

# *EMERITUS* Vol 3 No 14

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## Australian universities in the Asian century

Every Australian university will be encouraged to send students to universities in Asia to ensure the next generation of Australian leaders is Asia-literate, the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research, Senator Chris Evans, said when commenting on the White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century*.

He went on to say that Australian universities already have close working relationships with partner institutions in the region—under the *Australia in the Asian Century* White Paper these relationships will be strengthened by the establishment of exchange arrangements with major Asian universities. Students will be able to gain credits for the study they undertake in Asia.

Universities will be supported to increase the number of students who undertake Asian studies and Asian languages as part of their university education, including through increased use of the National Broadband Network and digital technology. In the past decade, there have been 1.9 million enrolments of students from Asia in Australian education institutions.

"We want to support more Australian students to undertake part of their study in the Asian region, not only to boost their direct understanding of Asia in the changing economy, but also to develop networks and friendships that will last a lifetime," Senator Evans said:

"Our aim is that by 2025, a larger number of Australian university students will be studying overseas and a greater proportion will be undertaking part of their degree in an Asian country. That's why we will work with universities to substantially boost the number of

Australian students studying in Asia.

"A national objective for Australian universities is to remain among the world's best for research and teaching, delivering excellent outcomes for a larger number of Australian students. This means by 2025, we want to see ten of Australia's universities in the world's top 100—up from six currently in the top 100.

"Skills and education is a core pillar of the plan for boosting productivity growth and incomes contained in the government's *Australia in the Asian Century* White Paper. This will involve strengthening university and research ties in Asia, encouraging more Australian students to study abroad in the region and developing a training system that is among the world's best."

Senator Evans said young Australians will play a major role in improving community understanding of Asia, building the capabilities of our workforce and enhancing people-to-people links.

**Research and teaching** links will also be encouraged between Australian institutions and those in the region with support through the Australian Research Council.

Senator Evans said harmonising vocational training standards will help support a highly skilled Australian workforce able to continuously develop its capabilities in the changing economy.

"We will work with business and Australian industry partners through regional forums and bilaterally, to build in-country partnerships and to develop complementary skills and qualification assessment and recognition," he said.

"Expanding training services and strengthening networks between Industry Skills Councils, Australian industry and unions, and their Asian counterparts, will help also support Australian businesses and workers to have a greater presence in Asian markets.

"Our efforts will ensure that Australia remains among the world's best for research, teaching and training, and that we deliver excellent outcomes for a growing number of Australian students through stronger links within our region."

### **Asian studies in schools**

**The Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, Peter Garrett** , said: "Success in the Asian century will require all Australian students to have a better understanding of the culture, history and languages of our Asian neighbours.

Starting in school, students will need to develop the capabilities and skills to better understand and be active in the region. To achieve this, three national objectives have been announced by the Minister in response to the release of the *Australia in the Asian Century* White Paper:

- Every Australian student will have significant exposure to studies of Asia across the curriculum to increase their cultural knowledge.
- All students will have the opportunity to study an Asian language from their first day of school through to Year 12. Priority Asian languages include Chinese (Mandarin), Hindi, Indonesian and Japanese.
- Australia's school system will be in the top five schooling systems in the world, delivering excellent outcomes for all students of all backgrounds, and

systematically improving performance over time, as outlined in the National Plan for School Improvement.

Asia-literacy will be a core requirement in new education reforms being negotiated between the Commonwealth, States and Territories and non-government education authorities under the *National Plan for School Improvement*."

Mr Garrett went on, "As part of our ongoing discussions we will require opportunities for students to study Asian culture, history and languages, from their first day of school, through the Australian Curriculum. That will give the next generation of Australians the knowledge and capabilities to prosper in the Asian century."

In line with these objectives, all schools will engage with at least one school in Asia to support the teaching of a priority Asian language, including through increased use of the National Broadband Network.

"These national objectives support the government's ambition for Australia to be in the top five schooling systems in the world, delivering excellent outcomes for all students regardless of their background," he said.

"The *National Plan for School Improvement* will make sure funding for schools is spent on the things we know will work to lift student results."

The White Paper is available at: <<http://asiancentury.dpmc.qov.au/>>

Fact sheets issued with the White Paper, which includes an Executive Summary, are:

1. The rise of Asia
2. Australia in Asia
3. A picture of Australian society
4. The outlook for Australia to 2025
5. Skills and education: setting the foundations
6. Innovation
7. Science and research
8. Infrastructure
9. The tax system
10. Regulatory reform
11. Environmental sustainability
12. Macroeconomic and financial frameworks
13. Building Asia-literacy through schools
14. World class higher education system
15. Through the vocational education and training system
16. International education
17. Asia-literate leaders, workplaces and institutions
18. Social foundations
19. Australian investment abroad
20. Foreign investment in Australia
21. Inward foreign investment screening
22. Meeting the growing demand for food
23. Regional Australia
24. People-to-people links
25. Public diplomacy
26. Cultural diplomacy and creative industries

## **Impact on grants**

Vice Chancellor Professor Ian Young AO, commenting on the mid-year economic forecast (MYEFO) released on October 22 by the Australian government, writes, "I would like to share some information and give you a rough idea of what it means for us. The statement has significant implications for the higher education sector, and for ANU.

