

# EMERITUS

*The Australian National University Emeritus Faculty e-magazine*

## After trials and sacrifices, ANU is on a path ‘to better times’

The Australian National University was “leaner but not meaner” as a result of the trials and sacrifices of the past two years, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Brian Schmidt, said in his 2022 State of the University address on 7 February.

In a wide-ranging address, the Vice-Chancellor reflected on “the most challenging time we have faced in our 75 years” but declared that in every part of ANU, 2022 would be a year “where there should be time and scope to strive for excellence”.

The underlying state of the university was strong because of the spirit and resilience the university community had shown during the past two years, and despite the hard changes that had been made, he said.

“The sacrifices we have made together, in adapting to the financial realities of our times, have been instrumental in setting us on a path to better times,” Professor Schmidt said.

Financially, 2021 was a better-than-expected year that had seen the ANU run a surplus, although it wasn’t yet clear how much of the result was an “on paper” surplus and how much was actual. Though much of the ‘on paper’ surplus was due to one-off events, a substantial amount came from unfilled positions and lack of expenditure on things like field work and travel. Sacrifices had been borne by people at every level across the university.

The stronger position would allow the university to bring forward leave loading and deferred pay increases, and to fill vacant positions this year. Staff would be able to take the university’s work around Australia and the rest of the world “as the national university needs to do”.

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ANU would be likely to run deficits in 2022 and 2023, and though the university would need to take on debt in coming years, Professor Schmidt was confident that it would not need to make further cuts.

In his address, Professor Schmidt also discussed programs to help students and graduates to develop their capabilities and ensure that the university's work was communicated more widely, including plans to massively upgrade its digital systems, intensifying its commitment to Indigenous Australians, and developing new degrees to train computer scientists and engineers.

The university's ability to sustain itself was "more important than ever because our purpose — to serve society through transformational research and education — remains fundamental to Australia re-emerging from the pandemic," he said.

Professor Schmidt reminded listeners of the work that university researchers had done during the pandemic, but added, "there are so many fields beyond Covid where our service is required. We live in a rapidly changing world, which sees the threats of not living sustainably on our planet increase each year."

"I can easily imagine a dystopic future emerging without strong guidance from thinking across the entire span of what we do at ANU," he continued. "There are only a few hundred research-intensive institutions like ANU across the entire globe where humanity's resources are concentrated to do the foundational work on these challenges. We cannot let our society down."

### *'Political interference can corrupt knowledge'*

However, it was worth thinking about how universities work within society, because that too was coming under threat, he said.

He was "dismayed" by the decision of the Education Minister before Christmas to interfere in the awarding of Australian Research Council grants. Moreover, both major parties agreed that it was appropriate for the minister to wield this power.

"Political interference has bipartisan support," he said. "I see this as an existential threat to Australian universities. My strong view, a view held by many university leaders, whether they say it out loud or not, is Australia needs an apolitical system to allocate research funding like all other countries similar to us have, and a review of the Australian Research Council and its governance.

"Political interference can corrupt knowledge and slow down its creation. It is one of democracy's key advantages over other forms of governments. Our academic autonomy and freedom ... allows us to pursue ideas across a broad spectrum of possibilities. We don't just focus on what is known or thought relevant or acceptable at the time."

The impetus here for the university is to resist the restrictions of the present and focus confidently on the future.

The full text of the Vice-Chancellor's address can be found here:  
<https://www.anu.edu.au/news/all-news/2022-state-of-the-university-vice-chancellors-address-0>

# Chancellor backs ‘apolitical’ processes

In advancing the cause of excellence in teaching and research, the Australian National University “must be academically engaged but we must be intellectually self-sufficient in generating ideas in and for our distinctly Australian context,” the Chancellor, Julie Bishop, said in her Chancellor’s Address on 7 February.

“I publicly and openly endorse the Vice-Chancellor’s comments about apolitical processes in the field of research and the ARC in particular,” she said, referring to Professor Brian Schmidt’s “dismay” at the ability of government ministers to interfere in the award of Australian Research Council grants (see previous item).

The Chancellor noted the ANU’s tradition of serving the Australian people, mostly recently “exemplified by the way we rose to the challenge of assisting the government response to the ravages of a global pandemic” The university had responded “in a particularly unique Australian way”, she said.

