

EMERITUS

The Australian National University Emeritus Faculty e-magazine

Vol. 11 | No. 7, August 2020

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COVID-19's impact on students, staff and marking

The stressful impact of COVID-19 on students continues in Semester 2 2020, the Academic Board of the ANU has been advised, and this has necessitated an extension to the alternate grading scheme adopted in Semester 1 2020.

The board was also advised that, overall, the temporary grading system had been received positively by students.

In response to questions from the Board, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) advised that:

- Clear messaging will be directed to students on the impact of alternate grades on scholarships and academic progression into courses.
- Students can request the Registrar revert their records to their original grades if a Grade Point Average is deemed necessary.
- It is expected that regular grading will resume for Semester 1, 2021. The Academic Board received an update about the University's management of the COVID-19 situation.

The following main points were made during the discussion:

- The Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) for COVID-19 concluded its work on June 7.
- Over 600 ANU staff members were directly involved in the COVID-19 response.

Lessons learned

Appreciating the significance of having an overarching mission, goals and values in guiding the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT), especially where decision making is concerned, highlighted:

- The importance of making progress rather than seeking perfection, and the necessity to maintain progress in periods of high uncertainty.
- Receiving regular feedback while responding quickly.
- The benefit of having reliable sources of information and expert advice such as that provided by the CIMT's Expert Panel.
- Ensuring that decisions taken at the highest levels are implemented.
- Discovering the great capacity and commitment from the ANU community.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student & University Experience) also explained that the University is gradually moving into a highly coordinated business-as-usual environment to risk-manage COVID-19, especially where the return to campus strategy is concerned.

The Academic Board also posed questions:

What has been learned from ANU's crisis response that will inform how the University will make academic decisions in a post-crisis management environment?

The board heard that, in response, the continuing academic challenge for the University also included aligning strategy to execution, while being flexible enough to respond to changing circumstances.

Noting recent QS rankings and the potentially uneven COVID-19 impact across the higher education sector, how should ANU's position be interpreted relative to other institutions in Australia and globally?

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation) explained that COVID-19 - and especially the travel ban - would have a long-term and potentially disproportionate impact on the ANU relative to other institutions. As a result, the University will need to carefully explore the manner in which it deals with the effects of COVID-19 equitably. To achieve this, the DVC (R&I) invited and would welcome suggestions from members.

Given the Vice-Chancellor's recent statement that ANU remains committed to being an on-campus university, how should that inform the ways in which the university plans and delivers current and future modes of remote teaching and learning?

The DVC (Academic) reported that results of the survey on remote teaching in Semester 1 2020 were mixed. Students appreciated learning flexibility but raised a number of issues with remote study. Student feedback continues to be monitored with the University working with all areas of student engagement as part of its commitment to continuous improvement. It was also confirmed that the University remained committed to face-to-face teaching, with remote teaching and learning being a temporary arrangement in response to COVID-19.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Brian Schmidt AC, highlighted the following:

- ANU staff narrowly voting to vary the Enterprise Agreement that will defer a two per cent pay increase for all staff effective from July 2020 to July 2021, and July 2021 to July 2022.
- Substantial changes being announced to Commonwealth funding for tertiary education, generating a pronounced impact on HASS disciplines. Members also discussed the balance between funding and excellence in education outcomes.

Academic Board is keen to hear from the wider University community. What are the big issues regarding academic governance that it wants the Academic Board to address?

Professor Imogen Mitchell attended her first Academic Board Meeting as the Deputy Chair earlier this month.

Freedom of Expression on campuses under review

Universities acknowledge the importance of freedom of expression and academic freedom on Australian campuses and look forward to assisting Professor Sally Walker in her review announced by Education Minister Dan Tehan earlier this month, according to a Universities Australia media release.

Professor Walker will be reviewing university progress against the principles of the Model Code produced by former Chief Justice of the High Court Robert French in 2019.

