THE HON CHRISTOPHER PYNE MP
Minister for Education
Leader of the House

MEDIA RELEASE

200 new opportunities for early-career researchers

8 November 2013

Minister for Education, Hon Christopher Pyne MP, has today announced more than $75.7 million for 200 new research projects to be undertaken by some of Australia’s best early-career researchers.

The funding has been announced as part of the Australian Research Council’s (ARC) Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA) scheme.

Mr Pyne said he was pleased to announce the award recipients today and noted the importance of supporting young researchers.

“One of our challenges is to inspire the next generation of researchers and it is important to ensure that funding schemes like these are in place to kick-start the careers of a possible future Nobel Laureate or Prime Minister’s Prize winner,” Mr Pyne said.

“This funding scheme provides support for and advances promising early career researchers. It also promotes enhanced opportunities for diverse career pathways.”

Some of the projects that will be undertaken by the DECRA awardees, for commencement in 2014, include:

- Investigating how we structure and access word meaning in the ‘mental lexicon’ and how this lexicon changes in childhood and old age. Researchers will use an innovative computational network model of a large part of the lexicon and apply it to large-scale studies with children and patients whose lexicon is affected, such as those with Alzheimer’s disease.
- Exploring internet usage by primary schools students, who are increasingly engaging in virtual worlds with social network functions. Researchers will map the benefits, risks and competencies associated with these usage trends and develop recommendations for parents and policy makers.
- Enhancing our understanding of the interactive role that plant debris and soil microbes play in reducing unwanted material in urban water treatment systems. Through this understanding researchers will develop optimised low-energy, low-tech and low-maintenance treatment systems.

For more information about these funding outcomes please visit the [ARC website](https://www.arc.gov.au) or view the media announcement kit.

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