Q. I'm considering whether or not to choose the ACU National offer of an AWA, does it provide any potential benefits not otherwise available to a staff member?

A. Yes. A staff member who chooses to accept the offer of an AWA may potentially access any or all of a number of benefits that would otherwise not be available to her or him. Because of the newness of regulation of higher education sector employment through AWAs and its present regulation at ACU National, their number is currently small. However, it is expected that the range of benefits will expand over time, introducing greater flexibility and, where benefits can be accommodated, the potential for personal tailoring to a staff member’s needs by agreement making.

Currently the following benefits are available:

- **Salary averaging** - a staff member who works for less than 52 weeks a year (say, on a semester basis) may elect to average salary earned over a whole year to provide a predictable and consistent level of income. Please access the Interim Policy on Salary Averaging for General Staff for further details.

- **Merging annual leave loading into salary** - a staff member’s annual leave loading is paid as a component of fortnightly earnings across the whole year to marginally enhance take-home pay and superannuation contributions.

- **Encashment of long service leave** - a staff member may encash the value of all or part of her or his long service leave entitlement. Please access Interim Policy on Encashment of Long Service Leave for General Staff for further details.

- **“Purchase” of additional recreation leave** - a staff member with personal needs (eg: for child or elder care) may be permitted up to 10 days additional recreation leave over the year by foregoing an equivalent amount of salary. Please access the Interim Policy on the Purchase of Additional Annual Leave for Staff for further details.

- **Extended working hours - general staff member** - a general staff member may elect to work a 37.5 hours week - an extra 30 minutes a day - with annual workload, income and superannuation contributions increased by 7.14%. Access to expanded working hours is limited to those staff members working in Student Administration, the University Library and the Information Technology and Communication Directorate. Please access the Interim Policy on Expanded Working Hours for General Staff for further details.

- **Deferred salary scheme** – a staff member may receive 80% of annual salary for 4 years to fund a fifth year of leave using the foregone salary. Please access the Interim Policy on the Deferred Salary Scheme for Staff for further details.

- **Choosing a pathway to retirement** – a staff member may wish to fix a definite retirement date and to arrange conditions of employment which will provide a transitional arrangement tailored to their personal circumstances. Please access the Interim Pre-Retirement Contract, Fixed-Term Retirement Transition Contract and Post-Retirement Contract Policies for further details.

Notwithstanding the benefits and flexibilities of these options, the needs and capacities of local work areas will determine the conditions required to sustain them. However, their benefits and flexibilities will not be declined unreasonably wherever options can be implemented.

If you are interested in exploring the available options, there would be value in first privately discussing any that may interest you with your nominated supervisor or manager when considering whether or not to choose the ACU National offer of an AWA.