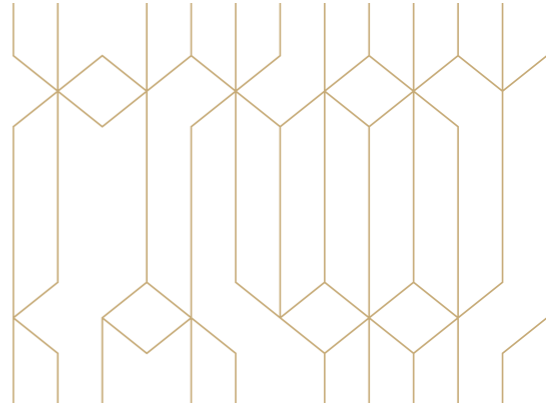


From the Vice-Chancellor and President



Dear colleagues,

As has been widely reported, many universities around Australia have identified inaccuracies in how they have calculated entitlements which has resulted in underpayment of staff wages in recent years.

I am writing to all staff today to confirm that unfortunately Australian Catholic University has not been immune to this problem.

ACU became aware of this issue in late 2022 and advised the Audit and Risk Committee in May 2023 of anomalies around the potential underpayment of sessional academic staff in one School. We then began an extensive process of audit and analysis across all sessional staff over the last seven years.

I regret to inform you that the extensive audit has identified potential underpayments of approximately \$3.6 million affecting approximately 1,100 sessional staff across the university from 2016 to 2023. These primarily relate to unpaid or underpaid entitlements for higher rates of payment where sessional staff have PhD qualifications or are undertaking subject/unit coordination duties or lecturer-in-charge duties.

We will directly contact all former and current staff who we know have been affected by this so we can apologise to them, advise them of the amount owed to them and reassure them that the underpayment will be paid in full, with interest, as soon as possible.

We have disclosed this matter to the Fair Work Ombudsman and we have also advised the National Tertiary Education Union and Community and Public Sector Union, as the unions party to the ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement (Agreement). We have also advised

the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, the Australian Taxation Office and UniSuper.

As a result of this finding, we initiated a major project in late 2023 to conduct a comprehensive analysis of our obligations with the employee entitlements in our Agreement. The Chief Operating Officer, Provost and Chief People Officer have been leading a steering committee to assess and address the situation, with close oversight from the Senate. Due to its complexity, management has engaged external advice from Deloitte and Minter Ellison to ensure correct interpretation and application of all entitlements under the Agreement.

You deserve to be paid correctly for your work and it is our responsibility to ensure you are being paid correctly.

On behalf of the university, I would like to sincerely and unequivocally apologise on behalf of the university and the Senate to every employee – past and present.

ACU is committed to wage integrity, in accordance not only with our legal obligations but also with our dedication to upholding the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. Our mission as a Catholic university commits us to treat every human person with dignity and respect.

What happens next?

We have been working very hard to correct the underpayment and there is still more to do. The steering committee will continue to thoroughly investigate and address the issue that led to this problem and ensure that additional measures are implemented to avoid future underpayments. We will continue to engage directly with the Fair Work Ombudsman as well as engage the National Tertiary Education Union and Community and Public Sector Union.

We have published a dedicated page on our [website](#) where more information can be found, including comprehensive FAQs and contact details.

You may wish to discuss your personal circumstances with us directly. Our Service Central team, supported by People and Capability, is available to take your call on +61 7 3623 7272 (select option 4). Alternatively, please email entitlements@acu.edu.au and we will respond.

Again, please know we are deeply sorry that this underpayment has occurred. Thank you for your patience and understanding while we correct this issue and continue this very important work.

Regards,

Professor Zlatko Skrbis

Vice-Chancellor and President

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I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. I honour our Elders past, present and emerging.

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