

## Submission Number 317 - Prof Roland De Marco

I attended yesterday's McKeon Review consultation in Brisbane, and I want to add the following comments and advice to those offered by others at the meeting.

Regarding the new restrictions on researchers only holding one ARC Discovery Project grant when holding NHMRC funding, I am aware of several researchers who work at the intersection between traditional scientific and medical research who hold both NHMRC and ARC grants, but are driven by the rule change to steer away from the ARC to the NHMRC since NHMRC grant sizes are larger and NHMRC Fellowships are transparent and more plentiful. I expect that this behavior will be widespread amongst this group of researchers, and it will place an additional burden on the NHMRC grant system. In my view, the solution to this problem is simple; lift the restriction on ARC Discovery Project grants.

Regarding the issue of greater flexibility in the management of NHMRC Fellowship funding, I commend to the NHMRC the system rolled out by the ARC in 2011 where they renamed Fellowships as Awards [e.g., Discovery Early Career Awards (DECRA) and Discovery Outstanding Researcher Awards (DORA)]. Evidently, this change in nomenclature allows greater flexibility in the management of the DECRA and DORA funding. For instance, in 2010, when the ARC CEO did a presentation on ARC grants at the University of Western Australia, she advocated that Award holders could use the funding to backfill their position while there were on maternity leave, or they could take a temporary teaching position in a department and use the Award funding to backfill their position, etc. The flexibility offered to the Award holder is excellent, and the NHMRC should consider a similar change to their system.