



COUNCIL FOR ADVANCEMENT
AND SUPPORT OF EDUCATION

The CASE Asia-Pacific Leadership Award recognises CASE member institution heads, presidents, vice-chancellors, chancellors, system heads, or other campus chief executive officers for outstanding efforts in promoting and supporting education and institutional advancement. Overall, nominees must demonstrate the ability to actively support advancement, create a vision and inspire others, establish a positive image for their institution while leading it to higher levels of success, increase their institution's stature in the community, and encourage innovation among employees.

Citation for 2021 CASE Asia-Pacific Leadership Award Recipient

**Professor Brian P. Schmidt AC FAA FRS
Vice-Chancellor & President, The Australian National University**

Professor Brian Schmidt is recognised globally as an accomplished vice-chancellor, a Nobel Prize laureate, and a leading astrophysicist. A natural leader through example, Professor Schmidt has a clear vision for ANU and the higher education sector, and he has advocated for it. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he demonstrated outstanding leadership and used his public profile as both a Nobel laureate and vice-chancellor to bring attention to the pivotal role universities are playing in the nation's recovery, making a strong case for strategic and sustainable funding.

He has called on and worked with the government to develop plans, in partnership with higher education institutions, with a view to safely allow international students and others to enter Australia. He has rallied his peers to challenge the government regarding the long-term impacts on funding. He has challenged the validity of the global ranking systems as they pressure institutional decision-making that may preferentially reward science and engineering, while overlooking critical areas such as teaching quality, humanities research, and history.

Leading by example to inspire change is at the core of Professor Schmidt's actions, and we are reminded of his selflessness, humility, and leadership demonstrated through his voluntarily taking reductions in salary. Not only when he became vice-chancellor, but again when the university sector experienced significant financial challenges over the last two years. He chose to take less and give more.

Professor Schmidt explicitly understands the role of advancement in higher education. Maintaining alumni engagement and philanthropic support are critical contributors to all aspects of his vision, and he has invested directly in the growth of advancement at ANU to match his aspirations and institutional goals. Choosing again to lead by example, Professor Schmidt has been a regular and generous donor to

multiple areas across ANU, including making significant contributions to support staff and student relief funds established during the pandemic. He has fiercely advocated for the value of philanthropy across the university, embracing the demands advancement work places on a vice-chancellor. The evidence clearly supports this as ANU has seen its philanthropic returns increase from \$7.49 million in 2016 to \$32.26 million in 2020.

Professor Schmidt reformed the ANU student admissions process, instituting a ground-breaking model to deliver a more diverse set of pathways to study, and encouraging students from across Australia to consider studying at the national university. This is a major contribution to access and equity. That same interest in equity extends to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. He established the ANU First Nations Portfolio, encouraging the integration of indigenous teaching and research across the university, and making a leading contribution to national policy in the relationship between Indigenous Australians and the nation.

At its heart, the ANU philanthropy effort supports an impressive array of scholarships for talented students, from the Tuckwell Scholarship Program to an innovative Rural and Regional Equity Scholarship program aimed at recruiting the best and brightest from across the country to attend ANU. In 2020, Professor Schmidt established the Kambri Scholars Program, providing holistic scholarship support for Indigenous Australians at ANU in perpetuity. His goal is to establish a \$50 million endowed fund for which he secured a \$25 million commitment from the university to match every donation to the program, dollar for dollar.

Professor Schmidt believes in the power of action, pushing the higher education sector to stand up for climate science and address climate change. He has led the university's commitment to the Below Zero Initiative, becoming the second university in the world to announce a significant below zero emissions strategy. This world-leading goal – to achieve net-zero emissions by 2025 – is ANU's collective commitment to climate change action and an initiative designed to lead by example and inspire change.

Professor Schmidt has championed stronger representation of women, First Nations people, and other underrepresented groups across the university and the sector. He is unequivocal in his commitment to the pursuit of excellence in research and the student experience, and cares deeply about the success and well-being of staff and students. He has led by example in every aspect of his role as vice-chancellor.

In recognition of Professor Schmidt's outstanding achievements in building a strong culture of advancement at The Australian National University and his inspiring leadership, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education proudly presents Professor Brian Schmidt with the CASE Asia-Pacific Leadership Award.