"As you know, there was considerable concern amongst researchers that grants were 'paused'; that 'pause' has now been lifted, and there has been 'no change to the level of grants' allocated to the Australian Research Council and to Cooperative Research Centres.

Indexation has been preserved and there are no changes to the demand-driven system for student enrolments at this stage. There are changes for some student income support programs.

However, the promised growth in 'Sustainable Research Excellence' (SRE) funding, which supports the indirect costs of research, will be significantly slowed. The expected uplift in SRE funds will not take place in 2013 as promised, and I estimate a \$500 million cut to the program over the next four years.

This will have an impact on all universities, but most acutely on strong research institutions. ANU, like many other universities, has already factored the SRE funding into our budget for next year. We expect the decision will cost the ANU budget an approximate \$3.4 million in 2013 and at least \$10 million in 2014. Also the loss of Facilitation Funding, associated with the government's Compacts, will see \$270 million cut from the sector, costing ANU around \$4.7 million in 2014.

There has been no announcement on replacement funds to support the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Scheme (NCRIS), which will also impact on research-intensive universities."

## **Extra day at Christmas**

In a note to colleagues, the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ian Young AO, advises of the university arrangements for this year's Christmas-New Year period from Saturday, 22 December, 2012 until Tuesday, 1 January, 2013, with the university reopening on Wednesday 2 January 2013.

He writes, "In recognition of the extraordinary contribution that staff make to ANU, and given that Christmas Day falls on a Tuesday, I have approved an additional holiday for Monday, December 24, 2012."

"Thank you to all staff for your tremendous contributions to ANU throughout 2012. I wish you, your family and friends a safe and enjoyable break over the Christmas and New Year season".

## Obituary

### **J.J.C. Smart AC** **16 September 1920 – 6 October 2012**

John Jamieson Carswell (Jack) Smart was born in Cambridge, England. He studied philosophy and mathematics at the University of Glasgow, graduating with the MA in 1948. His career as an undergraduate was interrupted by service in the British Army, 1940 – 1945, mainly in India and Burma. He took the BPhil at the University of Oxford in 1948, was a Junior Research Fellow at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, 1948 – 1950, before being appointed Hughes Professor of Philosophy at the University of Adelaide.

He was very young (29) for a chair and his appointment was part of Adelaide's policy of making bold appointments of early career scholars to chairs. This is a high risk policy but it paid off in more than spades in Smart's case. During his time at Adelaide (1950 – 1972), he made enormously influential contributions in four areas of philosophy: the philosophy of time, the philosophy of science, normative ethics and the philosophy of mind. The impact of his contributions can be gauged by the fact that during this time he accepted visiting professorships at Princeton (1957), Harvard (1963) and Yale (1964), and later at Stanford (1982).

Despite a great affection for Adelaide—the city and the university—in 1972 he felt it was time to move on and he took a Readership at La Trobe University, 1972 – 1976, before moving to the Research School of Social Sciences at The Australian National University, in 1976, where he was professor of philosophy and the chair of the department. He retired in 1985. He was a Visiting Fellow in RSSS from 1986 to 1999. He moved to Melbourne in October 1999, where he was an Honorary Research Fellow in philosophy at Monash University and regularly attended philosophy seminars there for many years. Among his many distinctions were honorary doctorates from the University of St Andrews, Glasgow and La Trobe, the giving of the Gavin David Young Lectures at Adelaide in 1987, being a foundation Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, and being made a Companion in the General Division in the Order of Australia in 1990.

Although born in England and educated in Scotland, Smart very quickly became identified with Australia and Australian philosophy. The directness and informality of Australia and Australian philosophy appealed to him and when the Philosophy Program (formerly department) in the Research School of Social Science decided to name an annual lecture in his honour, he asked the program to change the title from the 'J. J. C. Smart Lecture' to the 'Jack Smart Lecture'. His publications were marked by great clarity and an unusual lack of pretension for someone of his eminence, but it was the kind of clarity and lack of pretension that is only possible for someone with a deep understanding of difficult issues. He had a remarkable ability to cut straight to the core of a philosophical problem and make a seminal contribution in surprisingly few words.

His most famous article, 'Sensations and Brain Processes', first published in 1959, reshaped the philosophy of mind and is one of the most reprinted articles in analytical philosophy. In it he defended and developed the view that sensations are brain processes. Later he extended the view to encompass intentional states like belief and desire and mental states in general. Nowadays some form of materialism is a very widely accepted position, but in the 1960s and '70s the view was extremely controversial and was known in some quarters as

the 'Australian heresy'. (David Armstrong at Sydney also played a very important role in developing the view and together they influenced a generation of Australian philosophers.)