“Our public health academics provided advice at the highest levels in government,” she said. “Our epidemiologists provided advice on testing and were involved in training, in contact tracing through the Pacific and WHO. Our economists devised theories and policies for a post-Covid economic recovery, given the unprecedented levels of government debt that we now see as a result of the response to Covid. And our ANU clinicians were on the frontline particularly at Canberra Hospital, treating patients.”

## *‘We change lives for the better’*

ANU took its rightful place among the world’s great universities “because we change lives for the better” by building understanding and engagement, bringing together people from all over the world, by harnessing expertise and generating ideas.

This had been brought home during a recent visit to Papua New Guinea, when Ms Bishop was struck by the number of Papua New Guineans who spoke about their experience with ANU as students, undergraduates and post-graduates, through ANU-University of Papua New Guinea partnerships, or through academic exchanges and scholarships. “So many of them said to me that their link, their connection with ANU changed their lives for the better,” she said.

“As life returns to campus, we must commit anew to our goals of attracting the best and brightest talent in our staff and our students, by generating new knowledge and ideas, by carrying out research for the benefit of our nation, and by collaborating with government and industry and civil society so that our knowledge and ideas can be brought to life,” Ms Bishop said. “We must also ensure that our institutional values make us the standard bearer for equity, diversity, inclusion, respectful relationships. That is what we offer our nation.”

The full text of the Chancellor’s State of the University address is here: <https://www.anu.edu.au/news/all-news/2022-state-of-the-university-chancellors-address>

## **University mourns loss of Professor Brendan Sargeant**

The ANU community is mourning the loss of Professor Brendan Sargeant, who died on the south coast on the weekend of 12-13 February in a swimming accident.

Professor Sargeant was Head of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre (SDSC) in the Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs. A former deputy secretary and associate secretary in the Department of Defence, he was the principal author of the 2013 Defence White Paper. He joined the SDSC in 2018 as an honorary professor and was appointed as Head in 2019.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Brian Schmidt, said ANU had lost “a giant of the university, of Canberra and of the nation”.

## **‘Accelerator’ will help commercialise research**

Stronger commercialisation of research and ideas would mean a stronger economy and a stronger future for Australia, the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, said on 1 February when announcing the creation of a \$1.6 billion “economic accelerator”.

Australia’s Economic Accelerator (AEA) is intended to turn Australian research into leading international businesses. It is part of a \$2.2 billion package that will focus on commercialisation in the six national manufacturing priority areas — resources and critical minerals, food and beverage, medical products, recycling and clean energy, defence, and space — by bringing business and academe together.

Together with a new \$150 million expansion of CSIRO’s Main Sequence Ventures, the AEA would reshape research funding to emphasise projects with high potential for commercialisation, the government said. The AEA would invest in projects as they developed.

“The AEA will drive our universities and businesses to work hand-in-glove through the stages to prove projects’ viability and potential,” Mr Morrison said.

The Acting Minister for Education and Youth Stuart Robert said the AEA would boost investment in two critical stages of experimental development: proof of concept and proof of scale. It would take a lot of the risk and uncertainty for universities out of the equation. he said.

“For example, stage one will involve nearly 100 grants a year of up to \$500,000. Recipients will be required to engage industry through in-kind support or even co-location,” he said.

The government would also invest \$296 million in industry-focused PhDs and fellowships to support its research commercialisation goals. “This new scheme will generate 1,800 industry PhDs and over 800 industry fellows over 10 years to fundamentally reshape the workforce of Australia’s universities,” Minister Robert said.

# Obituaries

## **Nigel Lendon**

**14 September 1944 – 24 October 2021**

The visual arts community, colleagues and friends join the family of highly regarded artist educator Nigel Lendon in expressing sorrow at his recent death.

A year after being diagnosed with brain cancer, Nigel died peacefully at his Wamboin home on Sunday, 24 October 2021.

A conceptual artist, Nigel will be remembered for his contribution to visual arts education, studio practice, theoretical writing and his curatorship of exhibitions.

As Canberra School of Art Deputy Director 1988-2012, he was Convenor of the Graduate Studies program, leading to the introduction of research degrees and the PhD program when the art school amalgamated with the ANU in 1992.

Nigel was always a very supportive colleague and friend, an ideas person, inspirational teacher and a generous mentor.

