned with metrics and how the profession uses law academics works (Shucha, 2021; Soh & Yihan, 2022; Weatherall & Giblin, 2021).

This study is one of just a few to holistically factor in how academics not only view research engagement and impact, but how they obtain opportunities for, and experience the barriers to, research impact. This study provides evidence that the current university-level practices around research engagement and impact are working against academics, not for them. The findings from this study reveal that research engagement and impact activities, and internal discourses around achieving impact, are very much focused on top-down, enabling approaches (Reed et al., 2022) that have not considered the way the actors, within an academic context approach, define and articulate research impact. This study therefore contributes this new knowledge to the literature and provides recommendations for academic practice in the area of research engagement and impact.

6.4.1 Categories of experience

In this section, I will discuss each category of experience, examining its contribution to knowledge and understanding of how Australian law academics experience research engagement and impact. I will briefly discuss and compare the literature in relation to my findings, further positioning my grounded theory within the literature.

6.4.1.1 Category 1: Negotiating law school and university culture

My findings suggested that the participants experienced several barriers to research engagement and impact, which were exacerbated by higher education policy around research engagement and impact and university approaches and processes.

As noted in the literature, universities are frequently influenced by the expectations of funders and hence develop frameworks that satisfy these expectations that then changes the behaviours of academics in relation to their work (Morton & Cook, 2022). Other literature concurs that discourses (Wróblewska, 2021), top-down approaches (Reed et al., 2022) and processes around research engagement and impact (de Jong & Balaban, 2022; Golhasany et al., 2021; Reed et al., 2022; Reed & Rudman, 2022) in universities can prevent academics from pursuing research engagement and impact opportunities. For example, my study found that universities across the board did not offer any incentives or awards for those who chose to pursue research engagement and impact opportunities, which was discussed across the literature (Atta-Owusu & Fitjar, 2022; Kump et al., 2023; Nelson & Lindsay, 2023; Sormani & Uude, 2022). If anything, most participants found that the university – and indeed their law school – wanted them to focus on activities that extended international reputation over any societal impacts. Doing high-quality teaching and publishing in high-performing international journals seemed to be the activities most valued by the participants' law schools and universities across the literature (de Jong & Balaban, 2022; Johnson & Orr, 2020; Kondakci et al., 2021; H. P. McKenna, 2021; Nightingale & Vine, 2022). Although several studies within the literature were conducted outside of Australia, these findings seem to echo through the literature on academic perceptions on research engagement and impact (Golhasany et al., 2021; Kondakci et al., 2021; McNamara, 2018; Smith et al.,

2020a; Wilkinson, 2019). Other studies, similar to my own findings, recognised that there was little incentive for academics to pursue research engagement and impact, particularly in countries where it was not linked to funding (Atta-Owusu & Fitjar, 2022; Barnsbee, 2020; Kondakci et al., 2021; Kump et al., 2023; Sormani & Uude, 2022; Williams, 2020). Time allowed to prioritise these activities over more traditional forms of activities required by academics, such as teaching, service and research, also hindered opportunities for impact (Atta-Owusu & Fitjar, 2022; de Jong & Balaban, 2022; Fecher & Hebing, 2021; Johnson & Orr, 2020; Powell et al., 2018). This was similarly found in my study, where participants struggled to find time to pursue research engagement and impact.

My study also contributes a new finding around academic and law school culture: that internal law school cultures themselves could contribute barriers to achieving research engagement and impact. Some participants experienced siloing of research, which left some with few opportunities for impact as they were not part of these impactful research teams. Similarly, some participants felt 'like outsiders' in their law schools, which affected their confidence to approach other academics for collaborative opportunities. Participants suggested that law schools should encourage better collegiality between their staff and spread out the expertise better to advance collaboration across different research subsets within the school and with other disciplines.

6.4.1.2 Category 2: Prioritising time

My findings suggested that the participants struggled to prioritise research engagement and impact activities due to their already full workloads. Although the literature in this particular area is sparse, some current studies concur with my findings that most academics want to do research engagement and impact activities, yet a lack of incentives and acknowledgement through workload or promotion often hinders this motivation (de Jong & Balaban, 2022; Fecher & Hebing, 2021; H. P. McKenna, 2021; Nelson & Lindsay, 2023; Sormani & Uude, 2022). Indeed, it is often the environment and the way a university behaves that influence how academics make sense of their university's priorities and expectations (de Jong & Balaban, 2022). When universities fail to provide resources, incentives or promotions for certain activities (such as research engagement and impact) de Jong and Balaban

(2022) suggest this signals to academics that their university does not value these activities, and nor should the academics.

Additionally, my study contributes to literature that finds participants who pursue research engagement and impact activities often do so outside of work hours and on weekends. Others chose to prioritise and partake in activities that were valued by their universities, including publishing in places their university recommended. Several participants offered ideas and solutions about how their workload and university requirements could meet in the middle – for example, suggesting that their publication KPIs could produce three high-quality papers and two quality research engagements rather than five high-quality papers. However as noted from reviewing the literature, it is clear that without inbuilt incentives to achieve research engagement and impact, academics are essentially undertaking these activities for personal goals and are intrinsically motivated. The literature around academic motivation (see for e.g. Bayley, 2023; Hall et al., 2019) for research engagement and impact concurs with my findings, which suggests that academics are motivated by personal values (i.e., wanting to make a change) and by money and resources, which then aids them to pursue further research in an area of interest. Specifically, Atta-Owusu and Fitjar (2022) similarly found that academics tend to pursue research engagement activities for reasons that include contributing to society and acquiring funding and external resources. Similarly, Hall et al. (2019) found that motivation towards the intellectual process of engagement and impact were key to success. However, other papers noted that motivation is often linked to promotion and needing to do engagement to meet the criteria for promotion and/or metrics (Kump et al., 2023). These findings also coincided with my findings that promotion promises can often fuel specific behaviours and attitudes.

6.4.1.3 Category 3: Being an expert

Expertise is well noted throughout the literature as an important aspect of achieving research engagement and impact over time, particularly as it relates to collaborative endeavours. For example, some studies investigated expertise through a social media or self-marketing lens (Jordan, 2022; N. J. McKenna, 2021), while others investigated how expertise plays a role in knowledge creation and knowledge transfer (Antonyuk et al., 2022; Barrett & Oborn, 2018; Nightingale & Vine, 2022), or on how early career researchers experience and identify as experts (Hall et al.,

2019). My participants, however, experienced expertise on many levels not mentioned in the literature, which included being viewed as experts by other academics and students, as well as by industry and policy-makers. This is quite different to how the literature currently discusses academic expertise and reputation in relation to research engagement and impact, as reputation and therefore apparent expertise are normally based on the number of years someone has been an academic and the track record they have in their specialised topic areas (McNamara, 2018).

Gow and Redwood (2020) note that generally those who are invited by policy-makers to provide advice have already been noticed by the policy-makers. This can be in relation to particular research the researcher has undertaken or simply research standing (or expertise). Interestingly several of my participants who were more junior had experienced being contacted by policy-makers due to the niche areas in which they did research, which speaks to their topic expertise. Several were contacted through their staff profiles or via social media, which appears to be different to how participants of other studies experienced connecting with industry and policy-makers (McNamara, 2018).

Additionally making connections with others was viewed as imperative to achieving impact. These connections, often built through personal and professional networks opened additional avenues for impact opportunities. This concurs with literature around the importance of networking and building connections (Kelly, 2022).

This category builds on the current literature around academic expertise and adds an Australian flavour to how academics experience being sought out by those internal and external to the academy.

6.4.1.4 Category 4: Contributing to change

This category of my findings captured the processes the participants undertook in having impact or what they deemed 'contributing to change'. Impact processes have been discussed through the literature quite sparsely with a focus on outputs (e.g. submissions, publications, media interviews) and outcomes (e.g. legislative change) of research rather than on 'how' impact is done (De Jong et al., 2014; de Jong & Balaban, 2022; Doyle, 2018; Knight & Mitchell, 2023; McKenna & McKenna, 2021; Spaapen & Van Drooge, 2011) and achieved over time.

As mentioned under *Category 7: Cultivating impact through teaching and learning* (section 6.4.1.7), there are limited studies that discuss the impacts of teaching and learning through the lens of research engagement and impact assessment. My participants also experienced contributions to changes in student learning (including curriculum and course design) as forms of impact, which have yet to be discussed in the literature. Additionally, my findings contribute to the literature on how academics shape and influence societal change. For example, my participants discussed how being on research committees and other forms of external engagement led to them 'being part of the change'. This category of my theory contributes to further debate and future discussion in these important areas around academic experiences of research engagement and impact.