In the philosophy of science Smart was one of the most influential supporters of realism about the sub-microscopic particles of physics. Electron theory is not merely a device for predicting experimental results, rather electrons are the causes of the results; otherwise, Smart argued, the results would be some kind of enduring miracle. Smart viewed time as a fourth dimension akin to the three spatial ones—objects are extended in time as well as in space. He saw this view as the only one to hold in the light of relativity theory and was impatient with those philosophers who think that one can sensibly philosophise about time without due deference to what physics has to say. In normative ethics he defended act utilitarianism: the right act is that act out of those available to the agent that would produce the most happiness (or, better, has the greatest expectation of doing so). His criticism of rule utilitarianism—the view that the right act is the act in accord with the rule the following of which would produce the most happiness—as involving a kind of 'rule worship' inconsistent with utilitarianism's guiding focus on outcomes set the agenda for much of the debate over utilitarianism and more generally consequentialist views in ethics.

Philosophy for Smart was much more than something he was quite unusually good at; it structured his life. But it was never all his life. He had a great affection for family and friends – and then there was cricket. He was known to check the test score (discreetly, on a small radio held to his ear) during philosophy seminars, and he remarked that he realised he had become an Australian when he found himself barracking for Australia against England in cricket. (He became an Australian citizen in 1976).

His first wife Janet Paine died in 1967. He married Elizabeth Warner in 1968. He is survived by Elizabeth, and his children Helen and Robert from his first marriage.

**Frank Jackson**  
**Director, Research School of Social Sciences**  
**The Australian National University**

**Gordon Leslie Ada**  
**6 December 1922 – 25 September 2012**

Professor Gordon Ada, one of Australia's leading microbiologists, made many important contributions in the field of virology and immunology and helped foster a scientific research environment that led to a Nobel Prize winning discovery. He made a significant contribution to the World Health Organisation and the Australian Academy of Science and was a mentor to many Australian medical research scientists. Gordon passed away peacefully in Canberra, after a short illness, aged 89.

Gordon Ada was born in Sydney, the fourth of six children. His father William Leslie Ada was the Chief Electrical Engineer of the New South Wales Railways. His mother was Erica Maude Flower. During secondary school, a Christmas present, *The Science of Life*, fascinated young Gordon. He was educated at the University of Sydney, completing a Bachelor of Science (BSc) in 1943, a Master of Science (MSc) in 1946 and a Doctor of Science (DSc) in 1959.

Gordon began his career in 1944 as a research scientist at the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories (CSL) in Melbourne, before moving to London to work at the National Institute

for Medical Research in Hampstead where he mastered new biophysical techniques to study proteins.

In 1948, at Sir Macfarlane Burnet's invitation, he returned to Australia to join the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute (WEHI) in Melbourne. Gordon studied the biochemistry of the influenza virus and, surprisingly, found that its genes were composed not of DNA but of the related molecule, RNA. This was of fundamental importance.

When Burnet switched the emphasis of WEHI from virology to immunology, the study of the natural defence system of the body, Gordon worked out ways of tracing where the vaccine molecules (called antigens) went after injection. This resulted in much deeper knowledge of what is known as immunological memory, the fact that booster shots of vaccine work much better than the first dose. Another famous (but complex) study, picturesquely called the 'hot antigen suicide' experiment, contributed crucial knowledge on how the white blood cells fabricate protective antibody molecules.

After 20 years of service at WEHI, Professor Ada was invited to join the John Curtin School of Medical Research at the Australian National University as Head of the Department of Microbiology. He brought with him the belief that if research projects combining both virological and immunological approaches were strongly encouraged, some exciting findings could be made. He was right.

Professor Ada strengthened immunological research in the department by recruiting staff and students with an interest in immunology. A collaboration between the most notable recruits, Peter Doherty and Rolf Zinkernagel, resulted in a Nobel Prize winning discovery on how the immune system recognises virus-infected cells and selectively destroys them. But this was not the only paradigm-shifting discovery made during this period; there were several other seminal ones which underpin our current understanding of the immune system.

Gordon Ada was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science in 1964. He served as Foreign Secretary of the Academy from 1977 to 1981, where amongst other things he helped forge Australian scientific links in China.

For 20 years beginning in 1971, Gordon was an important contributor to the World Health Organisation (WHO). He served on a number of committees and chaired the Scientific Advisory Group of Experts for the WHO Programme for Vaccine Development from 1984-1989. He was also a founding member of the Australian Society for Immunology and was its President in 1974 and 1975.

