



To: Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University (cc Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and Deans of Colleges)

From: NECTAR representatives

Subject: Eligibility for Newly Announced ANU Futures Scheme

Date: March 8, 2017

Dear Colleagues,

We, the ANU Network for Early Career Teachers, Academics, and Researchers (NECTAR), are writing to express our concern about the terms of the recently announced "ANU Futures Scheme". Unfortunately, there are two fundamental aspects of the scheme as it is currently described that concern us. These are:

- **It will only be accessible by staff newly recruited to the University;**
- **It can be given only to tenure-track or permanent appointments.**

While NECTAR is encouraged that the ANU has pledged to show support for early- and mid-career researchers through the scheme, we are disappointed that it appears to discriminate against most of us through being ineligible to apply for funding. This ineligibility gives us the impression that we are completely overlooked, regardless of our efforts and achievements. We are unsure as to why funding is only available for new hires, given one of the stated aims of the scheme is to "*retain* world leading EMCRs." We suggest that the Futures Scheme should reward the efforts and achievements of current EMCRs by funding the best researchers, whether they are newly hired or currently employed at the ANU.

Our second issue with the scheme is the criterion for being offered a tenure-track or permanent appointment. In many schools, the number of ECRs who hold a permanent/tenure-track position is as low as one or even zero, with no prospect of any appearing soon. While we appreciate that this scheme may be intended to encourage schools to create tenure-track positions for EMCRs, it places the onus on the schools to create and fund them. This seems unlikely given that similar schemes, such as those offered by ARC and NHMRC, have not succeeded in encouraging ANU schools to appoint permanent early/mid career staff. Many schools do not have enough budget to open new positions. With this term of eligibility, many EMCRs become ineligible to apply for this grant, not because they are not good enough, but because their schools do not have enough budget for permanent positions. We believe it is totally unfair.

Finally, we feel that the definition of "Early- to Mid-Career" as being up to 15 years since PhD graduation is too broad, as this could easily extend to Level E appointees. We feel that limiting the eligibility to levels A, B and C better reflects early- to mid-career researchers.

Please note that we are writing this letter on behalf of hundreds of EMCRs throughout the University, who have raised their serious concerns to NECTAR.

Yours faithfully, NECTAR