

**CAUL Strategic Plan  
Report to CAUL**

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<b>Section</b>	IV. Collaboration and International Engagement
<b>Action</b>	Ensure CAUL representation on groups seeking to influence regulatory reform, especially in relation to information policy such as: copyright, academic and other networks, higher education, eResearch, funding, etc.
<b>Responsibility</b>	Executive
<b>Time-line</b>	Ongoing
<b>Activity since last report</b>	<p><b>Middleware Action Planning and Strategy Project (MAPS)</b></p> <p>As reported at the September CAUL meeting in Perth, MAPS surveyed the sector to “stocktake” the middleware within the sector and identify gaps and plans for future development.</p> <p>The Project Officer and Chair released the first draft of the Middleware Roadmap on 21 March, 2007. The report was circulated to the CAUL Executive for feedback. Comments were called for by 5 April, 2007.</p> <p>An excerpt of the feedback submitted by the CAUL representative on MAPS follows:</p> <p>The report reads as a justification for the creation of the Australian Access Federation (AAF) rather than an analysis of the state of middleware and a roadmap for its future implementation. There should be a presentation of the roadmap (timeline) for filling the gaps identified in the survey. In addition, an estimate of the time it will take for a single institution to Shibbolise and PKI-ise its systems, resources and infrastructure would be beneficial to create expectations about the timeframe for addressing Australia’s middleware needs.</p> <p>The location and reporting relationship of the Australian Access Federation (AAF) to AusCERT (as recommended in the report) will be somewhat contentious. My opinion is that while AusCERT is a highly respected organisation (and I am not completely clear on its structure) is it not one jointly owned by the entire sector, as say the Australian Academic Research Network (AARNet) is? If not, AARNet will serve as a better location for the AAF.</p> <p>eResearch has an entire dimension not covered in the report and that is the sharing of and access to quality research. All of the scenarios covered relate to the researcher as content developer, not content consumer and this is an essential dimension for middleware to facilitate. Related to this is the slow adoption of Shibboleth internationally. As a middleware platform there are high expectations that this will open-up resources if not completely, then to a very significant extent. However the reality is that there are a relatively few number of pilot participants reconfiguring systems to utilise this form of authentication and the real workload of “Shibbolising” all relevant resources is unknown. If it is large, many of the objects of the Middleware Action Planning and Strategy and AAF will take years to realise leading to further fragmentation in research practices relating to the creation and consumption of quality research outputs. Additionally, it is not clear whether the copyright management aspects of Shibboleth have been analysed fully</p>

	<p>and in an Australian context. In summary, there needs to be more detail on “the productizing of the software.” Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Where Shibboleth and PKI need to be implemented?</li> <li>- How long it will take?</li> <li>- How much it will take?</li> </ul> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <p>It might be good to have in the report a short description about how MAPS has addressed its objectives:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To identify middleware activity that has so far been undertaken within the Australian research and higher education sector             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ ie: refer to the AARNet site if this is an exhaustive map (I know this is presented in the report, however not as a specific reference to this objective of the group)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• To identify international middleware activity and best practices that could benefit Australia             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Not sure how this was addressed – perhaps through the CAMP . . . then the following applies</li> </ul> </li> <li>• To commission position papers from domain experts within a number of domains of middleware activity             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Could be evidenced through a summary of the Middleware CAMP in the Appendix</li> </ul> </li> <li>• To develop a draft roadmap for middleware activities to support research and higher education in Australia             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The report presents an action plan, however has not presented a roadmap. In IT terms roadmaps are typically presented as timelines</li> </ul> </li> <li>• To disseminate the draft roadmap widely and seek feedback from the sector</li> <li>• To produce a completed roadmap and action plan             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ I think the roadmap is missing</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Finally, the report indicates the European Union is relying on Shibboleth which does not meet all eResearch needs and so PKI + Shibboleth are presented as solutions. However our process has not determined whether or not PKI + Shibboleth will exhaustively address the gaps either. Ticking off in a roadmap on what Shibboleth and PKI will resolve will assist in this regard. This may be achieved if we map the survey results to the examples of middleware, although there may be further analysis needed.</p>
<b>Achievements since last report</b>	Release of Final Report.
<b>Publicity, reports, publications since last report</b>	Nil – report only circulated to the Steering Committee.
<b>Plan for forthcoming activity</b>	Meeting between MAP Project Officer, Nick Tate, Chair and Jeff Murray CAUL representative at EduCause, Melbourne, 2007.
<b>CAUL budget implications</b>	Nil.
<b>Recommendations to CAUL</b>	To note the report and feedback and request a copy for comment prior to 26 June, 2007 if interested.