Professor Ada retired from the John Curtin School in 1987. During a plenary lecture on the prospects of an AIDS vaccine at the International Congress on AIDS in Stockholm in 1988, Gordon, somewhat contentiously, stated that "there will not be a vaccine against HIV for some time". Partly as a result, he was invited to join the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health in Baltimore, where he soon became Director of the Centre for AIDS Research.

On his return to Australia in 1992, he was appointed Visiting Fellow in the Department of Immunology at the John Curtin School and Chairman of the Australian HIV Vaccine Working Group. In 1993, Gordon Ada was awarded an AO for service to medicine in the field of immunology and international health.

In his retirement, Gordon remained a passionate advocate for vaccination, co-authoring a book for parents, educators and students and talking with community and school groups

about the virtues of vaccination. He found time in his retirement to return to his passion for sailing and could be often found sailing on Lake Burley Griffin.

In 1946, Gordon married Jean Macpherson, whom he had met in 1944 at CSL. After a long and happy marriage, Jean died in 2005 after an extended illness, throughout which Gordon remained a devoted husband and carer.

Gordon Ada, who regarded family as one of his greatest achievements and pleasures, is survived by his four children Ian, Andrew, Louise and Neil, four grandsons and two great grandsons.

**By Gordon Ada's family, Sir Gustav Nossal and Professor Chris Parish**

## **Writing and retired academics**

***James Hartley\* outlines two studies on academic writing in retirement and argues that many retired academics can contribute a good deal to research and practice***

There have been two recent studies of the academic writing of retired academics. The first of these (Thody, 2011) examined the writing activities of 41 emeritus professors in a single university. 23 of them were scientists, seven were social scientists, five were from the arts and six reported no discipline. The respondents' sex and ages were not provided – only how long they had been emeriti.

The second study (Hartley, 2012) looked at the experiences of 88 retired academics, 72 men and 16 women (not all emeriti) aged 63-93 in over 30 institutions. There were 18 of these from the arts, 52 from the social sciences and 18 from the sciences. Putting these disparate studies together provides some interesting findings.

Thody (2011), using questionnaires and interviews, concentrated on the professional activities of her emeriti, listing 41 such activities undertaken by at least one of her sample, including publishing, editing, reviewing and giving conference papers. She showed that many of the emeriti who responded to her questionnaire had made an enormous contribution to their university.

Hartley (2012), using a different questionnaire, focused in particular on the experiences of academic writing in his sample of 88 retired academics (not all emeriti) from 37 institutions. In addition he distinguished between the responses of those who had retired early as well as those who had retired at the conventional age of 65. In this study approximately 80 per cent of the sample came from the social sciences and 20 per cent from each of the arts and sciences, and approximately 80 per cent of the sample was male.

### **What are some of the benefits of retirement?**

Both Thody and Hartley found respondents whose research benefited from retirement:

“One of the best things to have happened to me was to retire. I now do not have to participate in the target-obsessed numerical performance indicators, box filling, teaching/research activities of the department/university, and I can devote myself full-time to research which I can control to my satisfaction and in directions I consider are most important”.



“I get great pleasure out of working with my younger colleagues”.

Hartley found that many of his respondents had not changed their ways of writing very much during retirement, despite being assisted by the internet and personal computers. Most continued to use the technology they were familiar with before they retired, and few changed these technologies or adopted new techniques to cope with difficulties associated with increasing age. However, more time was spent on *non*-academic writing than before (for example, on local histories), and there was a gradual slowing down in publication rates with increasing age.

“I’ve been lucky to have kept reasonably fit, but my energy now (as I approach 90) is fading. In the first 20 years of retirement I published 20 journal papers. 4 books and 11 book chapters. Now I am content to have just one job a year”.

And, as in Thody’s research, many of these retired academics widened their focus to make many considerable (and unpaid) contributions to their institutions and society at large, for example:

“I am the founder and director of a local community arts centre”.

“I have served as a member of various government committees and am a chairman/member of various trusts”.

“I am a school governor (deputy chair), which involves a lot of work...  
And I am trustee of several mental health charities (which also involves a lot of work)”.

### **How might institutions make better use of their retired staff?**

Both studies showed that institutions could be very different in how they treated their retired academics. In Thody’s study significantly more help was given to the scientists – perhaps because her institution particularly supported scientists. By way of contrast, in Hartley’s study, the 18 arts scholars reported most support—perhaps because they did not expect much anyway!

In Hartley’s study some individuals reported receiving no support from their institutions (and they had to leave as soon as they retired) whilst others enjoyed a considerable amount of support. It is perhaps this aspect of the findings that is most disturbing, and it replicates findings from earlier studies (e.g: Tizard, 2004).

“Alas no office and departmental facilities provided.”

“As an emeritus professor I have first use of a desk, a computer, full library membership, and certain other rights.”

“In the first five years of my retirement I maintained an office and then I moved into a shared office with three other emeriti.”