He was a nature lover, nurturing the trees and native plants on his Wamboin property with his studio that he called RKD. Nigel was an early and avid blogger, and his two most notable blogs were 'Iconophila' and 'Rugs of War'. He was very knowledgeable and interested in bird life, a collector of art works, examples of 1950s design and plastic cameras that were shown at a Canberra Museum and Art Gallery exhibition in 2019.

Born in Adelaide to a well-established family, with a GP grandfather and father who was Professor of Surgery at Adelaide University, Nigel Lendon was expected to attend medical school. However, in 1964, he abandoned medical school and enrolled at the South Australian School of Art, where he encountered influential artist teachers and their networks with which he remained in contact.

He first exhibited his work in the Mildura Art Prize in 1967, at the Adelaide Contemporary Art Space and in other group exhibitions. That year he contributed his minimalist work to the Mildura Triennial Sculpture Exhibition, and in 1968 his work was included in the first National Gallery of Victoria's ground-breaking exhibition *The Field*, where he befriended colleagues in a conceptual artist group.

In 1972 Nigel Lendon was appointed to the new Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education to teach sculpture. The same year he was appointed to the recently established Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council, together with Udo Sellbach and Geoff Parr, who were also involved with new ideas in teaching visual arts education.

In 1974, following several exhibitions in Sydney at the Bonython and Watters Galleries and again at the NGV, Nigel was awarded a two-year Harkness Fellowship for travel to the USA to work and study in New York. There he

become involved with a recently formed art and language group of artists where he developed an interest in Muybridge's photographic images, studies of motion and stereoscopic photography.

After he returned to Sydney in 1976 Lendon participated in the formation of key visual arts organisations, including Media Action, Union Media Services, Art Workers Union, the National Association for the Visual Arts and the Arts Law Centre.

In 1977 Nigel Lendon was recruited to join the Art Theory Department of the new Sydney College of the Arts, and in 1988 he was appointed Deputy Director of the Canberra School of Art as convenor of the school's graduate program. This led to the introduction of research degrees in the visual arts and eventually to the PhD program once the school formally amalgamated with the Australian National University in 1992.

Once in Canberra, with a growing interest in Indigenous art and curatorial practice, Lendon worked in conjunction with colleagues Wally Caruana and Djon Mundine to research and curate the exhibition *The Painters of Wagilag Sisters Story, 1937 to 1997*. Presented at the National Gallery of Australia in 1999, this exhibition was very successful and attracted significant praise from prominent national historians.

Now as a Fellow in the ANU Centre for Cross Cultural Research, Lendon's time in Arnhem Land researching this exhibition inspired further cross-cultural interests.

He focussed on Afghanistan after he was introduced to examples of the Afghan "war rug". With ANU colleague Tim Bonyhady in 2002, he curated a small exhibition, *The Rugs of War*, which was shown at the Canberra School of Art Gallery. This exhibition toured to the Adelaide Festival of Arts in 2004.

In 2012 Nigel Lendon retired from the School of Art and returned to full-time studio practice, continuing to make sculpture.

From that time he participated in a number of survey exhibitions in prominent city galleries, including Melbourne's Heidi Museum and Gallery in 2012, the ANU Drill Hall Gallery in 2017, Sydney's Casula Powerhouse in 2018, Canberra's Museum and Art Gallery in 2020, and a series of other small exhibitions displayed in his Wamboin studio.

Nigel's most recent studio work has been the preparation for an exhibition later this year with former art school friend Alex Danko for presentation at Milani Gallery in Brisbane.

Significantly, his most recent collaborative curatorial effort has again been with Tim Bonyhady, writing the catalogue and selecting rugs for the exhibition *I Weave What I Have Seen: the War Rugs of Afghanistan*. This major exhibition opened at the Drill Hall Gallery on 25 June 2021 and remained on show until late November.

It is a fitting tribute to the remarkable career of a wonderful colleague, creative artist and friend who died on Sunday, 24 October 2021.

A nationally significant artist with a distinguished career, Nigel Lendon leaves an impressive legacy of sculpture, a series of written articles, substantial exhibitions and student successes.

His sustained studio practice, academic leadership and teaching stand as a reference point for a new generation of young artists.

Nigel Lendon will be greatly missed by his family, colleagues, friends and past students.

He is survived by his wife Pamela McGrath, his son Axel and a brother, Colin.