6.4.1.5 Category 5: Planning for impact

My findings suggested that the participants often felt powerless over their outputs from their research engagement in order to achieve research impact. Several participants also noted uncertainty and confusion around what constitutes impact and how to record and manage impact. Others felt outside the loop of what they felt their law schools considered to be impactful work. These findings are similar to those within the literature, particularly around definitions (Barnsbee, 2020; Doyle, 2018; Kondakci et al., 2021; McKenna & McKenna, 2021; McNamara, 2018; Smith et al., 2020b; Williams, 2020; Williams & Lewis, 2021; Wróblewska, 2021) and recording of impacts (Kondakci et al., 2021; H. P. McKenna, 2021; Brendan T O'Connell et al., 2020; Wróblewska, 2021). Specifically Gow and Redwood (2020) discuss the difficulties in tracing research impact that has been translated into practices. However, they also suggest that it is often the processes of impact that are more evident. The participants in my study found that it was difficult to trace their research engagement activities to impact most of the time. Additionally, other studies have found that

Other authors have also considered how those who do research within particular domains (e.g. conceptual research vs applied research) often experience more challenges to obtaining impact – for example Smith et al. (2020a) state:

Unsurprisingly, the academics for whom conceptual impacts are perceived to be a priority tended to find the impact agenda more

challenging. As one of the social scientists pointed out, the model on which the impact agenda is based depends on an assumption of social change that seems to ignore, or sideline, longer term, conceptual learning.

These sentiments were also seen in my findings, by the participants who labelled themselves as theoretical legal researchers.

My findings from this category also contribute to the literature around collective impact, which Smith et al. (2020a) explains as ‘research impact [that] was positioned as a collective and often cross-disciplinary endeavour (rather than something emanating from single individuals, projects, institutions or disciplines) requiring a broad spectrum of experts in different areas to reach a viable, useful application’ (Smith et al., 2020a, p. 76). This is similar to how the participants of my study experienced impact, as something collective rather than something that one individual person sets out to achieve. Interestingly, the Engagement and Impact Assessment in Australia (EI2018) focused specifically on case-studies showcasing the impact of individual researchers via discipline-based Fields of Education (FOE) codes. This meant that case study impacts were generally aligned with a specific key discipline area, even when the impact itself involved people and research expertise across multiple disciplines. Academics are generally assessed individually, or are discipline based, which does not align with how they experience the many facets and multiple ‘productive interactions’ (Barker et al., 2011; De Jong et al., 2014; Muhonen et al., 2020; Spaapen & Van Drooge, 2011) undertaken to produce the impact. They experienced impact as a collective venture that is the culmination of several disciplines and researchers.

6.4.1.6 Category 6: Engaging and translating

My findings suggested that the participants experienced engaging with those outside of academia and translating their academic work for non-academic audiences. This included utilising platforms such as *The Conversation* to reach broader audiences. They also utilised open access to allow those outside of academia access to their work, and social media to either engage with others or to simply promote their published work. This concurs with literature around academics’ use of social media for engagement and self-promotion purposes (Fecher & Hebing, 2021; Jordan, 2022; N. J. McKenna, 2021).

My study also contributes new findings to the literature around academics' engagement with the media through the lens of research engagement and impact. My participants described their experiences in working with journalists and the media to promote their research and to better translate their message for the general public. This included developing relationships with the media that led to continued reciprocity and future engagement opportunities. Finally, my study looked at the types of activities the participants undertook for research engagement purposes, which included giving talks to non-academics and educating the legal profession through professional courses. This contributes to the literature on how law academics experience research engagement and impact and how they translate their tacit knowledge to non-academics and the legal profession.

The literature around engaging and translating demonstrates that academics tend to engage with stakeholders relevant to their discipline, which is often different between disciplines (Chubb, 2017; de Jong & Balaban, 2022; Muhonen et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2020a). For several of my participants, engaging with the legal profession was key to producing research impact over time. This was often muddled by their law schools advising them to move away from publishing in legal trade journals read by the profession, as it diluted the pool of high-quality publications, they wished to showcase for research assessment purposes. The study by Johnson and Orr (2020) of business academics experiences found similar sentiments to my study, where their participants were dissuaded from publishing in business trade journals read by members of their profession for publishing reputation reasons.

In addition to engaging with the legal profession, engaging with policy-makers and relevant industry stakeholders was also imperative to successful collaborations that had the potential to eventuate into impact. The study by McNamara (2018), which investigated law academics' engagement with policy-makers from a UK perspective, found that many law academics struggled to engage with policy-makers. This differs from my study, where engagement with policy-makers from an Australian perspective seemed to be a lot simpler – see discussion under *Category 3: Being an expert* (section 6.4.1.3).

6.4.1.7 Category 7: Cultivating impact through teaching and learning

My findings suggested that the participants generally viewed teaching as one of their most important impacts on society. Interestingly, although some of

components of teaching (including mentoring), may not be viewed through an ARC-defined lens as research impact, the participants often saw them as linked. Participants used their research knowledge (including legal pedagogy) to inform their teaching practices, likening their experiences to research-led teaching.

My study asked the participants to discuss what they considered to be their 'research impact' without any government (ARC) or university definitions clouding their responses. The sparse literature in this particular space suggests that little research has been undertaken on how academics experience research impact through teaching students. The few studies I found in the literature that briefly discussed this were the Kondakci et al. (2021) study of education academics, where participants of this study considered teaching one of their most important societal impacts; the book by Thomas (2018) aptly named *Questioning the assessment of research impact* looked at how tourism researchers could consider the impacts of teaching to inform more 'meaningful approaches to the impact agenda' (p. 126); and finally the study of business academics by Johnson and Orr (2020), where they discovered that the impacts of learning and teaching remained mostly uncaptured. Like my participants, the participants in the study by Johnson and Orr (2020) said, 'We ... don't see teaching and research as separate, we see it as a continuum ... Our teaching is based on our research and the students take these ideas and use them later in their practice' (p. 568). This is similar to how my participants experienced having impact through teaching and learning.

My study also took the concept of teaching as a form of "research impact" slightly further and investigated how the participants experienced mentoring others as impact, and how they viewed teaching or training those outside of academia (such as running training courses for the legal profession) as impactful activities. Although not traditionally "research" activities, the participants again saw these activities as connected or informed by their research training and practices. It could also be argued that some participants' understandings of research impact were not aligned with the traditional views of what research impact is, or they might have felt confused about research impact in general.

Having made a difference to other academics or students' careers was viewed by the participants as a great contribution to society, particularly when those people went on to achieve good things. These forms of research engagement

through teaching, training, and mentoring contribute to the literature on how academics experience research engagement and impact holistically.

6.5 Contribution to academic practices

In this section, I will discuss how my substantive theory *Navigating Research Engagement and Impact* contributes to academic practice around research engagement and impact broadly. This section will provide recommendations to universities, considering the experiences of my study participants, and the barriers to achieving research impact they faced such as lack of time, workload pressures and the need for more training in engaging with those outside of academia.

6.5.1 Informing academics training and development

This study informs the ways universities can provide training and development for academics to aid them in their opportunities for research engagement and impact. For example, in the category *Cultivating impact through teaching and learning*, Professor Jane Lambert discusses how she would like to learn more about engaging with her audience through digital media such as infographics. She said that if someone could help her set these up, it would not be too difficult for her to do on her own with some training. She felt excited about the training opportunities that impact and engagement priorities might offer: 'If all this impact and engagement talk means that some more resources and ideas and training become available to help with that then that's good.' Professor Lambert particularly noted that there were several skills she would like to develop, and that most law academics in general do not have the technical expertise to develop graphics and other digital media that would be useful to engage their audiences. She noted that her university offers media (interview) training, which she said was helpful for this form of research engagement, yet there is very little training on other aspects of research engagement that could also prove fruitful.

Other participants, such as Professor Belinda Smith, mentioned that it would be helpful to develop skills for writing in more non-academic publications and other media such as *The Guardian* or *Times Higher Education Supplement*. Most of the participants were familiar with platforms such as *The Conversation*; however, some noted that they had tried to publish there without any luck due to the oversaturation. Professor Smith stated that she did not like *The Conversation*'s move from research-

focused articles to news-focused articles. This may also explain why some participants who did not do research in overly newsworthy areas struggled to publish via this platform. Providing academics with training for writing articles and opinion pieces for different mediums will strengthen their ability to engage with broader non-academic audiences, thus increasing their chances of research impact.

Additionally, several of the participants noted that new roles had been developed across the university to support research engagement and impact. One participant (Associate Professor Katherine Mason) was working in one of these roles as an academic lead and explained how the role helped her to provide support to other researchers in her law school, particularly junior academics. She noted that through her role in supporting research engagement and impact, she provided mentorship to others, directing mentees on how to approach the legal industry and judges for research engagement purposes.

