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In-principle agreement reached with global academic publisher Elsevier

The Council of Australasian University Librarians (CAUL) has reached an in-principle agreement with global academic publisher Elsevier.

The agreement is the final renegotiated agreement with the biggest four international academic journal publication companies and marks a substantial shift toward fair, sustainable and transparent access to research across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

Negotiations between CAUL and Elsevier restarted in December after pausing in November with the agreement of all Australian and New Zealand universities.

CAUL has secured a significantly improved agreement to start in 2026. The in-principle agreement delivers a substantial reduction in sector expenditure, uncapped hybrid open access publishing across the full Elsevier portfolio, including internationally renowned journals such as Cell Press and The Lancet, and other measures to begin addressing the inequities associated with previous legacy pricing models. Gold OA titles are not included in the agreement.

CAUL Open Access Negotiation Strategy Committee Chair and Deakin University Vice-Chancellor Professor Iain Martin said: “The new agreement meets many of the key objectives established at the outset of negotiations and addresses many of the longstanding issues associated with previous Elsevier agreements.

“Through this agreement, more than 10,000 ANZ research articles will be published openly with Elsevier in 2026, providing public access to our research for the communities we serve.”

Australian and New Zealand universities were bracing themselves for major disruption and a multi-year wait for a new agreement, with contingency plans being put in place to overcome the temporary loss of access to Elsevier’s 1659 academic journals, if a new agreement had not been reached.

Chair of CAUL’s Content Procurement Committee, Hero Macdonald, said: “In most international examples, achievements of this scale have only been secured through significant disruption and multi-year cancellations. I am delighted that we have worked constructively with Elsevier to achieve this outcome while maintaining uninterrupted access for our academic communities,” said Hero Macdonald, Chair of CAUL’s Content Procurement Committee.

The Elsevier agreement comes after CAUL, Universities Australia and Universities New Zealand recently announced new agreements with global academic publishers Springer Nature, Wiley and Taylor & Francis.

The agreements were negotiated under CAUL’s new trans-Tasman framework, established in response to rising institutional costs and long-standing inequities associated with subscription-based pricing and open access processing charges.

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“This year, we set out to negotiate four new agreements that would maximise open access publishing options for researchers in our region, at a more sustainable cost. With the Elsevier agreement now in place, we have delivered on that commitment,” Hero Macdonald said.

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