Hartley described three different kinds of possible support: specific departmental support; shared facilities across related departments; and separate institutes for senior scholars. He comments that in each of these situations one would not expect the retired scholars to draw any salary, to undertake any paid teaching/marking, or to reduce the resources available for beginning academics.

Universities currently reviewing the level of support they provide for their retirees might like to consider these possibilities—and others.

*Note: This article gives the views of the author(s), and not the position of the Impact of Social Sciences blog, nor of the London School of Economics.*

**\*About the author:**

**James Hartley** is Research Professor in the School of Psychology at the University of Keele, UK. He is widely known for his work on student learning, text design and academic writing.

*References*

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Thody, A. (2011). Emeritus professors in an English university: How is the wisdom of the aged used? *Studies in Higher Education*, 36, 6, 637-653.  
Tizard, B. (2004). Support for retired academic staff: University policies and practices. *Oxford Review of Higher Education*, 30, 3, 257-263.

## Graduation ceremonies

*Judy Luyt, Senior Graduation Officer, writes:* The Australian National University will be conducting *Conferring of Awards* ceremonies on 12, 13 and 14 December 2012 at Llewellyn Hall.

ANU Emeritus Faculty members are cordially invited to participate in the academic processions for these ceremonies. Please register your intent to participate via the following web address:

< [http://www.anu.edu.au/sas/graduation/Emeritus\\_Poll/](http://www.anu.edu.au/sas/graduation/Emeritus_Poll/) >

You will be asked to select the ceremony (or ceremonies) you wish to attend, and the area that you will be representing. A schedule for each ceremony is included on the website.

Please note: **Registration will close on Friday 7 December at midnight.**

It is the responsibility of each participant to provide their own academic dress. If a participant is unsure of the code of dress, the Examinations & Graduations Office may be consulted (email: [graduation.officer@anu.edu.au](mailto:graduation.officer@anu.edu.au))

Assembly for all processions occurs near the Graduands Robing Room; there will be signs on the day providing directions. Registered participants are asked to assemble in this location, at least half an hour prior to the commencement of the ceremony.

Please feel free to contact the Senior Graduations Officer —Judy Luyt (x54648) —if you require any further information (or if you are unable to complete the registration form).

Phone: (02)6125 4648

email: [graduation.officer@anu.edu.au](mailto:graduation.officer@anu.edu.au)

## Current Affairs

### Asia, education and diplomacy: Australia's fault line

A day after the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, released the White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century*, a parliamentary inquiry has found Australia's representation overseas through the diplomatic network is seriously deficient and does not reflect Australia's true international standing.

The White Paper sets out targets for language education in schools in "a priority Asian language—Mandarin Chinese, Hindi, Indonesian and Japanese" and wants a third of board members of Australia's top 200 publicly listed companies and Commonwealth bodies to have "deep experience in and knowledge of Asia." [See lead report in this edition]

Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade has tabled its report on the year-long inquiry into Australia's overseas representation recommending increased funding to redress the situation and an external review of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. It has called for an increase of at least 20 diplomatic posts to bring Australia to a level commensurate with its position within the G20 and OECD.

Foreign Affairs sub-committee chair, Mr Nick Champion MP, said the inquiry had found there to be no overall strategy for Australia's diplomatic engagement with the world or any criteria for establishing, continuing, or closing the diplomatic posts.

"To address this deficiency, the committee has recommended that the government produce a White Paper to set the agenda for Australia's entire government overseas representation," Mr Champion said.

According to the Lowy Institute, the average number of diplomatic posts per OECD country is 133. Australia has just 95 and sits at 25th of the 34 nations of the OECD in its league table of diplomatic representation.

"Australia has the smallest diplomatic network of the G20 countries and is clearly punching below its weight," said Mr Champion, "In the longer term, funding to DFAT should be increased to a set percentage of gross domestic product sufficient to reflect Australia's standing as a middle power."

The committee has recommended that the budget priority for overseas representation should be significantly raised because of the benefits that accrue from diplomacy.

"Issues relating to the effect of recent funding cuts on overall effectiveness, resource allocation and the number and performance of locally engaged staff would benefit from further examination," said Mr Champion, "An external review would see canvassing of new ideas, community engagement, and modify inaccurate perceptions of DFAT's work."

Other recommendations of the committee include:

- funding the ever increasing demand for consular services from Australians who travel abroad, in part from revenue sources such as increased passport fees and a small tiered levy, structured to take into account those Australians who have taken out travelling insurance or who are unable to obtain travel insurance;

that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Austrade broaden their contacts with Australian business boardrooms to deepen understanding of how the Department and Austrade can assist in facilitating their overseas activities;

placing on the COAG agenda discussion of the location, coordination and effective use of State and Commonwealth overseas trade representatives;

the creation within AusAID of a mediation unit to reduce the potential need for aid and rebuilding assistance by preventing conflict; and

establishing an office of e-diplomacy within DFAT to harness the potential and deal with the challenges of e-diplomacy, particularly in light of the constantly evolving nature of this technology.

