Date: 28 October 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with great enthusiasm that this letter supports Fatemeh Vazirian for the National Innovation Visa. As Fatemeh's doctoral supervisor at the University of Tasmania, I have observed exceptional intellect, originality, and a strong commitment to advancing research in chronic pain and neurodegenerative diseases.

Peer-reviewed published research conducted by Fatemeh represents an innovative contribution to neuroscience. The investigations have elucidated the complex interplay between chronic pain and neurodegenerative processes, providing compelling evidence that persistent pain may represent an early indicator of neurological decline. This line of research challenges conventional perspectives and opens new pathways for early detection and preventive neurology. A recent publication in *GeroScience*, a leading journal in gerontology, highlights the capacity to conduct rigorous and high-impact research that reshapes current understanding of neurological health across the lifespan.

Earlier studies, including a publication in a top-tier journal of clinical neurology, *Movement Disorders*, identified a robust association between chronic pain and Parkinson's disease, positioning Fatemeh as an emerging leader in this field. Continuing work involves large-scale, population-based analyses that integrate advanced epidemiological and statistical methods to uncover mechanisms connecting pain, neuroinflammation, and neurodegeneration.

In addition to scientific achievements, Fatemeh demonstrates exceptional analytical, leadership and communication skills. Complex datasets are managed with precision, advanced statistical modelling is applied effectively, and findings are translated into clinically relevant insights. The integration of biological concepts with data-driven evidence underscores an exceptional capacity to contribute meaningfully to translational neuroscience and health innovation.

Collaborative engagement, intellectual curiosity, and professionalism are defining features of Fatemeh's approach to research. Every project reflects analytical depth, methodological rigour, and a forward-thinking vision consistent with Australia's mission to foster excellence and innovation in science.

Fatemeh Vazirian is an outstanding emerging scientist in the field of neuroscience whose work has the potential to advance future directions in neurodegenerative disease prevention and management. I strongly support Fatemeh's application and have full confidence that Fatemeh will make a significant and enduring contribution to Australia's research and innovation landscape.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Dawn Aitken | Associate Professor

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