

Comments in response to the ARC Linkage Projects Scheme Consultation Paper (January 2010) provided by the Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery (Australia & New Zealand) - 8 February 2010

Question: Do you support the ARC proposal to change the type of proposals invited to be submitted in each round of the *Linkage Projects* scheme?

Response: DISAGREE

Although we appreciate the administrative concerns of the ARC and RAOs it is likely to be challenging to separate the APAI process from the Linkage Process. The involvement of students in the projects at all stages is optimal to achieving the benefits of the linkage research process that results in pragmatic, translational research. This disconnect and potential not to attract an APAI may result in increased requests of salaries for research personnel to offset the risk of not being able to identify an appropriate APAI. The potential of attracting a potentially suitable APAI from industry to undertake this position may ensue from this scheduling. In essence we do not have an issue with an annual process but rather the disconnect between the APAI process and the Linkage Project process. Although challenging, a single application period may be useful. In leveraging funding from Industry, it is also useful to have a strong link between the project and APAI position. If the Linkage Project was funded and an APAI was unavailable, this would propose serious risks to the project.

Question: Do you have any comments on the proposed process for APAI requests

We applaud the monitoring of APAI completion rates and project outcomes, particularly aligned to the expectations of the Linkage partners. Separating the APAI and Linkage project application processes may impact on the appropriateness of the student to undertake the industry related projects- largely related to scheduling of announcements. In addition, some less research intensive research institutions may result in less numbers of APAs and therefore projects in industry in these catchment areas may be disadvantaged. This may particularly be the case in regional centres where industry projects and innovative solutions are most often needed. We are also concerned that metrics applied by Universities may limit access of individuals with 'non-traditional' academic career paths- such as nurses and midwives who may desire to pursue an APAI path for HDR.

Question: Do you support the introduction of two levels of support required for APAs by partner organisations?

Response: AGREE

Question: Do you support the timeline being considered for APAI requests? Do you support the timeline being considered for the full round of the Linkage scheme?

Response: DISAGREE

Although we recognise the rationale for the scheduling of Linkage project outcomes, we see some issues in the gap between October (APAI) and June (Linkage) projects. This time may result in challenges in project development, intellectual ownership and meeting the requirements of HDR and the timelines of the project. The inability to access an APAI on the basis of a successful project may also be challenging given this time difference. Again our issues are related not to the annual submission and review process but rather the disconnect between the APAI and Project. Aligning these is critical in undertaking timely and strategic research while ensuring the APAI has access to a scholarly environment.