Although several of the participants noted that their universities had implemented training and development for research engagement and impact activities, there is still room for improvement. Providing more opportunities for academics to access training for writing and speaking with different groups outside of academia is critical to them developing a 'sense of knowing' (de Jong & Balaban, 2022) about how to approach and develop their impact practices.

6.5.2 Informing academics' understanding of research engagement and impact

This study can be used to inform how academics understand and experience research engagement and impact. The current discourse around research engagement and impact is often saturated by top-down approaches that are not conducive to how my study participants experienced the phenomenon. These top-down approaches (Reed et al., 2022) are driven mainly by universities interpreting government research assessment exercises (such as EI 2018) by applying specific metric-based definitions to research engagement and impact, which fail to consider that there are often discipline-based, or at least research domain-based (i.e. applied, basic, hard, pure) differences to experiences of engagement and impact (Chubb, 2017; de Jong & Balaban, 2022; Muhonen et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2020a).

My grounded theory *Navigating Research Engagement and Impact* provides new and important data in the developing literature around how academics themselves as actors within a higher education university ecosystem (Brauer, 2023)

experience this phenomenon in their daily working lives. For example, Dr Laura Glover explained that she constantly felt her research engagement and impact activities such as writing submissions to government inquiries and reports for Royal Commissions were not valued or considered important to her law school, even though she believed the work she was doing was having a real impact:

I'm just starting to get some momentum in the academic environment even though the work I have been doing it has impact external to academia, but it isn't highly valued inside academia ... So there are inbuilt disincentives to doing that sort of high impact work.

She also explained that she strategically planned her research engagement and impact activities to align with matters with which the government and policy-makers were grappling. This involved having to work weekends to fit in this additional work that often had tight deadlines, which were not conducive to the very structured workloads allocated to academics.

These experiences and understandings of research engagement and impact are important for developing better and more conducive definitions and university-level processes and approaches to research engagement and impact. At present, universities fail to consider how their academics define, strategise, plan for and do research engagement and impact, focusing only on metrics and outputs from these engagements rather than taking a broader view of how academics define and do activities that contribute to their impact success.

This study and the findings within it will help universities and law schools within Australia to better understand and work together with academics to increase opportunities for research impact.

6.5.3 Informing law school practices and processes

The findings of this study can inform law school practices to allow for academics to have fewer barriers and more opportunities for research engagement and impact. The findings suggest that law academics often work with similar groups and entities outside of academia, such as the legal profession, policy-makers, regulators, the media and community and civil society groups. Providing opportunities for academics to engage with these stakeholders is critical to developing networks and collaborative relationships to enable impact to occur

naturally. Associate Professor Julian Henson mentioned in his interview that he made several of his connections just from attending conferences that were either aimed at other academics or the legal profession. He noted that he often contacted people who had presented on something he was interested in to make a connection with them. Conferences also enabled him to see what issues the legal profession were dealing with and how he could work with them to provide solutions to their problems.

The findings suggest that providing clear avenues for academics to develop and promote their expertise externally is imperative to making connections with those outside of academia who they may wish to influence or collaborate with. Currently, the literature in this space is sparse, with only two studies briefly discussing how law academics and law schools experience research engagement and impact (Dogan & O'Brien, 2019; McNamara, 2018). Universities – particularly law schools – could approach this by offering support for activities such as secondments (where they can use their tacit knowledge to inform stakeholders) and hosting events where academics can promote their expertise to non-academic audiences, also developing avenues for future collaboration networks. Dr Hannah Kirby mentioned that she had made some close government connections from events that were run by her law school, and from meeting alumni at these events.

Another recommendation to law schools based on the findings is to carefully assess their performance measures and workload processes to enable academics to undertake research engagement and impact opportunities as they arise. The category Prioritising time discusses the challenges and barriers the participants faced around their workload and how they often did not have any time to strategically plan for and pursue research engagement and impact work. This experience was also briefly mentioned above when Dr Glover discussed having to sacrifice her weekends to do her research engagement and impact activities. Understanding the processes of how law academics engage, including the timeframes and workload implications for undertaking the activities, will enable law schools to plan for these activities.

In conclusion, the findings here highlight the need for law schools to proactively remove barriers and create more opportunities for research engagement and impact among their academics. It is evident that law academics frequently collaborate with external entities such as the legal profession, policy-makers,

regulators, the media, and community and civil society groups. To foster these vital connections and collaborations, law schools should provide clear avenues for academics to promote their expertise externally, potentially through avenues such as secondments and events that facilitate engagement with non-academic audiences and the development of collaborative networks. Workloads and a lack of time were also hinderances to the pursuit of research engagement and impact as experienced by the participants. By helping law academics to better manage their workloads through internal workload processes, this will allow more opportunities to seek out research engagement and impact work. Of course, there are limitations here in that resourcing of law schools may inhibit these recommendations from being implemented. The findings from this thesis can serve as a valuable resource for institutions seeking to enhance the research impact and engagement of their law academics in the broader community.

6.6 Limitations of the study

There are several limitations to this study, discussed below. First, the study is a constructivist grounded theory (CGT) study, meaning that the substantive theory has been developed directly from the experiences of the participants and myself as the researcher at a particular time and within a particular context. Hence the study is specific to those who participated in the study and myself through the co-construction of the theory (Charmaz, 2014).

Second, the research focuses on Australian law academics, who may have a very different experience from law academics in other jurisdictions/countries, which was discussed briefly in section 6.3 where participants in the Kondakci et al. (2021) study were overtly focused on achieving tenure, whereas my participants were, in global academic employment terms, in ongoing 'tenured' positions. Similarly, a different experience occurred in the McNamara (2018) study, where the avenues for engaging with policy-makers differ between the United Kingdom and Australia due to the submissions process. In Australia, there are more institutional mechanisms for academics to formally engage in the policy-making and law-making process through submissions. Third, the sample size of participants is not representative of all Australian law academics. In keeping with CGT methods, purposive sampling was undertaken based on several factors, such as an academic publication history,

grants history and engagement history (obtained through their online staff profiles). Hence the findings are not representative of all Australian law academics and should be considered as a general overview that is moderately applicable in other similar contexts.

6.7 Future directions

The theory *Navigating Research Engagement and Impact* informs several future research directions in the literature around academics' experiences of research engagement and impact. These future directions may help contribute further to the sparse literature and knowledge in this important area.

6.7.1 Building on the findings of this study

The findings of this study produced seven categories of law academics' experiences of research engagement and impact. Some findings from the categories have been discussed in the extant literature regarding academics' experiences of research engagement and impact, such as the elements of expertise (in *Being an expert*) and how this aids in having research impact. Elements from *Prioritising time* – including the significant impact of workloads and institutional expectations are discussed generally throughout the literature on academia and academic culture. Similarly, the importance of relationships with audiences and stakeholders has been mentioned in the existing literature (and in the category *Planning for impact*). However, some elements are not discussed or are sparsely mentioned in the current literature, such as the experiences of translating knowledge into teaching and learning activities and how academics often view teaching as their most important contribution to society. This was echoed by several participants in my study and features in the categories *Engaging and translating* and *Cultivating impact through teaching and learning*.

Future studies could focus specifically on how academics achieve research impact on others through passing on their tacit knowledge to students, and as mentors to junior staff and colleagues. The focus on impacts through tacit knowledge would be an interesting approach for future research and would contribute to a better understanding of how academics experience research engagement and impact. Furthermore, understanding how other disciplines experience barriers to research engagement and impact, and how internal and external policies may inform

behaviours and research priorities is critical to developing a more robust framework of research engagement and impact that supports academics in achieving their goals.

6.7.2 Investigating lived experiences of research engagement and impact in other Australian academic disciplines

Although there some studies have been published about academics' lived experiences, often they are discipline or locality focused. Several studies have been undertaken in the United Kingdom around the engagement and impact (EI) agenda, which includes experiences across various disciplines, including the sciences and humanities and social sciences. Researchers such as Mark Reed (Reed, 2016; Reed et al., 2022; Reed & Rudman, 2022), Jennifer Chubb (Chubb, 2014a, 2014b; Chubb & Derrick, 2020; Chubb & Watermeyer, 2016) and Richard Watermeyer (Watermeyer, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016; Watermeyer & Hedgecoe, 2016), have investigated several different disciplines and facets of research engagement and impact experiences.