“The Committee recognises the valuable activities undertaken abroad by Australia’s representatives in promoting Australia’s interests, trade opportunities, and providing consular assistance to Australians abroad,” said Mr Champion.

“Nevertheless, the operations of our diplomatic network are being challenged by a lack of funding, the growth and development of Australia’s economy, the shift of global power towards Asia, the impact of technology, and the rising importance of public diplomacy.”

“This report along with recent reports by the Lowy Institute highlights the urgent need to rebuild Australia’s diplomatic network and enhance our international standing. Our diplomatic network must be resourced to grow if Australia is to again punch above its weight in the world,” Mr Champion concluded.

Copies of the report are available online at the inquiry website at:

<[http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/House\\_of\\_Representatives\\_Committees?url=jfadt/overseas%20representation](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=jfadt/overseas%20representation)>

**For inquiries** contact the inquiry Secretary, John Carter, on (02) 6277 2313 or visit the Committee website.

## Whistleblower legislation inquiry

The House of Representatives’ Social Policy and Legal Affairs Committee will inquire into and report on the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Bill 2012 and the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2012.

Interested persons and organisations are invited to make submissions to the inquiry by Friday 23 November 2012. The Committee will be considering the above bills and is not inquiring into whistleblowing, so the committee is not able to consider any individual cases.

The bills aim to strengthen public integrity by encouraging and facilitating the disclosure of corruption, maladministration and other wrongdoing in the Commonwealth public sector. It does so by providing protection for public officials to make such disclosures.

These bills were introduced following the House Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs 2009 report 'Whistleblower protection: a comprehensive scheme for the Commonwealth public sector.' This report outlined the primary legislative priorities of promoting integrity in public administration and supporting open and accountable government.

The Chair of the Committee, Graham Perrett, said that the Public Interest Disclosure Bill was an important step in providing protection for whistleblowers as well as promoting accountability in public administration.

**A public hearing is scheduled for Friday, 30 November, 2012 from 9am to 10.45am in committee room 1R3 at Parliament House, Canberra**

For the information about the inquiry, including copies of the bills and advice on making submissions, see the committee's website at [www.aph.gov.au/spla](http://www.aph.gov.au/spla) or contact the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 2358.

## **Freedom of Information Act under review**

Dr Allan Hawke AC will conduct an independent review of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and the *Australian Information Commissioner Act 2010*.

Attorney-General Nicola Roxon announced Dr Hawke will review the effectiveness of the Government's recent Freedom of Information law reforms. About \$41 million of taxpayer money was spent across the Federal Government in 2011 – 12 processing FOI requests. The review will consider how the Government's FOI costs could be reduced, including the Information Commissioner's recent recommendations regarding the current charging regime.

"The review will consider how these Acts and related laws continue to provide an effective framework for access to government information," Ms Roxon said. "Importantly, the review will also assess the impact of reforms to Freedom of Information laws in 2009 and 2010."

In 2011 – 12, more than 22,000 FOI requests were determined at an average cost of \$1876 per request.

A wide range of stakeholders and users of Freedom of Information laws will be consulted as part of the review, which is expected to be completed within a six month timeframe.

Under FOI legislation, the review is required to happen two years after the majority of the Government's Freedom of Information reforms commenced in November 2010.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1. The review should consider the following matters:
  - (a) the impact of reforms to Freedom of Information laws in 2009 and 2010, including the new structures and processes for review of decisions and investigations of complaints under the FOI Act, on the effectiveness of the FOI system;
  - (b) the effectiveness of the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner;
  - (c) the effectiveness of the new two-tier system of merits review of decisions to refuse access to documents and related matters;
  - (d) the reformulation of the exemptions in the FOI Act including the application of the new public interest test taking into account:
    - (i) the requirement to ensure the legitimate protection of sensitive government documents including Cabinet documents; and
    - (ii) the necessity for the government to continue to obtain frank and fearless advice from agencies and from third parties who deal with government;
  - (e) the appropriateness of the range of agencies covered, either in part or in whole, by the FOI Act;

- (f) the role of fees and charges on FOI, taking into account the recommendations of the Information Commissioner's review of the current charging regime; and
  - (g) the desirability of minimising the regulatory and administrative burden, including costs, on government agencies.
2. The review should include consultation with relevant stakeholders.
  3. The report should be provided by 30 April 2013.

## **Inquiry into Australia's oil refinery industry**

The House of Representatives Economics Committee will inquire into and report on Australia's oil refinery industry and is seeking submissions from stakeholders, interested people and organisations **by Monday, 19 November 2012.**

According to Australian Institute of Petroleum figures, in 2010-11 domestic refineries supplied around 74 per cent of petroleum products required by Australia's major industries and service stations. More than a quarter of total petroleum product consumed is imported, primarily from Singapore.