Vale Nigel Lendon

— David Williams



## **Peter Hamilton Bailey, AM, OBE**

### **3 September 1927 – 7 November 2021**

Peter Bailey's professional career spanned 70 years: 40 years in the Australian Public Service, and 30 years at the ANU.

In reviewing his career, and reflecting on the values that guided him, it is striking to note the points of resemblance with the career of his father, Kenneth Bailey. Indeed, comparisons of their achievements began at the earliest possible moment. When Peter was born, his father was the Vice-Master of Queen's College, the Methodist residential college at the University of Melbourne. The *Centenary History* of the college tells us that the students toasted Peter's birth, their president saying "We hope when he comes to Queen's, he will be as worthy a representative of the College as Mr Bailey is'." The author of the history commented, "That, in fact, did come to pass. In 1945, Peter entered Queen's and, like his father, won the Rhodes Scholarship."

Father and son both had distinguished careers in universities and the Australian Public Service, though in a different sequence. Kenneth Bailey was appointed to a Chair in the Faculty of Law at the University of Melbourne in 1927. In 1928, aged 30, he became the Dean. In 1943 he took leave to move to Canberra to be an advisor to the Attorney-General's Department. At the request of Dr H. V. Evatt, he was an advisor to the Australian Delegation to the United Nations when the draft Charter of the United Nations was being considered. In 1946 he was appointed Secretary of the Attorney-General's Department and Solicitor-General of the Commonwealth. He was also a member of the interim Council that established the ANU. He was High Commissioner to Canada from 1964 to 1969.

Peter's public service career — or his service to the public, as he liked to put it — started in 1946 as an assistant to Sir George Knowles, Secretary of the Attorney-General's Department, for a short period before Knowles was succeeded by Kenneth Bailey. Peter then completed a Law degree at the University of Melbourne. He won the Rhodes Scholarship for Victoria in 1949. After a MA at Oxford, he completed an LLM at Canberra University College, which was then an affiliate of the University of Melbourne. (The College merged with the ANU in 1961.) His degree was conferred in Canberra by Sir Robert Garran.

His early career in the public service was in Treasury, and later in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet when Harold Holt succeeded Robert Menzies as Prime Minister. As first assistant secretary, he was in charge of the Prime Minister's private office. In December 1967 it fell to him to inform Zara Holt of the Prime Minister's disappearance. In 1972, he became a deputy secretary of the department and was awarded the OBE.

Two major appointments followed. From 1974 to 1976, he was a full-time member of the Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration, under the chairmanship of H. C. Coombs. In 1978 the Fraser Government appointed him as a special advisor on human rights, with the task of setting up the Australian Human Rights Commission. He was the Deputy Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Commission from 1981 to 1986.

In late 1986, I bumped into Peter by chance at a friend's birthday party. I had met him often in various professional and social settings. I also knew his wife, Leila, who had a long career as a highly respected counsellor in the ANU Counselling Service. To my surprise, Peter told me that his public service career was about to end when his appointment at the Human Rights Commission expired. He was shocked, and uncertain about his next step. I was the Dean of the Faculty of Law at the ANU at that time. Our conversation led to negotiations that resulted in Peter's appointment as a Visiting Fellow in the Law Faculty. He would help to develop teaching and research in human rights and public law and give students and colleagues the benefit of his experience in the public service. I saw this as a stimulating venture for the faculty, and a transitional arrangement that would give Peter a chance to consider his options.

The transitional arrangement endured. The visiting fellowship was renewed, and it was replaced by an appointment as adjunct professor from 1999 until he retired, aged 89, in 2016.

Peter maintained a full teaching load almost to the end. He always had a full quota as a supervisor of honours students undertaking research theses. They were attracted by his forward-looking research interests and his consultative style.

He published several books on human rights, the most notable of which was *The Human Rights Enterprise: In Australia and Internationally* (2009). It was launched at the ANU by the then recently retired Justice Michael Kirby. He hailed the book as "a triumph for one of the great human rights scholars of Australia ... every nook and cranny of the subject is examined".

Throughout his 30 years at the ANU, Peter was a constructive participant in the development of our teaching, research and social engagement. He was a model of collegiality. Some of his activities should be mentioned, to give an indication of the range of his contributions.