International researchers have often interviewed Australian academics or addressed the EI agenda, but to date there have been very few Australian studies (Barnsbee, 2020; Doyle, 2018) investigating the lived experiences of Australian academics. Future research could investigate, qualitatively, how Australian academics from different disciplines experience research engagement and impact, which would allow for a broader understanding of the phenomenon, from an Australian lens rather than a comparative perspective.

Furthermore, studies could also be conducted further afield in countries such as Canada, New Zealand, and the United States around law academics' lived experiences of research engagement and impact.

6.7.3 Investigating the gendered aspects of workload and implications for research engagement and impact

Another avenue for future research would be to investigate gendered aspects of workload and how this limits the research engagement and impact opportunities for those with caring responsibilities. Some recent research looking at gender through the lens of the engagement and impact agenda suggests that, 'The assumption here is that academic performance and the metrics used to value, and

evaluate it, are heavily gendered in a way that benefits men over women, reflecting current disparities within the HE workforce' (Chubb & Derrick, 2020, p. 3). Chubb and Derrick mainly focused on the gendered discourses and typologies around research, and how women are often unfairly labelled as 'soft researchers' or pigeonholed into more teaching and pastoral care responsibilities (Chubb & Derrick, 2020; H. P. McKenna, 2021).

Only one participant (Dr Thomas Murray) in my study discussed how his caring responsibilities had limited his availability to pursue research engagement and impact opportunities. Future studies could investigate how primary carers (regardless of gender) experience research engagement and impact and look more closely at the ways carers could be provided with better opportunities, within the parameters of their current workload, to pursue research engagement and impact activities. This would aid in recognising the needs of academics with caring or other gendered responsibilities to address and broaden our understanding of workload barriers to achieving research engagement and impact success.

6.7.4 Expanding on barriers to research engagement and impact: workload, institutional culture, and academic motivation

While this thesis has provided an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences of law academics in relation to research engagement and impact, future research could benefit from a broader examination of the barriers that academics across various disciplines face, in an Australian or international context. These future research directions discussed below could contribute to the development of more effective policies and practices that support academics in their efforts to make meaningful contributions to society.

My finding suggested that unbalanced workloads and the absence of institutional incentives for research engagement activities are significant obstacles. Future studies could explore how these workload challenges intersect with institutional expectations, furthering our understanding of how these factors affect different disciplines

Another important area for future research is the impact of institutional culture on academics' abilities to pursue research engagement and impact activities. The findings from my study, and in recent literature indicate that a lack of support and recognition from universities can lead to disengagement from these activities (de Jong & Balaban, 2022; Nelson & Lindsay, 2023; Sormani & Uude, 2022). Moreover, the siloing of

research within academic departments and the marginalisation of some academics from collaborative opportunities emerged as significant barriers, particularly to early career researchers. Investigating how these cultural factors operate across different academic disciplines could provide valuable insights into this phenomenon, suggesting strategies that foster a more inclusive and supportive research environment.

A further avenue for future research in this space would be the exploration of academic motivation in relation to research engagement and impact. My study found the academics are often driven by personal values, such as the desire to contribute to society, rather than external rewards. However, this intrinsic motivation is often insufficient in the absence of institutional incentives or acknowledgment. Future studies could build on this thesis and recent studies by Atta-Owusu and Fitjar (2022); Bayley (2023); Hall et al. (2019) to further examine how motivational factors influence research engagement and impact pursuits across various disciplines and how these factors interact with institutional policies such as promotion criteria and performance metrics.

Finally, the recent suspension of the ERA and EI assessments by the ARC presents a unique opportunity for exploring how changes to established research evaluation frameworks might affect academics across different disciplines. Investigating how these changes influence academics' behaviour and research priorities could provide critical insights into the evolving landscape of research engagement and impact in Australia.

6.8 Conclusion

This substantive grounded theory, *Navigating Research Engagement and Impact: A Grounded Theory Exploration of Australian Law Academics' Strategies and Experiences*, contributes knowledge related to Australian law academics' experiences of engagement and impact through theoretical and empirical evidence of academics' experiences of the phenomenon. This theory contributes to several sparse areas within the literature and provides a holistic understanding of Australian law academics' experiences of research engagement and impact within a specific period.

The findings from this study can provide guidance to university management and law schools regarding how to better work with their academics to enable them to achieve research engagement and impact success. By acknowledging the many

barriers, discussed throughout the findings, law schools will have a better understanding of how their academics are achieving research impact and what improvements and support can be provided to help them with these important opportunities. The findings also underscore the need for research evaluation framework in Australia to account for the diverse challenges academics face, including workload pressures, institutional culture and varying motivations for research engagement and impact. By recognising these factors, future research evaluation policies could be better designed to support and incentivise academics across all disciplines, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and effective approach to measuring and rewarding research contributions. This shift could lead to more holistic evaluations that not only prioritise high-quality publications but also value important societal impacts and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Although this study makes a significant theoretical contribution, it must be noted that, due to the nature of CGT studies, a substantive theory is generally applicable in similar contexts but is not representative of all Australian law academics. I hope the research undertaken here will lead to more studies in this important area.

REFERENCES

- Annells, M. (2010). Grounded theory method: Philosophical perspectives, paradigm of inquiry, and postmodernism. In P. Atkinson & S. Delamont (Eds.), *Sage qualitative research methods* (pp. 380-393). Sage.
- Antonyuk, A., Minina, V. N., & Nikiforova, O. (2022). Expert knowledge creation in policy-making: A research perspective from sociological field theory. *Policy Studies*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2022.2051466>
- ARC. (2015a). *Research impact principles and framework*. Australian Research Council. <http://www.arc.gov.au/research-impact-principles-and-framework#Definition>
- ARC. (2015b). *Research impact principles and framework – glossary*.
http://www.arc.gov.au/sites/default/files/filedepot/Public/ARC/Research%20Impact/Glossary_for_research_impact.pdf
- Armstrong, F., & Alsop, A. (2010). Debate: Co-production can contribute to research impact in the social sciences. *Public Money & Management*, 30(4), 208–210.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09540962.2010.492178>
- Atta-Owusu, K., & Fitjar, R. D. (2022). What motivates academics for external engagement? Exploring the effects of motivational drivers and organizational fairness. *Science and Public Policy*, 49(2), 201–218.
- Australian Research Council. (2015). ERA FAQs.
<http://www.arc.gov.au/era-faqs>
- Back, L. (2015). On the side of the powerful: The 'impact agenda' and sociology in public. *The Sociological Review Blog*.
<https://thesociologicalreview.org/collections/future-sociologies/on-the-side-of-the-powerful-the-impact-agenda-sociology-in-public>

- Bandola-Gill, J. (2019). Between relevance and excellence? Research impact agenda and the production of policy knowledge. *Science and Public Policy*, 46(6), 895–905.
- Barker, K., Cox, D., Spaapen, J., Van der Meulen, B., Gallert, J. M., & Sveinsdottir, T. (2011). *Social impact assessment methods for research and funding instruments through the study of productive interactions between science and society*. European Commission.
- Barnsbee, L. N. (2020). *The capacity of health services researchers to engage with research impact* Queensland University of Technology.
- Barrett, M., & Oborn, E. (2018). Bridging the research–practice divide: Harnessing expertise collaboration in making a wider set of contributions. *Information and Organization*, 28(1), 44–51.
- Bastow, S., Dunleavy, P., & Tinkler, J. (2014). *The impact of the social sciences: how academics and their research make a difference*. Sage.
- Bengtsson, L. (2013). Utbildningssamverkan–för jobb, innovation och företagande. <https://lup.lub.lu.se/search/publication/5159021>
- Birks, M., & Mills, J. (2015). *Grounded theory: A practical guide*(2nd ed.). Sage.
- Blaxter, L., Hughes, C., & Tight, M. (1998). Writing on academic careers. *Studies in Higher Education*, 23(3), 281–295.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1998). Foundations of qualitative research in education. In *Qualitative Research in Education: An introduction to theory and methods* (pp. 1–48). Allyn and Bacon.
- Bogensneider, K., & Corbett, T. (2011). *Evidence-based policymaking: Insights from policy-minded researchers and research-minded policymakers*. Routledge.
- Bolingford, I. (2017). The Research Excellence Framework and the Stern Review: Implications for Australia’s Engagement and Impact Assessment Framework. <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/127264>