Universities Australia Chief Executive Catriona Jackson said, “Last year universities agreed to adopt, adapt or ensure the principles of the [Robert] French Model Code were reflected in the broad suite of policies that cover freedom of speech and expression at universities.

Universities have either finalised that process, or are part way through, and look forward to discussing progress with Professor Walker.

“Freedom of expression and academic freedom are part of the DNA of Australian universities. This is why Mr French’s proposed model code has been given careful attention by our universities to ensure the robustness of their frameworks for free speech and academic freedom. In asking universities to give full and careful consideration to adopting the model code, Education Minister Dan Tehan noted the making of regulations and policies by a university is a matter for each institution reflecting institutional autonomy.”

New Guinea named as world’s most plant-rich island

Nearly 100 researchers have completed a comprehensive study of plant life on the island of New Guinea, finding more than 13,634 species and earning it the title of most the botanically-diverse island in the world. The finding comes as logging, mining, and agriculture increasingly threaten the island’s forests, which are vital to the world’s carbon sequestration needs.

Led by Dr Rodrigo Cámara-Leret from the University of Zurich, the study involved 99 researchers from across the globe, including Dr Bruce Webber from CSIRO, and was published recently in *Nature*. New Guinea is the world’s second largest island after Greenland, and is part of both Papua New Guinea to the east and Indonesia to the west.

The study found that the island had 19 per cent more species than Madagascar and 22 per cent more species than Borneo across its varied climate, which includes lowland mangroves rising to tropical alpine grasslands and a glacier on the 5030m mountain, Puncak Jaya.

Dr Webber said this was the first attempt to critically catalogue the entire vascular plant diversity of New Guinea. “This is the most mega-diverse island, from a floristic perspective, with 68 per cent of plants only found in the region, which is unmatched in tropical Asia,” Dr Webber said. “In an area so varied, it is likely there are many more plants on New Guinea that are undescribed and unknown to western science.”

However, Dr Webber said the island’s floral diversity was increasingly under threat from logging, mining and conversion of forests for subsistence agriculture. “This is the most

concerning part of the work for me,” he said. “It’s likely that we’re losing plants before we even know they exist.”

The paper is temporarily free to access here: <https://t.co/qKMdoXlqJi> and can then be accessed here: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-020-2549-5>

Space view identifies every paddock

Scientists at CSIRO have solved a farming challenge using artificial intelligence to identify the boundary of every individual paddock in Australia’s grain-growing region from space – around 1.7 million of them.

The technology has been developed into a new product called ePaddocks, designed to save time for farmers and others in the agricultural sector when using digital services for farm analytics and insights.

Currently, farm-management software requires users to manually draw paddock boundaries for every service they use, like satellite-assisted fertiliser application or crop-growth monitoring, and they may have to update this information every growing season. Unlike property boundaries, which are recorded in local council or title records, paddock boundaries aren’t historically recorded anywhere. However, ePaddocks can identify paddock boundaries from season to season but it does not identify a particular property or landowner, or what paddock belongs to whom.

CSIRO remote sensing specialist Dr Franz Waldner said ePaddocks was highly accurate, detailed and available at the touch of a button. “The satellite images we use, although publicly available, are cumbersome to download, store and analyse by the average person,” Dr Waldner said. “So we apply our deep neural network and algorithms to produce the paddock boundaries based on vegetation signatures and land features. Our method only needs one satellite image taken at any point in the growing season to distinguish the boundaries. It relies on data-driven processes and decisions rather than assumptions about what’s on the ground. Paddock boundaries have been highly sought after in the digital agriculture world for a little while now, but we’ve tackled it over the past year or so with new technologies and solved it. Our method will set the standard for similar geo-spatial products.”

ePaddocks is available to purchase from CSIRO’s Ag Climate Data Shop (link: <https://acds.csiro.au/>)

CSIRO launches mask-testing facility

Australia's first accredited surgical face mask-testing facility has been launched in Melbourne by the CSIRO, to help frontline health workers in the fight against COVID-19, and supporting Australian business. The new facility, accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA), has the capacity to provide a rapid turnaround on surgical face mask-testing, helping manufacturers fast-track the supply of masks for frontline healthcare workers.