The planned closures of the Clyde and Kurnell oil refineries in Sydney will leave Australia with five domestic oil refineries by the end of 2014. These facilities will be converted to import terminals.

The Committee Chair, Julie Owens MP, said that it is timely for the committee to examine Australia's domestic refinery capacity, and potential impacts of declining capacity on the economy, energy security and employment. The Committee will:

1. Identify the current international and domestic trends and pressures impacting on the competitiveness of Australia's domestic oil refineries.
2. Investigate the impact of declining refinery capacity in Australia on the economy. This should include analysis of:
  - a) current supply chains and their effectiveness in meeting Australia's liquid fuel requirements;
  - b) import price outcomes for consumers from the current arrangements;
  - c) direct and indirect employment impacts;
  - d) any relevant information on the impact of the closure of Australian refineries, including on downstream activities.
3. Identify any potential issues for Australia's energy security from possible further closures of oil refinery capacity, noting the findings of the National Energy Security Assessment (December 2011).
4. Consider the implication of refinery closures on the associated workforce, including age profile, alternative employment opportunities and labour force mobility.

**For background information** contact the committee secretariat:

Phone: (02) 6277 4587

email: [economics.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:economics.reps@aph.gov.au)

website: [www.aph.gov.au/economics](http://www.aph.gov.au/economics)

## Committee inquiry into Water Account Bill

The House of Representatives Selection Committee has referred the Water Amendment (Water for the Environment Special Account) Bill to the Regional Australia Committee for inquiry. The Selection Committee has specifically asked that the Regional Australia Committee look at the commitment of \$1.77 billion for future funding and the legitimacy of this approach.

The Committee welcomes submissions to the inquiry by close of business 15 November 2012.

A public hearing will be held on **Tuesday, 20 November 2012** in Sydney. Details will be advised on [www.aph.gov.au/ra](http://www.aph.gov.au/ra).

**For information on the inquiry:** contact the Secretariat on (02) 6277 4162 or 0407 406 337, email: [ra.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:ra.reps@aph.gov.au) or visit the Committee website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/ra>

## Benefits of sport for Indigenous wellbeing

Professor Colin Tatz addressed the House of Representatives Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs on Thursday, November 1 on the contribution of sport to Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring. He has conducted research on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and sport for over 20 years.

Professor Tatz argues that participation in sport can reduce antisocial behaviour, pointing to examples of how sport reduces delinquency rates in rural and remote Australia. He is interested in how sport can prevent suicide in Indigenous populations, contending that sport can ameliorate suicidal behaviour. He suggests that a formal study should be conducted on how sport can affect youth suicide rates, in addition to ensuring that appropriate sporting programs are put in place in Indigenous communities.

Professor Tatz notes that the benefits of sport are not confined to playing and people can be meaningfully involved as scorers, umpires, organisers, managers and fund raisers. However, remote communities may face increased barriers to participation, such as a lack of sport facilities, sporting equipment, organised competitions, funding and appropriate role models.

Committee chair Shayne Neumann, MP, said the committee was examining how sporting bodies can increase opportunities for Indigenous participation, including for Indigenous women and how non-government organisations can use sport as a vehicle to improve outcomes for Indigenous people.

**For more information**, see the committee's website at [www.aph.gov.au/sport](http://www.aph.gov.au/sport) or contact the committee secretariat on **(02) 6277 4559**.

## National Archives of Australia building inquiry

Representatives of National Archives of Australia (NAA) appeared before the Public Works Committee on November 2 for the inquiry into the proposed new National Archives Preservation Facility (NAPF) for the National Archives of Australia at Mitchell, ACT. An earlier hearing was held in July.



The NAA's existing storage facilities will be filled to capacity by 2015. The new Archives building will provide increased storage capacity for archives from Australian government agencies.

Full details on the NAA's proposal and the transcript from the Committee's first public hearing are available on the Committee's website: <[www.aph.gov.au/pwc](http://www.aph.gov.au/pwc)>

### Treasury argues against IT price controls

Treasury's submission to the House Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications' inquiry on price of IT hardware and software, argues that regulatory intervention in response to high IT prices could be counterproductive

The Committee is investigating claims that Australians pay more for IT products and digital downloads than consumers overseas. Among its terms of reference, the committee is considering what role, if any, government might play in addressing IT price disparities.

Treasury advocates; "improving local competition and increasing access to international markets [as] 'no regrets' measures that can assist in ensuring Australian consumers and business have access to goods and services at internationally competitive prices."

Committee chair Nick Champion MP said, "The cost of IT hardware and software is now relevant to just about every aspect of our economic and social life".

**For inquiry information**, including the terms of reference and submissions, go to: <[www.aph.gov.au/itpricing](http://www.aph.gov.au/itpricing)>, or contact the secretariat on (02) 6277 2352.