- Bölling, M., & Eriksson, Y. (2016). Collaboration with society: The future role of universities? Identifying challenges for evaluation. *Research Evaluation*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/reseval/rvv043>
- Bowrey, K. (2012). *Assessing research performance in the discipline of law, 2006–2011*. UNSW Law Research Paper No. 2012-17. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2060801>
- Brauer, R. (2023). Tourism studies and the changing research ecosystem. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 48(4), 524–534. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2023.2188707>
- Breckenridge, J. P. (2012). Choosing a methodological path: Reflections on the constructivist turn. *Grounded Theory Review*, 11(1). <https://groundedtheoryreview.com/2012/06/01/choosing-a-methodological-path-reflections-on-the-constructivist-turn/>
- Broadbent, J. (2016). The real impact factor: Reflections on the impact of the research excellence framework. *Ideas*, 1, 15–28. <https://ideas.repec.org/a/fan/frfrfr/vhtml10.3280-fr2016-001002.html>
- Bruce, C., Pham, B., & Stoodley, I. (2004). Constituting the significance and value of research: Views from information technology academics and industry professionals. *Studies in Higher Education*, 29(2), 219–238. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0307507042000190804>
- Bryman, A. (2008). The end of the paradigm wars? In P. Alasuutari, L. Bickman, & J. Brannen (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of social research methods* (pp. 12-26). Sage.
- Burgess, R. G. (1984). *In the field: An introduction to field research* Routledge.
- Caelli, K., Ray, L., & Mill, J. (2003). 'Clear as mud': Toward greater clarity in generic qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 2(2), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690300200201>
- Chan, A.-W., Song, F., Vickers, A., Jefferson, T., Dickersin, K., Gøtzsche, P. C., Krumholz, H. M., Ghersi, D., & Van Der Worp, H. B. (2014).

- Increasing value and reducing waste: Addressing inaccessible research. *The Lancet*, 383(9913), 257–266.
- Chandler, C. (2014). What is the meaning of impact in relation to research and why does it matter? A view from inside academia. In P. Denicolo (Ed.), *Achieving impact in oesearch* (pp. 1-9). Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (1990). 'Discovering' chronic illness: Using grounded theory. *Social Science & Medicine*, 30(11), 1161–1172.
- Charmaz, K. (1996). Grounded theory. In J. Smith, R. Harre, & L. Van Langenhove (Eds.), *Rethinking methods in psychology* (pp. 27–49). Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (2000). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 509–535). Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (2006a). *Constructing grounded theory*. Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (2006b). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (2008a). Grounded theory as an emergent method. In S. N. Hesse-Biber & P. Leavy (Eds.), *Handbook of emergent methods* (pp. 155–172). The Guilford Press.
- Charmaz, K. (2008b). Constructionism and the grounded theory. In J. A. Holstein & J. F. Gubrium (Eds.), *Handbook of constructionist research* (pp. 397–412). The Guildford Press.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Charmaz, K., & Thornberg, R. (2021). The pursuit of quality in grounded theory. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 18(3), 305–327.
- Cherney, A., Head, B., Boreham, P., Povey, J., & Ferguson, M. (2013a). Research utilization in the social sciences: A comparison of five academic disciplines in Australia. *Science Communication*, 35(6), 780–809. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1075547013491398>
- Cherney, A., Head, B., Povey, J., Boreham, P., & Ferguson, M. (2013b). The utilisation of social science research: The perspectives of

- academic researchers in Australia. *Journal of Sociology*, 51(2), 252–270. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783313505008>
- Chikoore, L., Proberts, S., Fry, J., & Creaser, C. (2016). How are UK academics engaging the public with their research? A cross-disciplinary perspective. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 70(2), 145–169. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12088>
- Chubb, J. (2014a). How does the impact agenda fit with attitudes and ethics that motivate research? In P. Denicolo (Ed.), *Achieving impact in research* (pp. 20–32). Sage.
- Chubb, J. (2014b). What skills are needed to be an impactful researcher? In P. Denicolo (Ed.), *Achieving impact in research* (pp. 113–126). Sage.
- Chubb, J., & Derrick, G. (2020). The impact a-gender: Gendered orientations towards research impact and its evaluation. *Palgrave Communications*, 6(1), 1–11.
- Chubb, J., & Watermeyer, R. (2016). Artifice or integrity in the marketization of research impact? Investigating the moral economy of (pathways to) impact statements within research funding proposals in the UK and Australia. *Studies in Higher Education*, 42(12), 2360–2372. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2016.1144182>
- Chubb, J. A. (2017). *Instrumentalism and epistemic responsibility: Researchers and the impact agenda in the UK and Australia*. University of York.
- Clarke, A. E. (2005). *Situational analysis: Grounded theory after the postmodern turn*. Sage.
- Corbin, J., & Holt, N. L. (2011). Grounded theory. In S. Bridget & L. Cathy (Eds.), *Theory and methods in social research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 113–119). Sage.
- Corbin, J., & Morse, J. M. (2003). The unstructured interactive interview: Issues of reciprocity and risks when dealing with sensitive topics. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(3), 335–354.

- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, 13(1), 3–21.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods Approaches*. Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into practice*, 39(3), 124–130.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research*. Sage.
- D’Este, P., & Patel, P. (2007). University–industry linkages in the United Kingdom: What are the factors underlying the variety of interactions with industry? *Research Policy*, 36(9), 1295–1313.
- Davies, S. R. (2013). Research staff and public engagement: A UK study. *Higher Education*, 66, 725–739.
- De Jong, S., Barker, K., Cox, D., Sveinsdottir, T., & Van den Besselaar, P. (2014). Understanding societal impact through productive interactions: ICT research as a case. *Research Evaluation*, 23(2), 89–102.
- de Jong, S. P., & Balaban, C. (2022). How universities influence societal impact practices: Academics’ sense-making of organizational impact strategies. *Science and Public Policy*, 49(4), 609–620.
- Dobos, K. (2011). ‘Serving two masters’: Academics’ perspectives on working at an offshore campus in Malaysia. *Educational Review*, 63(1), 19–35.
- Dougan, M., & O’Brien, C. (2019). Reflections on law and impact in the light of Brexit. *The Law Teacher*, 53(2), 197–211.
- Doyle, J. (2018). Reconceptualising research impact: Reflections on the real-world impact of research in an Australian context. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 37(7), 1366–1379.
- Doyle, J., & McDonald, L. (2016). Making an impact: Politics and persuasions in 21st century higher education. In K. Trimmer (Ed.), *Political pressures on educational and social research*. Routledge.

- Doyle, J., McDonald, L., Cuthill, M., & Keppell, M. (2015a). *Digital futures research and society: Action, awareness and accountability. Proceedings of the 32nd Annual Conference of the Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (ASCILITE 2015)*,
- Doyle, J., McDonald, L., Cuthill, M., & Keppell, M. (2015b). Digital futures research and society: Action, awareness and accountability. In *Globally connected, digitally enabled* (pp. 77–81). Cambridge University Press. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/211498849.pdf>
- Fecher, B., & Hebing, M. (2021). How do researchers approach societal impact? *PLoS ONE*, 16(7), e0254006.
- Ferguson, M., & Head, B. (2014). *The value and character of political science: Report on the Members Survey, September 2014*. <http://apo.org.au/resource/value-and-character-political-science-report-members-survey-september-2014>
- Fielding, N. (1994). Varieties of research interviews. *Nurse Researcher*, 1(3), 4–11.
- Gaskell, G. (2000). Individual and group interviewing. In M. Bauer & G. Gaskell (Eds.), *Qualitative researching with text, image and sound* (pp. 38–56). Sage.
- Given, L. M., Kelly, W., & Wilson, R. (2015). Bracing for impact: The role of information science in supporting societal research impact. *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 52(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pr2.2015.145052010048>
- Glaser, B. G. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity: Advances in the methodology of grounded theory*. Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G. (1998). *Doing grounded theory: Issues and discussions*. Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G. (2001). *The grounded theory perspective: Conceptualization contrasted with description*. Sociology Press.

- Glaser, B. G. (2002). Conceptualization: On theory and theorizing using grounded theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1(2), 23–37.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine.
- Golhasany, H., Hosseini, T., & Hassanzadeh, M. (2021). Challenges to creating impact in humanities and social sciences in Iran: A grounded theory analysis. *Sciences and Techniques of Information Management*, 7(2), 141–174.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105–117). Sage.
- Gunn, A., & Mintrom, M. (2021). Where evidence-based policy meets research impact. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 80(3), 544–553.
- Haddow, G., & Genoni, P. W. (2009). Australian education journals: Quantitative and qualitative indicators. *Australian Academic and Research Libraries*, 40(2), 88–104.
- Hall, H., Griffiths, D., & McKenna, L. (2013). From Darwin to constructivism: The evolution of grounded theory. *Nurse Researcher*, 20(3), 17–21.
- Hammersley, M. (2014). The perils of ‘impact’ for academic social science. *Contemporary Social Science*, 9(3), 345–355.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/21582041.2014.923580>
- Johnson, S., & Orr, K. (2020). What is business school research for? Academic and stakeholder perspectives, politics and relationality. *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(3), 557–578.
- Jordan, K. (2022). Academics’ perceptions of research impact and engagement through interactions on social media platforms. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 48(3), 415–428.