To gain NATA’s accreditation, the CSIRO facility underwent rigorous on-site assessments to ensure it could provide tests that show single-use surgical masks adequately filter biological particles, resist blood penetration and enable the wearer to breathe comfortably.

Manufacturers that pass all three tests will meet both Australian and international standards and can be registered on the Australian Register for Therapeutic Goods.

CSIRO Chief Executive Dr Larry Marshall, welcoming the announcement, said, “It’s inspiring to see Australian science enabling Australian businesses to supply life-saving

surgical face masks to protect our frontline health care-workers – yet another way science is tackling the COVID-19 pandemic."

Manufacturers can use test results obtained at the CSIRO facility to demonstrate that the performance of their medical masks is suitable for supplying Australian hospitals, as well as contributing to the global pandemic response.

Queensland manufacturer, Evolve Group, has recently pivoted to mask manufacturing to help meet Australia's COVID-19 PPE demands.

Fears of famine accompany virus

In addition to the emergency food aid being delivered to Beirut by the UN's World Food Program following the recent dockland explosion, WFP is appealing for funds to avoid famine in Latin America and in parts of Africa,

With COVID-19 aggravating an already severe hunger crisis in Zimbabwe, the WFP has appealed for an additional US\$250 million to support a rapidly expanding emergency operation for millions at risk. WFP projections indicate that by year's end, the number of food-insecure Zimbabweans will have surged by almost 50 percent to 8.6 million – 60 per cent of the population – owing to the combined effects of drought, economic recession and the pandemic.

The WFP also warns that the relentless rise of hunger, struggling economies, deepening inequality and an active hurricane season are threatening the people of Latin America and the Caribbean and may have far-reaching consequences unless swift action is taken. As coronavirus cases soar, Latin America has become the region most impacted by COVID-19 globally, accounting for over a quarter of the world's cases. The health pandemic is driving hunger and food insecurity, which risks fuelling conflict and political unrest and forcing vulnerable families to migrate, WFP says in a recent media release.

For more information, access via your browser: newsfeed@wfp.org

Anticus and the dogs

It was during the reign of Mendacius IV that Anticus wondered if the First University of the Nation (FUN) was going to the dogs. There was, he recalls, a plethora of yellow forms to be suddenly filled in, fanciful goals to be set then met, a creeping tide of incongruous paperwork littering the shore of the mind with a flotsam of acronyms. In a long vac, when some were off on sabbatical, others to their house at Rosedale, and most, like Anticus, too matagrabolised by the difficult year to pluck up the energy to object, it was announced that marks for Credit, Distinction and High Distinction would be lowered by five per cent. Henceforth, HD would start at 80 instead of 85, D at 70 and Cr at 60. It was said that this reform, just approved by the Board of the Institute, brought FUN into line with the marking scales of other universities. Anticus wondered whether it was lawful for the Board of the Institute to have a say in undergraduate matters ; and he suspected that the assertion about scales at other universities was false (which it was later shown to be). He assumed that the unstated purpose of the 'reform' was to increase the numbers of students achieving higher grades. He argued against complying with this 'incremental creep' ; but colleagues went along with it, saying nothing could be done. Mendacius IV was pleased to sign Annual Reports to Parliament confirming an increase in higher grades awarded.

It was then that the matter of Stultitia arose. She had impressive references and qualifications. Anticus was a member of the electoral committee which unanimously recommended her appointment. Until it was confirmed, she taught as a casual. He soon realised she boded ill : she slipped bizarre notes under his door, she ridiculed her colleagues' competence to students, she occupied teaching rooms long after the timetabled hour, refusing to vacate them though the next classes were queuing outside and lecturers knocking on the door. After one baffling encounter with her, Anticus suggested to the Dean that the electoral committee be reconvened to reconsider her appointment, not yet confirmed. The Dean agreed and invited Anticus to his rooms to meet Mendacius himself.