Drawing on his experience at the Human Rights Commission, he was an early proponent of a scheme established in 1990 to recruit Indigenous students and to provide tutorial support for them. This was a forerunner to the current ANU College of Law Indigenous Programme and the Tjabal Indigenous Higher Education Centre.

He participated in recurring discussions that sought to improve the experience of women — staff and students — in the ANU College of Law.



He was an advocate for the establishment of the Law Reform and Social Justice Program, and a supporter of its activities.

He had a leading role in establishing a student exchange scheme with the University of Alabama, and a student internship program with the Australian Public Service.

He was the Convenor of the ANU Council Committee Against Sexual Harassment, 1989–1995 and 1997, and Chair of the ANU Discrimination and Harassment Survey Committee, 2000–2002.

In 1992 he provided funding to establish the Bailey Prize in Human Rights. The prize is awarded each year to the top student in the course Human Rights Law in Australia.

He was also a keen supporter of the Sir Kenneth Bailey Memorial Lecture series at the University of Melbourne, which commemorates Sir Kenneth's service as Dean of Law at Melbourne and his "significant part in Australia's contribution to the formation of the United Nations".

Peter was for many years an active member of several community organisations, including Relationships Australia and its predecessor, the Marriage Council; St John's Anglican Church, Reid, and the support group, Drugs in the Family.

In 1998 he was awarded the AM "for service as an advocate and educator in human rights at national and international levels, and community service". At the ANU he received the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Career Excellence in 2011, and the Law Dean's Cup for service to the College of Law community in 2014.

One of Peter's engaging quirks was his love of motorcycles. He rode on to the campus in 1987 on a BMW 800. Thirty years later, after a farewell gathering with his colleagues, he rode away on a shiny new Vespa.

At his farewell, Professor Stephen Bottomley, who was then the Dean, spoke for us all:

"Peter is one of Australia's foremost thinkers and contributors in the law on human rights, and in his time here many generations of students have had the immense benefit of his knowledge, wisdom and insight.

"As his colleagues, we have also greatly enjoyed his involvement in our teaching, research and administrative activities. In his quietly spoken but passionate manner, Peter has been the embodiment of the collegial spirit that we strive to maintain."

— David Hambly



**Brij Vilash Lal, AM**  
**21 August 1952 - 25 December 2021**

When I first knew Brij Lal in the early 1980s, he was beginning his academic career as a Pacific historian at the University of Hawai'i. He was to make a stunning success of his time in Manoa Valley, combining a talent for research and writing with a powerful ambition to work.

The first evidence of this work ethic had already come in his ANU PhD on Indian indentured labourers brought to work on the sugar plantations of Fiji from 1879 to 1916 (*Girmityas: the Origins of the Fiji Indians*, Journal of Pacific History, 1983). Born into humble circumstances in Labasa on the Fijian island of Vanua Levu, Brij was himself a descendant of *girmityas* and they remained a central interest for his lifetime.

Brij's time in Hawai'i made a mockery of those Pacific historians who complained that the demands of teaching at the university devoured their time for writing. Given huge teaching tasks, such as lecturing in World Civilizations to 400, a class that would last from 8:30 to 9:30am, Brij would nevertheless be found within five minutes not relaxing with a coffee and colleagues, but in front of a microfilm reader in the Hamilton Library, perusing the records of the British Colonial Office on Fiji. The result was the single best book ever written on Fiji's history, *Broken Waves: A History of the Fiji Islands in the Twentieth Century*, which became the definitive text on this subject and the basis of numerous courses, sections of courses, and summaries. *Broken Waves* was the foundation upon which he was to build a lifetime of commentary on Fiji's political fortunes, including every coup and every election from 1982 to 2018.

Brij followed the same approach to work after he was appointed in 1990 to the ANU, where he was to stay as the leading academic in the field of Pacific History for the next 25 years until retiring in 2015. More often than not he reached his office in the Coombs Building before 7.30am to devote the early hours to writing and then work through the usual day of doctoral supervision, meetings and, for a number of years, teaching undergraduates. It was no surprise that his colleagues were soon asking which book he had written the previous weekend.

The consequence was a CV of extraordinary length and quality, eighteen books through ANU Press alone and many more than that through other publishers, including HM Stationery Office, which was responsible for his edited version of *Fiji: British Documents on the End of the Empire* (London, 2006). Beyond the work on Fiji came an interest in the history of the Indian diaspora at the height of colonialism, including the diaspora in the West Indies, and the co-editorship of *The Encyclopedia of the Indian Diaspora* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006).