- Kelly, W. B., MacDermott, S., & Spelten, E. (2021). A seat at the table: Regional, rural and remote health research and impact. *Australian Journal of Rural Health, 29*(6), 1002–1007.
- Knight, E., & Mitchell, V. (2023). The 'how' rather than the 'what' of research impact. *Higher Education Research & Development, 42*(2), 336–349.
- Kondakci, Y., Zayim-Kurtay, M., Kaya-Kasikci, S., Senay, H. H., & Kulakoglu, B. (2021). 'Scaling' the academia: Perspectives of academics on the impact of their practices. *Research Evaluation, 30*(3), 370–381.
- Kump, B., Wittmayer, J., Bogner, K., & Beekman, M. (2023). Navigating force conflicts: A case study on strategies of transformative research in the current academic system. *Journal of Cleaner Production, 412*, 137374.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2023.137374>
- Lauridsen, E., & Higginbottom, G. (2014). The roots and development of constructivist grounded theory. *Nurse Researcher, 21*(5), 8–13.
- Lempert, L. B. (2007). Asking questions of the data: Memo writing in the grounded theory tradition. In A. Bryant & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Grounded Theory* (pp. 245-264). Sage.
- Mackenzie, N., & Knipe, S. (2006). Research dilemmas: Paradigms, methods and methodology. *Issues in Educational Research, 16*, 193-205.
- Makri, C., & Neely, A. (2021). Grounded theory: A guide for exploratory studies in management research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 20*, 16094069211013654.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2023.137374>
- McKenna, H. P. (2021). *Research impact: Guidance on Advancement, achievement and assessment*. Springer.
- McKenna, H. P., & McKenna, H. P. (2021). *Research impact: The what, why, when and how*. Springer.

- McKenna, N. J. (2021). *Digital self-marketing strategies of Australian-based academics*. RMIT University.
- McNamara, L. (2018). Understanding research impact in law: The Research Excellence Framework and engagement with UK governments. *King's Law Journal*, 29(3), 437–469.
- Meagher, L., Lyall, C., & Nutley, S. (2008). Flows of knowledge, expertise and influence: A method for assessing policy and practice impacts from social science research. *Research Evaluation*, 17(3), 163–173. <https://doi.org/10.3152/095820208x331720>
- Mitchell, V. (2019). A proposed framework and tool for non-economic research impact measurement. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 38(4), 819–832.
- Molas-Gallart, J., & Castro-Martínez, E. (2007). Ambiguity and conflict in the development of 'third mission' indicators. *Research Evaluation*, 16(4), 321–330.
- Morse, J. M. (2007). Sampling in grounded theory. In A. Bryant & K. Chamaz (eds), *The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory* (pp. 229–244.). Sage.
- Morton, S. (2015). Progressing research impact assessment: A 'contributions' approach. *Research Evaluation*, 24(4), 405–419. <https://doi.org/10.1093/reseval/rvv016>
- Muhonen, R., Benneworth, P., & Olmos-Peñuela, J. (2020). From productive interactions to impact pathways: Understanding the key dimensions in developing SSH research societal impact. *Research Evaluation*, 29(1), 34–47.
- Munhall, P. L. (2010). *Nursing research: A qualitative perspective* (5th ed.). Jones & Bartlett.
- Murphy, T., & Sage, D. (2015). Perceptions of the UK's Research Excellence Framework 2014: A small survey of academics. *Australian Universities Review*, 57(2), 31–36.
- Nelson, J. P., & Lindsay, S. (2023). What determines public affairs researchers' motivations for policy impact? Results from an

- exploratory study. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 89(3), 901–918.
- Nightingale, P., & Vine, R. (2022). By focusing on outputs, rather than people, we misunderstand the real impact of research. *Impact of Social Sciences Blog*.
<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2022/02/07/by-focusing-on-outputs-rather-than-people-we-misunderstand-the-real-impact-of-research>
- Nunes, J. M. B., Martins, J. T., Zhou, L., Alajamy, M., & Al-Mamari, S. (2010). Contextual sensitivity in grounded theory: The role of pilot studies. *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 8(2), 73–84.
- Nutley, S., Walter, I., & Davies, H. (2007). *Using evidence: How research can inform public services*. Policy Press.
- O’Connell, B. T., De Lange, P., Martin-Sardesai, A., & Agyemang, G. (2020a). Measurement and assessment of accounting research, impact and engagement. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 33(6), 1177–1192.
- O’Connell, B. T., De Lange, P., Stoner, G., & Sangster, A. (2020b). Impact of research assessment exercises on research approaches and foci of accounting disciplines in Australia. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 33(6), 1277–1302.
- Olmos-Peñuela, J., Castro-Martínez, E., & D’Este, P. (2014). Knowledge transfer activities in social sciences and humanities: Explaining the interactions of research groups with non-academic agents. *Research Policy*, 43(4), 696–706.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2013.12.004>
- Penfield, T., Baker, M. J., Scoble, R., & Wykes, M. C. (2013). Assessment, evaluations, and definitions of research impact: A review. *Research Evaluation*, 23(1), 21–32. <https://doi.org/10.1093/reseval/rvt021>
- Perkmann, M., & Walsh, K. (2008). Engaging the scholar: Three types of academic consulting and their impact on universities and industry.

- Research Policy*, 37(10), 1884–1891.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2008.07.009>
- Peruginelli, G. (2015). Evaluating research: The case of legal scholarly outputs. *Legal Information Management*, 15(1), 50–56.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s147266961500016x>
- Phillips, R. (2010). The impact agenda and geographies of curiosity. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 35(4), 447–452.
- Powell, E., Winfield, G., Schatteman, A. M., & Trusty, K. (2018). Collaboration between practitioners and academics: Defining the pracademic experience. *The Journal of Nonprofit Education and Leadership*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.18666/JNEL-2018-V8-I1-8295>
- Raskin, J. D. (2002). Constructivism in psychology: Personal construct psychology, radical constructivism, and social constructionism. *American Communication Journal*, 5(3), 1–25.
- Reed, M. (2016). What does the Stern Review mean for research impact? *Fast Track Impact*. <http://www.fasttrackimpact.com/single-post/2016/07/28/What-does-the-Stern-Review-mean-for-research-impact>
- Reed, M., Gent, S., Seballos, F., Glass, J., Hansda, R., & Fischer-Moller, M. (2022). How can impact strategies be developed that better support universities to address twenty-first-century challenges? *Research for All*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.14324/RFA.06.1.24>
- Reed, M. S., & Rudman, H. (2022). Re-thinking research impact: Voice, context and power at the interface of science, policy and practice. *Sustainability Science*, 1–15.
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11625-022-01216-w>
- Rowe, D., & Brass, K. (2008). The uses of academic knowledge: The university in the media. *Media, Culture & Society*, 30(5), 677–698.
- Rylee, T. L., & Cavanagh, S. J. (2022). Using NVivo™ as a methodological tool for a literature review on nursing innovation: A step-by-step

- approach. *Health Services and Outcomes Research Methodology*, 22(4), 454–468.
- Sampson, C. (2014). What counts as an academic publication. *The Conversation*, 25 November. <https://theconversation.com/what-counts-as-an-academic-publication-34549>
- Schwandt, T. A. (1993). Theory for the moral sciences: Crisis of identity and purpose. In D. J. Flinders & G. E. Mills (Eds.), *Theory and concepts in qualitative research: Perspectives from the field* (pp. 5–23). Columbia University Press.
- Schwandt, T. A. (1998). Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues* (pp. 221–259). Sage.
- Schwandt, T. A. (2000). Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry: Interpretivism, hermeneutics, and social constructionism. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative Research Second Edition* (pp. 189–213). Sage.
- Shastri, Y., Hoda, R., & Amor, R. (2017). Understanding the roles of the manager in agile project management. In *Proceedings of the 10th Innovations in Software Engineering Conference* (pp. 45–55). <https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3021460.3021465>
- Sheil, M., Dodds, S., & Hutchinson, M. (2023). *Trusting Australia’s ability: Review of the Australian Research Council Act 2001*. <https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-reviews-and-consultations/resources/trusting-australias-ability-review-australian-research-council-act-2001>
- Shucha, B. (2021). Representing law faculty scholarly impact: Strategies for improving citation metrics accuracy and promoting scholarly visibility. *Legal Reference Services Quarterly*, 40(2–3), 81–112.
- Smith, K. E., Bandola-Gill, J., Meer, N., Stewart, E., & Watermeyer, R. (2020a). Do experiences and perceptions of research impact vary