Never before had Anticus found himself so close to a man of such eminence — 'Call me Mendax', he said. There had once been a dinner at University House when Anticus had sat almost opposite Grandiosus III. And years before, at a meeting of Council, Mirificus II had lauded him several times as 'Dr Atnicus'.

Mendacius, listening gravely, gave his solemn undertaking that he would not confirm the appointment of Stultitia without consulting Anticus. That the man had a face like an arse and worked in a subject which Anticus had once called 'a baneful pseudo-science', had, he says, no bearing on the impression he gave of shiftiness. When Stultitia's confirmation was announced two days later, Anticus gave, as was his wont, the benefit of the doubt, assuming that Mendax IV was a very busy man.

Stultitia, after disrupting the work of the Department for three years, left without warning in the middle of an Orientation Week when teaching tasks for the year had already been allotted.

ANTIQVITVS

Obituary

Mike Slee 8 November 1934 – 29 January 2020

Michael Urquhart Slee was born in 1934 in England and graduated in forestry from Oxford University in 1960. In 1961, sponsored by Geoff Wood whom he had met at Oxford, he immigrated to Australia and worked for eight years with the Queensland Department of Forestry as a tree breeding officer, specialising in the introduction and improvement of Caribbean, Loblolly, Radiata, and Slash Pine plantations in that state. He also represented Queensland in rugby union in that period.

Mike was active in the Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA) from the outset. Amongst other early roles, he spoke on tree breeding at a Queensland IFA Field Day in 1964 and became Secretary/ Treasurer of the Qld Division of the IFA in 1965. In 1968, he moved with his wife, Judy, to Canberra, and completed his ANU Masters dissertation on the Slash-Caribbean hybrid in Queensland (supervised by Ross Florence). He first became a Committee Member of the ACT Division of the IFA in 1971.

In 1974, Mike was appointed as Lecturer in Tree Breeding and Tropical Forestry at the ANU; in 1977, he completed his PhD on the physiology of development of tropical pines (supervised by Ken Shepherd). He continued his research in tree breeding and taught that subject and plantation silviculture.

Mike put his knowledge into practice through consultancy work on these topics in Iran and the SE Asian region and also played a strong role in fostering the development of university forestry education in Malaysia. He supervised many postgraduate students from about 20 different countries, and led the graduate program in environmental science at ANU in the early 1990s. Around the same time, his research focus broadened, in conjunction with CSIRO colleagues and research students, to developing new tree crops, especially the commercial oil-producing eucalypts and melaleucas. He retired from the University in 1997 but continued his research and supervision as a Visiting Fellow for almost a decade.

Mike's good humour, interest in rugby union and willingness to join students in a beer as well as supervising their projects meant that he was a popular lecturer at ANU. He was well-known for his interest in them and his fairness in assessing their work. His fellow staff valued him for his cool-headedness, tolerance and integrity.

Although his mobility was increasingly curtailed in the past decade, Mike continued to participate in Institute activities. His many students, collaborators, colleagues and friends around the globe join with his wife, Judy, and his extended family in being thankful for his life and saddened by his passing.

Brian Turner and Peter Kanowski

A Populist Exception? The 2017 New Zealand General Election

Edited by: [Jack Vowles](#) , [Jennifer Curtin](#) 



