

ANU Philosophy Grant Success



The School of Philosophy at the ANU has in recent weeks been awarded a total of over AUD1.5m over four years for fundamental research in philosophy. Associate Professor Katie Steele and Dr. Rachael Brown were recipients of ANU Futures grants of \$409,000 and \$450,000 respectively. Dr. Bronwyn Finnigan and Dr. Matthew Kopec were awarded Australian Research Council Discovery Early Career Researcher awards for \$380,000 and \$360,000 respectively. ANU philosophers Professor Christian Barry and Honorary Professor John Broome were also involved in a successful UNSW Discovery bid, awarded \$360,000. Head of School, Associate Professor Seth Lazar, comments: 'These successes amount to a tremendous vote of confidence, from the

University and the Australian Research Council, in the new generation of philosophers at the ANU. They also show the promise of maintaining and building on the ANU's long-running global leadership in areas such as philosophy of the sciences, decision theory, philosophy of cognitive science, and moral and political philosophy. With Finnigan's success, as well as Koji Tanaka's recently-started Future Fellowship, ANU is now making a name for itself in Asian Philosophy as well.' Lazar noted further that every one of the eight early- and mid-career appointments to the school over the last eight years has been awarded (alongside numerous other grants), either a DECRA, a DORA, a Future Fellowship, or an ANU Futures grant.

Causation, Predictive Models, and Uncertainty



Katie Steele joined the ANU from LSE in 2016. Her grant, awarded under the ANU Futures scheme that provides large start up grants to recent appointments at the university, has four interrelated prongs, all drawing on Steele's expertise in decision theory, philosophy of science, and moral philosophy. She will work on how to frame a decision problem; everyday theories of causation; inference from predictive models; and ethics and risk, in particular exploring the prospects of a more realistic consequentialism.

Animal Cognition and Evo-Devo



Rachael Brown took her PhD at ANU in 2013; after a postdoc at the Rotman Institute, she joined the ANU from Macquarie in 2016. She is director of the Centre for Philosophy of the Sciences, and her ANU Futures award will support the activities of the Centre, particularly relating to Rachael's research interests in the evolution of cognition and behaviour; the relationship between Evo-devo and the Neo-Darwinian Synthesis; model-based reasoning in biology and philosophy; and methodological issues in the study of animal behaviour and cognition.

Moral Psychology and Buddhist Ethics



Bronwyn Finnigan joined ANU in 2014. Since that time, she has helped massively increase student enrolments, more than doubling the size of the School's flagship intro course. Her DECRA, to begin mid-2018, will investigate the ethical and moral psychological foundations of Buddhist thought. It aims to critically analyse the theoretical differences between Buddhist philosophical traditions to reveal a plurality of theoretical grounds on which Western thinkers can embrace Buddhist insights. The project is expected to advance intellectual engagement between Buddhist and Western ethicists, and to demonstrate the importance of a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to global philosophy.

Making More Effective Groups



Matt Kopec, who has been an honorary lecturer at the ANU, joins full time for his DECRA after a postdoc with CAPPE in Canberra. His project aims to devise strategies that a wide range of groups, such as those in healthcare, science, and business can use to improve their judgements and decisions. It begins with a philosophical approach to develop a practical framework for understanding and working with groups. This interdisciplinary examination will include devising concrete guidelines that various groups can use to improve the quality of their enquiries and decisions.

Ethics, responsibility and the carbon budget



Christian Barry, together with John Broome, in a project with Garrett Cullity (Adelaide), and led by Jeremy Moss (UNSW), will aim to provide a rigorous ethical framework for dividing the world's remaining 'carbon budget' (CB). To avoid climate change the world must drastically limit its emissions of greenhouse gases. The project will develop a new analysis of how our assumptions concerning risk and harm shape the CB. It will also provide a new understanding of how future emission rights should be allocated given that countries have emitted vastly different quantities of greenhouse gases in the past. The project will analyse how the CB will impact the climate transition plans of countries such as Australia.