- by discipline? In *The impact agenda: Controversies, consequences and challenges* (pp. 63–98). Policy Press.
- Smith, K. E., Bandola-Gill, J., Meer, N., Stewart, E., & Watermeyer, R. (2020b). *The impact agenda: Controversies, consequences and challenges*. Policy Press.
- Smith, K. E., & Stewart, E. (2016). We need to talk about impact: Why social policy academics need to engage with the UK's Research Impact Agenda. *Journal of Social Policy*, 46(1).
<https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0047279416000283>
- Smith, S., Ward, V., & House, A. (2011). 'Impact' in the proposals for the UK's Research Excellence Framework: Shifting the boundaries of academic autonomy. *Research Policy*, 40(10), 1369–1379.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2011.05.026>
- Smyth, R. (2009a). Citing outside the law reports. *Griffith Law Review*, 18(3), 692–726.
- Smyth, R. (2009b). Trends in the citation practice of the Supreme Court of Queensland over the course of the twentieth century. *University of Queensland Law Journal*, 28(1), 39–80.
- Soh, J. T. H., & Yiham, G. (2022). How and why do judges cite academics? Evidence from the Singapore High Court. *Asian Journal of Comparative Law*, 17(1), 134–166.
- Sormani, E., & Uude, K. (2022). Academics' prosocial motivation for engagement with society: The case of German academics in health science. *Science and Public Policy*, 49(6), 962–971.
- Spaapen, J., & Van Drooge, L. (2011). Introducing 'productive interactions' in social impact assessment. *Research Evaluation*, 20(3), 211–218.
- Spradley, J. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Stern, P. (1980). Grounded theory methodology. *Image*, 12(1), 20–23.

- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1994). Grounded theory methodology. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 273–285). Sage.
- Suddaby, R. (2006). What grounded theory is not. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 49(4), 633–642.
- Sugarman, D. (1986). Legal theory, the common law mind and the making of the textbook tradition. In W. Twining (Ed.), *Legal theory and common law* (pp. 26–62). Basil Blackwood.
- Svantesson, D., Corkery, J., & McCabe, B. (2014). The ghost of rankings past: The lasting harmful impact of journal rankings, and what we should do instead. *Bond Law Review*, 26(2), 71–85.
- Tranter, K., & Meyer, R. (2015). The use of journal articles by the Queensland Law Reform Commission. *Bond Law Review*, 27. <https://blr.scholasticahq.com/article/5634-the-use-of-journal-articles-by-the-queensland-law-reform-commission>
- Urquhart, C. (2013). *Grounded theory for qualitative research: A practical guide*. Sage.
- Watermeyer, R. (2012). From engagement to impact? Articulating the public value of academic research. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 18(2), 115–130. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13583883.2011.641578>
- Watermeyer, R. (2014). Issues in the articulation of 'impact': The responses of UK academics to 'impact' as a new measure of research assessment. *Studies in Higher Education*, 39(2), 359–377. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2012.709490>
- Watermeyer, R. (2015). Lost in the 'third space': The impact of public engagement in higher education and academic identity, research practice and career progression. *European Journal of Higher Education*, 5(3), 331–347. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568235.2015.1044546>
- Watermeyer, R. (2016). Stress put on academics by the REF recognised in Stern review. *The Conversation*, 1 August.

<https://theconversation.com/stress-put-on-academics-by-the-ref-recognised-in-stern-review-63237>

- Watermeyer, R., & Hedgecoe, A. (2016). Selling impact: Peer-reviewer projections of what is needed and what counts in REF impact case studies. A retrospective analysis. *Journal of Education Policy*, 31(5), 651–665. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2016.1170885>
- Watt, I. (2015). *Report of the Review of Research Funding and Policy Arrangements*. Department of Education and Training. https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/main_report_final_20160112.pdf
- Weatherall, K. G., & Giblin, R. (2021). Inoculating law schools against bad metrics. In K. Bowrey (Ed.), *Feminist Perspectives on Law, Law Schools and Law Reform: Essays in Honour of Professor Jill McKeough*. Federation Press.
- Wilkinson, C. (2019). Evidencing impact: A case study of UK academic perspectives on evidencing research impact. *Studies in Higher Education*, 44(1), 72–85.
- Williams, K. (2020). Playing the fields: Theorizing research impact and its assessment. *Research Evaluation*, 29(2), 191–202.
- Williams, K., & Lewis, J. M. (2021). Understanding, measuring, and encouraging public policy research impact. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 80(3), 554–564.
- Worrall-Carter, L., & Snell, R. (2003–2004). Nurse academics meeting the challenges of scholarship and research. *Contemporary Nurse: A Journal for the Australian Nursing Profession*, 16(1-2), 40–50.
- Wróblewska, M. N. (2021). Research impact evaluation and academic discourse. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 8(1), 1–12.
- Young, R. A., & Collin, A. (2004). Introduction: Constructivism and social constructionism in the career field. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 64, 373–388.

APPENDIX A

AUSTRALIAN ACADEMIC ROLES

In Australia, academic staff roles in universities are diverse and encompass a range of responsibilities related to teaching, research, and university administration. Below is a brief overview of academic staff roles in Australian universities that were mentioned throughout this thesis:

Sessional academics: These are casually employed lecturers who often undertake tutorials and marking. Normally an undergraduate law degree, as a minimum qualification, is required for this role.

Lecturer or early career research/academics: Lecturers are primarily responsible for teaching undergraduate and postgraduate courses. They prepare and deliver lectures, conduct tutorials, grade assignments and assess students' progress. They also provide academic guidance and support to students. The participants in this study who were lecturers or early career researchers often had large teaching workloads.

Senior lecturer/associate professor: Senior lecturers and associate professors balance teaching and research, and often have a more even workload. They lead research projects and contribute to academic committees and other service roles as part of their workload.

Professor: Professors are normally renowned experts in their field. They contribute significantly to research, teaching and academic leadership within the university. They may lead research groups, mentor junior staff and serve on academic committees and in other service roles as part of their service workload.

Dean: The role of the dean of a law school is essentially the head of the law school or faculty. They often represent the law school and form part of the university management team.

All participants in this study held law degrees and most had PhDs or significant career experience and expertise in their field of study.

APPENDIX B

Recruitment email

The recruitment email was sent to all participants who were part of the study. It was also sent to a number of participants who declined to participate or were unavailable.

I am conducting a research project exploring how Australian law academics experience research engagement and research impact. I am currently at the theoretical sampling stage of my study and would like to interview you about your experiences as an academic who has transitioned from another profession.

I am conducting one-on-one interviews from late Feb through to mid-March 2022.

The interview will be conducted at a time convenient to you and using whichever method you prefer (e.g., Skype, Zoom, phone, in person). Interviews are between 30-60 mins long.

You will be asked to share knowledge of your experiences in relation to research engagement and research impact in the context of your work as a legal scholar.

If you have any questions or for further information and to participate in the interview, please reply to this email.

This study has been approved by the USQ Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number H17REA015).

Participant information sheet (PIS)

All participants were sent the PIS which was sent with the recruitment email. The PIS is below (3 pages).



University of Southern Queensland

Participant Information for USQ Research Project Interview

Project Details

Title of Project: Research Impact and Engagement in Australian Law Schools: A Grounded Theory Study of the Legal Scholars Experience
Human Research Ethics Approval Number: H17REA015

Research Team Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details

Ms Ilana Bolingford
Email: [REDACTED]
Mobile: [REDACTED]

Supervisor Details

Professor Helen Partridge
Email: [REDACTED]
Telephone: [REDACTED]

Dr Kate Davis
Email: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]

Description

This project is being undertaken as part of a PhD Project.

The purpose of this project is to understand how legal scholars in Australian law schools experience research impact and engagement.

You have been invited to participate because you are a legal scholar (law academic) who works in an Australian law school or faculty.

Participation

Your participation will involve participation in one interview that will take approximately 30-60 minutes of your time. You will also be contacted via email to provide feedback and comments on your interview transcript. This will give you the opportunity to mention anything that may have been missed or not discussed in the interview. You may be contacted to participate in a second interview if required. This interview will run for approximately 30 minutes and will follow the same process as the first interview.

The interview will take place at a date and time that is convenient to you using whatever mechanism you prefer (Skype, Zoom, telephone, in person).

Questions will include: "Can you tell me about your experience with research impact and engagement?"

The interview will be audio recorded.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to take part you are not obliged to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project prior to the thesis being finalised. You may also request that any data collected about you be destroyed within this timeframe. If you do wish to withdraw from this project or withdraw data collected about you, please contact the Research Team (contact details at the top of this form).