ISBN (print – rrp \$60.00): 9781760463854

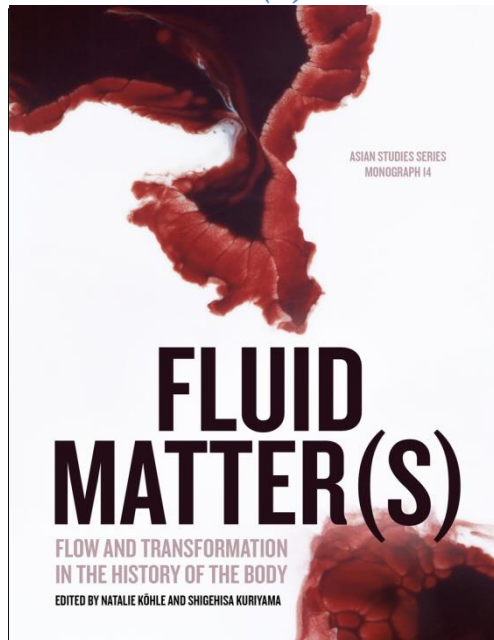
ISBN (online): 9781760463861

ANU Press

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22459/PE.2020>

The ‘spectre of populism’ might be an apt description for what is happening in different parts of the world, but does it apply to New Zealand? Immediately after New Zealand’s 2017 general election, populist party New Zealand First gained a pivotal role in a coalition with the Labour Party, leading some international observers to suggest it represented a populist capture of the government. The leader of New Zealand First, Winston Peters, justified his support for Labour as necessary to allow capitalism to ‘regain ... its human face’. The new prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, spoke of a kinder, inclusive politics. This book draws on the 2017 New Zealand Election Study to uncover New Zealanders’ political attitudes and preferences post-election. Its authors ask: is New Zealand now A Populist Exception? Through detailed empirical analyses of how populism and authoritarianism affected vote choice, opinions about immigration, satisfaction with democracy and the relevance of gender and indigeneity to these issues, this book finds that New Zealand politics today does not reflect the international trend toward ideological polarisation and electoral volatility. The authors argue that inclusive forms of populism can be pluralist if a leader’s rhetorical approach recognises ‘the people’ as diverse and encompassing. *A Populist Exception?* concludes that although populism has long been a strong current in New Zealand history, contemporary New Zealand exhibits a moderate form of populism, with liberal and pluralist values in balance with a strong commitment to majoritarian democracy.

Fluid Matter(s) Flow and Transformation in the History of the Body



Edited by: [Natalie Köhle](#), [Shigehisa Kuriyama](#)

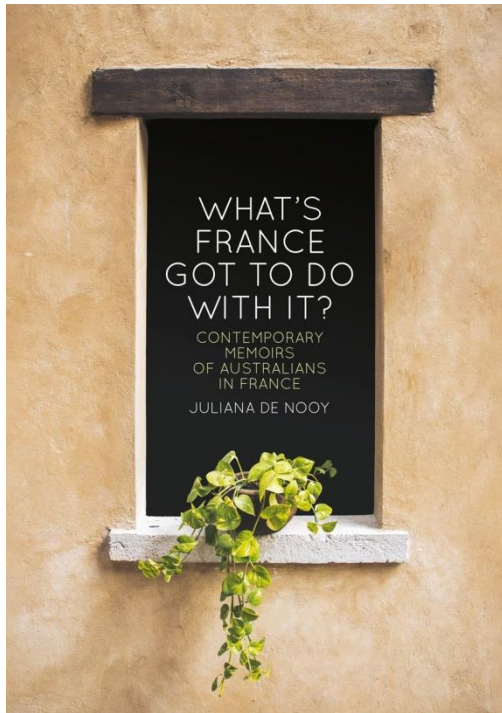
ISBN (online): 9781760463878

Note: Asian Studies Series Monograph 14

ANU Press DOI:

<http://doi.org/10.22459/FM.2020>

Once upon a time, doctors across Eurasia imagined human beings in ways that strike us today as profoundly strange and alien. For over 2,000 years, they worried anxiously about fluids to which our modern doctors spare hardly a thought (such as sweat, phlegm and qi) and they obsessed over details (such as whether a person's pores were open or closed) whose meaning and vital importance have now largely faded from memory. Through a series of case studies from Europe, India, China, Mongolia and Japan, *Fluid Matter(s)* suggests ways to make sense of this strange and dimly remembered past, and urges us to reflect anew on the significance of fluids and flows in the history of medicine. The book also urges us to re-imagine the way in which we narrate history. The articles here are essays, in the original French sense. They are exploratory trials, experiments to illustrate some of the ways in which digital texts can go beyond the affordances of print. They test visual effects that are inconceivable on a paper page, but that are easily conjured on an electronic screen. *Fluid Matter(s)* is the first work of its kind: a study that narrates the body's past in a form that embodies new futures for narrative.



