Friday, 20 October 2023

Chief Executive Officer

Australian Research Council

GPO Box 2702

Canberra ACT 2601

**RE: DE25XXXXXX – [insert name]**

Dear Ms Zielke,

Dr [insert name] has the full support of The University of Newcastle for their Discovery Early Career Researcher Award 2025 application. [insert name] [insert 1-2 sentences regarding research focus and general impact of researcher’s work or field of research]

***Outline the area of core or emerging research strength*** *(1 paragraph)*

May include:

* brief summary of project goals and benefits
* what the project builds on and work that has been done to bring this project to this point
* overview of the project/compelling summary of why this project and why now for this candidate
* Potential national benefit and impact of this project

**Why this University** (1-2 paragraphs)

**Alignment with University Strengths and Goals**

The University of Newcastle’s position is a global leader in academic excellence, with consistent growth in the QS World University Rankings over the past decade, most recently ranked amongst the top 173 in the world (2023). The University has developed a reputation for high quality research outputs recognised by the Excellence in Research Australia assessment, which awarded the University the highest possible '5' rating across 22 research fields, placing us in the top eight Australian universities for research quality 'well above world standard' (2018, ERA).

Dr [insert name]’s proposed project aligns with The University of Newcastle’s Strategic Plan, *Looking Ahead.* *This paragraph should clearly describe the research environment. Details here may include:*

* *Summary of University of Newcastle discipline strengths related to the project/candidate*
* *Refer to* [*Uni rankings*](https://www.newcastle.edu.au/our-uni/rankings) *and* [*ERA rankings*](https://www.newcastle.edu.au/research/support/services/performance) *and the UON* [*Engagement and Impact Toolkit*](https://uonstaff.sharepoint.com/sites/ResearchEI)
* *If the candidate/ proposal is aligned with a Research Centre and/or the Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources (NIER)/Hunter Medical Research Institute (HMRI), then applicants should also detail the advantage brought about by affiliations with these centres and institutes, in particular opportunities for rapid translation of research outcomes;*
* *Align and relate the proposed project to above strengths and rankings and how the proposal complements strategic direction*
* *The existing and or emerging research strengths and strategic directions of the University, generally at the School/College level, particularly within the area in which the research proposal is to be situated*

**Resources to be provided to support the candidate**

**University of Newcastle Support for the DECRA candidate**

The University of Newcastle will provide cash support totalling [insert value] to Dr [insert name]’s DECRA in addition to significant in-kind support.

*Salary Gap – select relevant section*

1. *Ongoing employee* use of salary and ongoing support

Dr [insert name] is currently employed as a Level [X] academic in the [school/college]. This three-year fellowship will enable….. The salary currently provided by the University will be used to [discretion of School to complete]. The 0.2FTE allocated to the administering institution over the life of the Fellowship will be used to develop Dr [insert name]’s career skills and independence by [school to complete by looking at teaching/admin/other skills to support an independent and well-rounded academic]. At the conclusion of the DECRA, Dr [insert name] will return to their/his/her ongoing position and will be supported to maintain a high research profile and take a leading role in training the next generation of scholars. The University will provide a Momentum Grant (pending appropriate performance), to support this transition, with $5,000 cash and 0.4FTE salary for the first-year post-fellowship, the later can be used as teaching relief or to appoint a 0.4FTE research academic in the applicant’s research field.

1. *External employee salary gap and future employment*

Dr [insert name] will be appointed as a Level [X] academic in the [school/college] and the University will provide cash support of $X in total over the Award period towards the salary gap ($X p.a. x 3 years). The 0.2FTE allocated to the administering institution over the life of the Award will be used to develop Dr [insert name]’s career skills by [school to complete by looking at teaching/admin/other skills to support an independent and well-rounded academic]. At the conclusion of the DECRA, the University will award Dr [insert name] with a Momentum Grant (pending appropriate performance), consisting of $5,000 cash and a 0.4 FTE salary. Given Dr [insert name]’s outstanding research profile, it is expected that their/he/she would be competitive for a continuing position within the University beyond the Award.

*PhD Students -* ***Domestic***

The University will provide support for up to two domestic Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students including fully funding one 3.5-year stipend (at $32,000 p.a.) in addition to the one ARC funded stipend. For each HDR the University will provide a support package that includes project support ($1,500 p.a.), a laptop ($1,300) and relocation costs in year 1 ($1,500). The University will also waive the tuition fee for each domestic HDR (valued at $19,550 p.a.).

Capacity Building Package

The University will invest $5,000 p.a. cash to support [insert name] to build the research infrastructure and capacity required to establish their/his/her research program as an area of strategic strength within the University.

Mentoring

University of Newcastle DECRA candidates will be actively engaged with the research leadership of the University throughout the Award period and beyond. This support will complement their highly developed research skills with the opportunities, career planning and related interpersonal skills necessary to transition from a leading researcher to an independent research leader.

Dr [insert name] will be supported throughout the Award with monthly individual mentoring sessions with Professor [insert name], a leading University of Newcastle research academic in xxx. This will involve working with their mentor to develop and activate a 5- and 10-year career trajectory plan that includes expanding independent and collaborative research, broadens strategic thinking, grows Dr [insert name]’s research profile, networks and collaborations, and positions the Dr [insert name] to become an independent research leader within and outside the University of Newcastle.

Other in-kind support

* + *For new employees* - the University will coordinate onboarding activities to ensure the candidate is provided with appropriate tools, information and resources in readiness to commence employment with the University.
	+ Tailored training opportunities with Research Advantage, an initiative at the University designed to foster the development of an engaged research community, empowering academics at all career levels to reach their full potential.
	+ Media and promotion activities to raise awareness of the research capability and achievements of the applicant among internal and external stakeholders. This will be co-ordinated by the Research Advantage unit of the R&ID
	+ Leadership and mentoring program with annual meeting with the PVC(I&E). *Where appropriate* The University’s Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise and Integrated Innovation network teams will support [insert name] including working with them to identify appropriate pathways for commercialisation and research translation, broader industry and partner collaboration, and enterprise skill development and new venture creation.

The University of Newcastle strongly supports Dr [insert name]’s DECRA application and welcomes the opportunity provided by the ARC to support and promote research that benefits both Australia and the University.