His contribution was also practical. Brij Lal was a constitutional expert and was thoroughly informed on the complex constitutional evolution of Fiji. He served with distinction in the 1990s on the Reeves Constitutional Review Commission, whose recommendations led to the promulgation of Fiji's 1997 constitution, which was the law of Fiji, with one break, until it was abrogated in 2009. At ANU he was in constant demand from the media as a commentator on developments in Fiji, and invariably responded with an informed and

measured contribution, as befitted someone of his experience, grace and dignity.

He was proud to be an Australian citizen and was deeply moved by his reception in Sydney after being deported from Fiji in 2009. When he called for a return to democracy, he was detained, interrogated and assaulted by Fiji military officers and told to leave that country within 24 hours. In Sydney he was met by a representative of the Australian Federal Police who offered to help him. Among many other honours, Professor Lal was made a Member of the Order of Australia in the 2015 Queen's Birthday Honours (Australia) "for significant service to education, through the preservation and teaching of Pacific history, as a scholar, author and commentator."

Beyond these achievements, Professor Lal is fondly remembered by a generation of higher degree students whom he supervised, many from Fiji and many whose research was later published as books or articles. He left behind him a powerful tradition of research in Pacific history. Nor would this tribute be complete without mentioning Brij's wife, Padma, herself a scholar in the field of resource economics and sustainable development whose strength of character and temperament were the pillars on which his achievements were built.

ANU's original contribution to Professor Lal's education was the supervision of his PhD. He repaid that contribution many times over as a teacher, conversationalist, commentator, scholar, teacher and writer whose achievements gained worldwide recognition. As a friend he was extraordinarily generous and entertaining, as well as being a wise confidant in times of trouble. He will be deeply missed.

— Stewart Firth

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## Diary dates

### Meet the Author events

#### *Democracy the target of mass demonstrations*

Participants in mass demonstrations like that seen in Canberra in the first weeks of February may claim that they're "inspired" by similar gatherings in other countries but "a chilling tactical similarity" to protests overseas suggests "a deeper level of international coordination," says writer Van Badham, a guest at a forthcoming ANU/*Canberra Times* meet the author event.

Last year, she notes, the Logically group that targets online misinformation showed that Melbourne's protests occurred among worldwide action devised and organised by extremists from Germany.

"Supposedly local organisers in Canada and Australia have been tracked to foreign servers, operating hacked accounts," she writes. "Observe now how the same behaviours — from shared language, icons and slogans to their direct organising tactics on the ground — are common across the protests. Note that their political targets are consistently the apparatus of democratic government itself."

Badham spent a year undercover to write *QAnon and On: A Short and Shocking History of Internet Conspiracy Cults*, which she will discuss with Andrew Leigh, MHR for Fraser, in an ANU/*Canberra Times* meet the author event at 6pm on Monday, February 28.

It is one of a series of ANU/*Canberra Times*' meet-the-author events scheduled over the next few months.

**February 19, 6pm:** in association with the National Film and Sound Archive, eminent Australian film critic David Stratton will talk with Alex Sloan about his new book, *My Favourite Movies*. It will be followed by a screening of one of his favourites, *Lorenzo's Oil*, directed by George Miller. At Arc Cinema, National Film and Sound Archive. Cost \$12/\$10, Registrations at <https://www.nfsa.gov.au/events/david-stratton-conversation-my-favourite-pictures-lorenzios-oil>.

**February 21, 6pm:** Award-winning author Jess Hill will talk with Virginia Haussegger about her latest Quarterly Essay, *The Reckoning: How #MeToo is Changing Australia*, a powerful essay about shame, secrecy and a revolutionary movement for accountability. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre, ANU. Registrations at [anu.edu.au/events](https://anu.edu.au/events).

**February 28, 6pm:** Van Badham will be in conversation with Andrew Leigh MHR on her book *QAnon and On: A Short and Shocking History of Internet Conspiracy Cults*, which delves into the phenomenon of the mobilised modern conspiracy community. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre, ANU. Registrations at [anu.edu.au/events](https://anu.edu.au/events).