ISBN (print – rrp \$50.00): 9781760463632

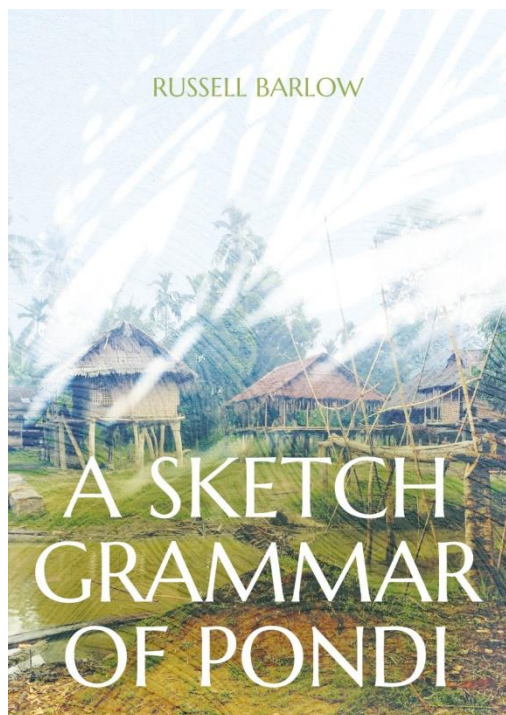
ISBN (online): 9781760463649 ANU Press

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22459/WF.2020>

What's France got to do with it?
Contemporary memoirs of Australians in France

By: [Juliana de Nooy](#) 

While only one book-length memoir recounting the sojourn of an Australian in France was published in the 1990s, well over 40 have been published since 2000, overwhelmingly written by women. Although we might expect a focus on travel, intercultural adjustment and communication in these texts, this is the case only in a minority of accounts. More frequently, France serves as a backdrop to a project of self-renovation in which transplantation to another country is incidental, hence the question ‘What’s France got to do with it?’ The book delves into what France represents in the various narratives, its role in the self-transformation, and the reasons for the seemingly insatiable demand among readers and publishers for these stories. It asks why these memoirs have gained such traction among Australian women at the dawn of the twenty-first century and what is at stake in the fascination with France.



ISBN (print – rrp \$50.00): 9781760463830

ISBN (online): 9781760463847

ANU Press

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22459/SGP.2020>

A Sketch Grammar of Pondi by Russell Barlow

This book provides the first grammatical description of Pondi, a severely endangered language spoken by fewer than 300 people, almost all of whom live in a single village in the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea. Pondi is a non-Austronesian (i.e. Papuan) language, belonging to the Ulmapo branch of the Keram family. *A Sketch Grammar of Pondi* includes ethnographic information, with ample discussion of language vitality and endangerment. The grammatical description begins with phonetics and phonology, before turning to major and minor word classes. The description of nominal morphology focuses especially on Pondi's irregular number affixation and stem alternation, while the description of verbal morphology is largely concerned with aspect and mood suffixation. Syntax is discussed both at the level of the phrase and at the level of the clause. Topics in syntax, such as questions, commands, negation and conditionals are discussed. Following the grammatical description, there is a lexicon of over 600 Pondi words, presented both as a Pondi-to-English word list and as an English-to-Pondi finder list.

Matters of possible interest

Time travellers welcome at the National Film and Sound Archive

The National Film and Sound Archive is again open to the public in Canberra. Visitors can plan their visit by checking the Archive's program, so visitors know what is on offer on the day of a visit. The Archive's new public space, Hive, and its daily film programs (Vintage Australia and Black Screen) are free and no bookings are necessary, but all other events require online bookings as the Archive is operating cashless. Its website has details of relevant COVID safety measures.

