

14 January 2016

Hon. Gareth Evans, Chancellor  
Professor Brian Schmidt, Vice Chancellor  
Professor Veronica Taylor, Dean of ANU College of Asia & the Pacific  
The Australian National University  
Acton ACT 2601  
Australia

Dear Chancellor Evans, Vice Chancellor Schmidt, and Dean Taylor,

The South Asian Studies Association of Australia was formed in the late 1960s and has worked as a network of scholars in Australia and New Zealand who specialise on South Asia. SASAA represents the interests of our members in various fora, supports academic events, and publishes *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, which is acknowledged globally as a leading peer reviewed journal of South Asian studies. Our Association also includes members based in India, the United States and Europe several of whom are scholars with outstanding international reputations.

On behalf of the Association, I write to you to express our concerns as to possible budget cuts and job losses at The School of Culture, History and Language (CHL) in 2016. It is our understanding that up to one-third of staff may be dismissed, even after a glowing review of the School. If this is the case we urge you to reconsider this decision. The School has a well-deserved reputation for excellence in teaching and research focused on Asia and the Pacific, inclusive of an outstanding group of South Asianists. South Asian Studies at CHL has an illustrious history and at present is at the cutting edge of research and teaching on the subcontinent, especially in history, anthropology and literary studies. During the last decade South Asia expertise across Australian Universities has been weakened severely by a wave of retirements and, in most instances, these positions have not been replaced. As a consequence, budget cuts or job losses at CHL would cause irreparable harm to efforts to re-build South Asian studies in this country. The ANU is one of the few Universities in Australia to offer Hindi and as an Association we are especially concerned that there is no diminution in course offerings or the quality of language teaching at the School. Academics at the School are associated with the South Asia Research Institute <http://sari.anu.edu.au/> which, again, is a spearheading institution in Australia for interdisciplinary social science research focused on the region. Several CHL staff members hold leadership positions in the Association and our flagship journal, and are deeply involved in nurturing the next generation of research students and organising conferences for the creation of a more fruitful exchange between Australia and South Asia. For all of these reasons we call on you to continue to support the excellent teaching and research at the School and to be conscious of its national significance as a knowledge-base on South Asia and the Asia-Pacific region.

Sincerely,  
South Asian Studies Association of Australia

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