Your decision whether you take part, do not take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will in no way impact your current or future relationship with the University of Southern Queensland.

Expected Benefits

It is expected that this project will directly benefit you by encouraging you to think critically about your experiences as a law academic in relation to research impact and engagement. In addition, law schools may benefit from this research as they move towards training and development for academics with regards to research impact and engagement.

A short report summarising the key findings of the study will be provided to you at the completion of the project. If you are interested in obtaining this report please contact the researcher on the email provided.

Risks

There are minimal risks associated with your participation in this project. These include:

Time imposition: To minimise the risk of time imposition, the interview will be undertaken at a time and date suitable to your needs using whichever mechanism you prefer.

Social risks: You may feel pressured to answer questions correctly and may be concerned that participation in this project may impact on your career and well-being. To minimise this risk, the investigator will ensure you are clearly informed prior to the interview and once the interview commences that your answers are anonymous and confidential and that the researchers will be the only people who can access the data. You will also be advised that there are no correct or incorrect answers.

You will also be given the option to withdraw from all or part of the study by emailing:

Privacy and Confidentiality

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially unless required by law.

Audio recording information for participants:

- You will not have the opportunity to verify your comments or responses prior to final inclusion. However, you will be contacted to provide further comments on the interview transcripts following the interview. You may at this point include any further comments that were not mentioned in the interview.
- The audio recordings will be destroyed in line with legislative requirements and stored securely – only the research team and the third party transcriber will have access to the recordings.
- The recordings will not be used for any other purpose other than for research purposes.
- The transcriber will be asked to complete a confidentiality agreement before any work takes place. They will not have access to participant information other than the audio recordings and given the participants pseudonym code for transcription purposes.

Page 2 of 3

Any data collected as a part of this project will be stored securely as per University of Southern Queensland's Research Data Management policy.

Consent to Participate

We would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate in this project. Please return your signed consent form to a member of the Research Team prior to participating in your interview.

Questions or Further Information about the Project

Please refer to the Research Team Contact Details at the top of the form to have any questions answered or to request further information about this project.

Concerns or Complaints Regarding the Conduct of the Project

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Coordinator on (07) 4631 2690 or email ethics@usq.edu.au. The Ethics Coordinator is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an unbiased manner.

Thank you for taking the time to help with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.

Consent form

All participants signed the consent form and returned to me prior to their interview (2 pages).

University of Southern Queensland	
	
Consent Form for USQ Research Project Interview	
Project Details	
Title of Project:	Research Impact and Engagement in Australian Law Schools: A Grounded Theory Study of the Legal Scholars Experience
Human Research Ethics Approval Number:	H17REA015
Research Team Contact Details	
Principal Investigator Details	Other Investigator/Supervisor Details
Ms Ilana Bolingford	Professor Helen Partridge
Email: [REDACTED]	Email: [REDACTED]
Mobile: [REDACTED]	Telephone: [REDACTED]
Statement of Consent	
By signing below, you are indicating that you:	
• Have read and understood the information document regarding this project. • Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction. • Understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team. • Understand that the interview/s will be audio recorded. • Understand that I will be provided with a copy of the interview transcript for my perusal and comment, and that these comments will become part of the data collected in the project. • Understand that you are free to withdraw before the finalization of the thesis, without comment or penalty. • Understand that demographic data will be collected for the purposes of the study and may be used in future publications. • Understand that you can contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Coordinator on (07) 4631 2690 or email ethics@usq.edu.au if you do have any concern or complaint about the ethical conduct of this project. • Are over 18 years of age. • Agree to participate in the project.	
Participant Name	
Participant Signature	
Page 1 of 2	

Date

Please return this sheet to a Research Team member prior to undertaking the interview.

APPENDIX C

Interview questions

The questions used for the interviews are listed below.

Pilot study questions

1. Can you tell me about your experiences with research impact and engagement?
2. How do you define research impact?
3. Can you describe research engagement in your own words?
4. What do you think is the most important mission for academics?
5. What's your most present problem in relation to research impact and engagement?
6. What in your experience has been the most negative aspect of research impact and engagement?
7. Can you tell me about your experiences of translating your research for a non-academic audience?

Main study questions

The same as the pilot study with the addition of the first question.

1. Can you tell me what a normal working week looks like for you?
2. Can you tell me about your experiences with research impact and engagement?
3. How do you define research impact?
4. Can you describe research engagement in your own words?
5. What do you think is the most important mission for academics?
6. What's your most present problem in relation to research impact and engagement?
7. What in your experience has been the most negative aspect of research impact and engagement?
8. Can you tell me about your experiences of translating your research for a non-academic audience?

Theoretical sampling questions

The main study questions were asked as were the following questions to develop the emerging categories.

BOTH ECR and PROF

- BOTH - Tell me about your experiences working with people outside of academia.

Probing

- Where do these collaborations generally start?
- Previous participants have discussed the concept of being an expert - has your experience with engagement and impact been around expertise?

- BOTH - What are your experiences in relation to learning from others as an academic?

- BOTH - How does your law school's culture influence your engagement and impact goals?

Probing

- have you experienced interdisciplinary research? How has this experience aided your engagement and impact strategy (ONLY if mentioned)

- BOTH - Tell me about your experiences with publishing.

Probing

- Other participants have experienced push-back from their universities around publishing in professional journals. Has this been your experience?

- BOTH - Tell me about how teaching and research intersect for you.

Probing

- Other participants have said they see teaching and research as linked – is this your experience?

PROF only – Did you feel more positive about teaching once you had established your career as a law academic?

PROFS

- Tell me about your experiences working at different law schools (*may also answer some gaps in the culture memo*)

Probing

- Have you always felt supported by your dean/head of school/institution around your research agenda?

ECR

- How do you view success as an academic?

Probing

Do you want to have impact?

Is there anything stopping you from having impact?

- Tell me about your teaching experiences – how do they fit with your engagement and impact plans?
- Tell me about the impact your workload has on engagement and impact

Probing

- How do you ensure you fit your research into your working week?

APPENDIX D

Memo reflections pilot interviews

Below I have listed the reflections following each pilot interview. These reflections were undertaken after each interview for each participant of the study.

Memo reflection for interview 1: 28/2/17 – Professor Paul Miller

I thought it was interesting that the first question I asked, 'Can you tell me about your experiences with impact and engagement?' led to Professor Miller wanting to first define what he thinks impact and engagement are. I also liked how I mentioned something Professor Miller said earlier on about publishing for certain audiences, which spurred further discussion around other elements that weren't originally discussed.

What went well:

Letting the participant talk while I simply encouraged or nodded in agreement.

Allowing the participant to define things and discuss their experiences and thoughts openly. Following up on items of interest, which led to further development of these points.

What could be better:

Trying to rephrase words used by participants in the same context in which they used them.

Memo reflection for interview 2: 6/3/17 – Dr Hannah Kirby

I think the opening question works well as I found with this interview, like the previous interview, the participant chose to define what they consider to be research impact and engagement before going on to talk about further issues. I think making them define what they think impact and engagement is up front is important for developing further questions as the interview goes on.

What went well:

The participant talked succinctly about their research engagement and impact without going off topic. I attempted to match the probing questions to follow up on what they had previously said or when I wanted to gather more information about what they had said.

What didn't go well:

Unfortunately, I am sick today! However, I felt that the interview covered everything I intended to cover and touched on some similar issues as to what they first interview touched on. The questions will be further developed for the main study, considering some of the issues touched on in these pilot interviews.

Memo reflection for interview 3: 27/4/17 – Professor Jane Lambert

The opening question enabled the participant to talk about her experiences clearly and succinctly. I did, however, notice that she was mainly explaining her experiences in relation to research engagement rather than research impact, hence I decided later to ask her to define research impact in her own words. Later in the interview, she also mentioned that she wants to be known for engaging and that impact is the result of someone else using your work which you cannot control. So, after she said this, I understood why she was more focused on engagement as she sees this as the most important way to potentially achieve impact.

What went well:

This was a great interview. Professor Lambert talked really well about her experiences, and it was great to hear about her broad experiences with law-makers, regulatory bodies and certain industries. I feel like her experiences are shaped by the fact that she has worked in various universities. She is also a very personable and approachable person, which was wonderful. I think the fact that I don't work with her helped too as she doesn't know my background and what I do in my current role so she didn't have any biases. I also loved how she talked about her experiences at different universities and how different universities approach things like benchmarking and research and engagement. Overall, this was a great interview and a fantastic addition to my data collection.

What didn't go well:

I did want her to talk more about engaging with judges and she did talk a bit more on this but maybe I could have gone further?