



Open Letter

7 January 2016

TO:

Professor Gareth Evans  
Chancellor  
Australian National University  
[gareth.evans@anu.edu.au](mailto:gareth.evans@anu.edu.au)

Professor Brian Schmidt  
Vice Chancellor  
Australian National University  
[brian.schmidt@anu.edu.au](mailto:brian.schmidt@anu.edu.au)

Professor Veronica Taylor  
Dean  
ANU College of Asia & the Pacific  
[veronica.taylor@anu.edu.au](mailto:veronica.taylor@anu.edu.au)

Dear Prof Evans, Prof Schmidt and Prof Taylor,

I am writing to you on behalf of the World Council of Anthropological Associations to request that you intervene to prevent pending staff cuts at the Australian National University's College of Asia and the Pacific. We have been informed that as many as one third of members of the School of Culture, History and Language (CHL) may face dismissal next year. This would be unfortunate for a number of reasons.

Many of the anthropologists (and other scholars) at the School are prominent members of their discipline with significant international reputations. They make a significant contribution to enhancing ANU's reputation as a centre of scholarship and research excellence. The University's reputation and ability to attract top-tier academics would be severely impacted over a long period of time if the proposed cuts are enacted.

Of particular note is the high degree of expertise on Asia to be found at the School. I am sure that you do not need reminding of the importance of Asian societies and cultures in our increasingly globalised era. This expertise provides an ability to contribute to policy making and to prepare ANU graduates for engaging with Asia. Additionally, the focus on Asian studies means that the School, and by extension ANU, is strongly placed to attract research funding and donations in support of its scholarly activities. From that perspective, losing scholars of the quality to be found within the School will likely not serve the long-term interests of the University.

We hope that you will take the time to reconsider ANU's plans for the CHL, as we are convinced that the long-term interests of your university will be best served by preserving the scholarly integrity of the School.

Sincerely,



Vesna Vucinic Neskovic, Chair

On behalf of the Organizing Committee of the WCAA

[www.wcaanet.org](http://www.wcaanet.org)

Professor

School of Philosophy, University of Belgrade

11000 Belgrade, Serbia

T. +381 11 3089098

M. [vvucinic@f.bg.ac.rs](mailto:vvucinic@f.bg.ac.rs), [vvucinic4@gmail.com](mailto:vvucinic4@gmail.com)