### Lack of security worries some seniors on internet

Michael O'Neill from National Seniors Australia suggests lack of cybersafety is why some seniors either don't use the internet at all or are limiting the ways in which they use it.

National Seniors Australia told federal Parliament's Joint Select Committee on Cybersafety in its submission that research and feedback from its members indicates that some older Australians have high levels of concern about cybersafety.

Additional support is needed to encourage more senior Australians to use the internet, to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to do so safely and with confidence, according to National Seniors Australia.

At its recent hearing, the committee heard from Mrs Joyce Sheasby from the University of the Third Age in Toowoomba who says in her submission that education is the most pressing need to be addressed in order to get seniors safely online.

For further information on the inquiry, or to participate in the committee's **Seniors' Cybersafety Survey**, go to the committee's web site at <<http://www.aph.gov.au/jscc>>. Or contact the Inquiry Secretary (02) 6277 4202.



## Academics on dementia care models

Community based care options, access to services and preventative activities were discussed at a parliamentary committee hearing on dementia held in Newcastle on November.

The House of Representatives Health and Ageing Committee heard from a range of individuals and organisations about early intervention and treatment of dementia in the Newcastle region, including Professor Dimity Pond, other academics, health professionals and carers.

Committee Chair Steve Georganas MP said: “The committee will also hear from academics who are studying early screening and intervention of dementia, and the effectiveness of different care models in meeting the needs of patients and their families”.

**For more information** contact the Committee Secretariat by phone on (02) 6277 4145 or visit the Committee's website: <[www.aph.gov.au/haa](http://www.aph.gov.au/haa)>

## Afghan Hidden Treasures

The *Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures of the National Museum, Kabul* exhibition will tour Sydney, Perth, Melbourne and Brisbane in 2013 and 2014—but not Canberra.

Comprising more than 230 artefacts dating from sites along the Silk Road between 2200 BC to AD 200, the exhibition attests to the role Afghanistan has played as a crossroads of the ancient world.

Foreign Minister Bob Carr said the items were feared destroyed after Soviet occupation and civil war in Afghanistan, and were kept hidden by museum staff during the period of Taliban rule.

“The exhibition illustrates the motto of Afghanistan’s National Museum - ‘a nation stays alive when its culture stays alive’,” and went on, “The human stories behind these artefacts add to their value as a cultural record of ancient Afghanistan.”

Arts Minister Simon Crean said the exhibition highlighted the important role cultural diplomacy and exchange played in strengthening Australia’s engagement with the rest of the world.

“The partnership between Australian and Afghan state museums and galleries is a fusion of cultures that will reinforce the strength of our identity and our engagement with Afghanistan and the rest of the world. As home to one of the oldest cultures on earth and also welcoming to greater diversity of cultures, we are thrilled to bring the *Hidden Treasures* exhibition to Australia.”

The Australian Government has provided diplomatic and financial support to bring the exhibition to Australian audiences, following successful tours of the Hidden Treasures to the United States and Europe. The exhibition will tour the Melbourne Museum, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the Queensland Museum and the Museum of Western Australia.

## 2012 ANUEF activities

### Additions to ANUEF E-Texts

Click on (or paste it in your browser) the link below to visit our E-archive of articles by members. The two new ones are:

Malcolm Whyte "Olympic Medal Mania"

Shirley Pipitone "Study of the social value of Lake Burley Griffin and its setting"

<<http://www.anu.edu.au/emeritus/e-texts.html> >

Malcolm's story looks at the Olympic Games and tries to avoid the fervent nationalism that distorts our view of what really happened. The truth is that the smaller less wealthy countries do better per capita than their big rich neighbours.

Shirley's story gives the results of an attitude survey from the citizens of Canberra about their much loved Lake.

### Lectures and diary dates

**12 December** ANUEF Christmas Party at 5 pm

More diary date details can be found here: <<http://www.anu.edu.au/emeritus/events.html>>

### ANUEF room bookings

Requests for booking the Molony Room should be addressed to Judith Caton via email, and these will be forwarded to the committee for approval, and then entered into the diary. A return email will be sent to the organisation confirming the booking. The diary will be held in the office rather than being left on the table in the meeting room. Conditions for the use of the premises will be emailed to users and a copy is on the ANUEF website.

Contact Judith Caton on [judith.caton@anu.edu.au](mailto:judith.caton@anu.edu.au)

### What's on at the ANU?

*What's On at ANU* is a fortnightly email for staff and students that aims to highlight many of the interesting, enlightening and engaging public lectures, seminars and events happening around the university. All of these events are open to the public. Please check if reservations are needed.

For more information on any of the events listed, or to see a calendar of upcoming events, go to <<http://billboard.anu.edu.au/events.asp>>

**Next edition of *Emeritus*, the ANUEF Newsletter, will be published in December.**