Opening hours are Monday to Sunday between 10am and 4pm. For more information contact National Film and Sound Archive of Australia, McCoy Circuit Acton, ACT, 2601 (02) 6248 2000 or access www.nfsa.gov.au/

WHO's news links

For members interested in news from the World Health Organisation the following updated links may be useful: **All previous situation reports are at:**

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports>Media assets and information on COVID-19

<https://who.canto.global/v/coronavirus>

ANU's 75th anniversary plans

The Australian National University is gearing up to mark the 75th anniversary of its founding, which takes place on 1 August, 2021. A new project called ANU75 is being launched to commemorate this anniversary, collecting stories and information from across campus that relate to the University's more recent history from the 1990s to the present day. To contribute or for more information contact Project Coordinator Dr Daniel Oakman, from the School of History at the ANU Research School of Social Sciences, ph. 6125 2722 or email Daniel.Oakman@anu.edu.au.

Diary Dates in abeyance

Craig Reynolds is coordinator of ANUEF's Events' Diary (creynolds697@gmail.com also Craig.Reynolds@anu.edu.au).

Meet the author

All previously scheduled Meet-the-Author events have been cancelled in the present COVID-19 emergency. Some virtual events will take place. For further Meet-the-Author information, contact Colin Steele, Emeritus Fellow, ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences. Ph. 6125 8983 or by email: colin.steele@anu.edu.au

Administration

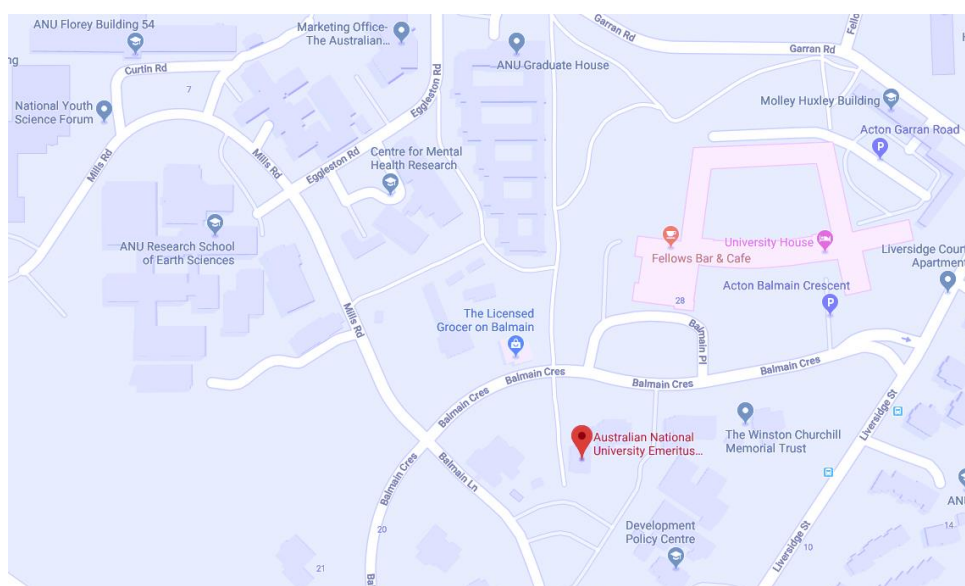
Arrangements for ANUEF room bookings

Requests for booking the Molony Room should be addressed to Secretary of the ANU Emeritus Faculty **Jan O'Connor** at jantancress@gmail.com or **Tel: 6247 3341**

Finding the Molony Room

The Molony Room is at 24 Balmain Crescent, on the south side of Balmain Crescent almost opposite University House.

It is Building 1c on <https://tinyurl.com/yckuknbj> set back between No 22 Balmain Crescent, which is the Acton Early Childhood Centre, and No 26 Balmain Crescent, which is the Academy of the Social Sciences. There are four free car parking spaces reserved for ANUEF members visiting the Molony Room in the Balmain Lane Car Park immediately south of the Molony Room. The room is marked on: <https://tinyurl.com/y7gsyqgh>



The next edition of *Emeritus*, the ANUEF e-magazine, will be published in September, 2020