



26th September 2012

Prof David Day
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Flinders University of SA

Claire Jessup

BBiotech(Hons); PhD
Vice Chancellor's Postdoctoral Research Fellow

Human Physiology
School of Medicine
GPO Box 2100
Adelaide SA 5001
Telephone +61 8 Author Phone
claire.jessup@flinders.edu.au
Facsimile +61 8 Author Fax
www.flinders.edu.au

Cc: Prof Michael Barber, Vice-Chancellor; Prof Michael Kidd, Executive Dean of Health Sciences; Prof Keryn Williams, Associate Dean (Research) - Faculty of Health Sciences; Prof Paul Worley, Dean of School of Medicine; Prof Simon Brookes, Head of Cluster - Flinders Medical Science and Technology; Dr Marguerite Evans-Galea, Chair of Early/Mid Career Researcher Forum – AAS; Prof Bob Williamson, Secretary for Science Policy – AAS;

Dear Prof Day,

RE: NHMRC and AAS Early-Mid career research meetings – Canberra Sept 2012

I write to thank you for supporting my recent visit to Canberra to participate in two important research meetings.

“*Science Pathways: Getting Science of the National Agenda*” was the inaugural meeting of the Early-Mid Career Researcher Forum of the Australian Academy of Science (AAS). We were addressed by Prof Ian Chubb (Chief Scientist of Australia) and Prof Brian Schmidt (Nobel Prize winner in Physics 2011), as well as leaders in research, policy and industry. Further, through a number of workshop sessions, we discussed the current issues facing early-mid career researchers in Australia and contributed to a publication that will be submitted to government. I congratulate Dr Marguerite Evans-Galea and Prof Bob Williamson for organising a truly interactive forum.

There were over 130 attendees from diverse disciplines including physics, economics, public health and biomedical research. I was the only Flinders University attendee, and there were no representatives from the University of Adelaide or the University of SA. On the other hand, Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research had 7 representatives, RMIT had 11 and Western Australia contributed 8 attendees.

I was also able to attend the first NHMRC *Postdoctoral Reference Group Symposium – Empowerment through knowledge and networks*. Here, we heard from the CEO of the NHMRC, Prof Warwick Anderson, along with members of the NHMRC Research Committee. For my research area, diabetes, the opportunity to meet and interact with people of this calibre – people who will be assessing my grants and fellowship applications – was invaluable.

It was clear to me that forums such as these will play a role in shaping future national funding opportunities and research policy. I believe that to remain competitive for national research funding, we need to ensure that Flinders has a voice at these meetings. One way to achieve this would be to send the incoming Vice-Chancellor's research fellows (one from each faculty) to the AAS meeting in their first year. As well as representing Flinders on a national level, this will serve to educate our fellows about the funding schemes they should be striving for, and how they can make themselves most competitive for Category 1 funding during their time at Flinders.

This could be achieved through funding each person separately or, as was done by some of the Universities this year, become a meeting sponsor which includes a number of registrations. The best contact regarding possibilities is ecr@science.org.au.

Many thanks once again for this opportunity,

Dr Claire Jessup

Vice-chancellor's Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Department of Human Physiology, Flinders University of SA