**March 8, 6pm:** Allan Behm, Director of the Australia Institute's International and Security Affairs Program, will talk with Helen Sullivan about his new book, *No Enemies No Friends: Restoring Australia's Global Relevance*, an analysis of the

“pathologies” of Australia's strategic mindset. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre, ANU. Registrations at [anu.edu.au/events](http://anu.edu.au/events).

**March 15:** Wendy McCarthy in conversation with Virginia Haussegger on her autobiography, *Don't Be Too Polite, Girls A Memoir*. Manning Clark Theatre, Kambri Cultural Centre, ANU. Open for bookings.

**March 17:** Former foreign minister Gareth Evans will talk with Michelle Grattan on his essay, *Good International Citizenship: The Case for Decency*. Manning Clark Theatre, Kambri Cultural Centre. Open for bookings.

**March 23:** Troy Bramston, senior writer with *The Australian*, will discuss his new book, *Bob Hawke: Demons and Destiny*, with political columnist Paul Kelly. Manning Clark Theatre, Kambri Cultural Centre.

**March 30:** Matthew Ricketson and Patrick Mullins will talk with Frank Bongiorno on their book, *Who Needs the ABC? How Digital Disruption and Political Dysfunction Threaten the ABC's Existence*. Manning Clark Theatre, Kambri Cultural Centre.

**April 4:** Dr. Kylie Moore-Gilbert will talk about her memoir *The Uncaged Sky: My 804 Days in an Iranian Prison*. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

**April 20:** Nobel laureate Peter Doherty will talk with Tracy Smart about his book *An Insider's Plague Year*. Manning Clark Theatre, Kambri Cultural Centre. Rescheduled from 2021.

**April 26:** Aboriginal author, poet and activist Anita Heiss will be in conversation with Ann McGrath about her new book *Am I Black Enough For You? 10 Years On*. Manning Clark Theatre, Kambri Cultural Centre.

**May 10:** Toby Walsh will talk with Andrew Leigh about Toby's new book, *Machines Behaving Badly: The Morality of AI*. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

**May 18:** Dervla McTiernan will talk with Chris Hammer about her new crime novel, *The Murder Rule*.

**May 23:** Elizabeth Tynan in conversation with Frank Bongiorno about her new book, *The Secret of Emu Field*.

Enquires to the convenor, Colin Steele, at [colin.steele@anu.edu.au](mailto:colin.steele@anu.edu.au).

## *Ancient Greeks at the National Museum*

The National Museum of Australia's exhibition *Ancient Greeks: Athletes, Warriors and Heroes*, continues until 1 May. The exhibition, mounted with the collaboration of the British Museum, explores competition through sport, politics, drama, music and warfare, illuminated by more than 170 objects from the British Museum collection.

## *Jeffrey Smart at the National Gallery*

More than 100 works make up the exhibition that spans the career of renowned Adelaide-born artist Jeffrey Smart. The exhibition marks the centenary of Smart's birth and features works from the 1940s to his last painting, *Labyrinth*, completed in 2011. Smart sought inspiration from the world around him — looking to the environment of urban and industrial modernity — which he

transformed through his imaginative sense of theatre and intimate understanding of geometry and composition. Smart's powerful images have become emblematic of 20th and 21st century urban experience.

## *Shakespeare to Winehouse: National Portrait Gallery*

Portraits of famous people from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the present will go on show in the exhibition *Shakespeare to Winehouse: Icons from the National Portrait Gallery, London*, opening at the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, on 12 March. The London gallery holds the world's most extensive collection of portraits, 80 of which are on loan to Canberra while its central London building is renovated. Shakespeare, Dickens, Churchill, the Brontes, the Beatles, Bowie and Amy Winehouse — all these and more will be on show. Bookings are essential, prices ranging from \$25 for adults to \$5 for 15 and under.

## *Nolan in Central Australia: CMAG*

Sidney Nolan's desire to explore Australian landscapes and mythologies intensively is brought together in the exhibition *Finding the Dry Heart: Sidney Nolan's Early Travels in Central Australia*, at the Canberra Museum and Gallery. In the late 1940s Nolan and his wife Cynthia made a series of extensive travels through Central Australia and Queensland, recorded in photographs, notes, and some drawings, carried back into the studio in Sydney. The exhibition features paintings from the Nolan Collection, alongside some of the reading material that Sidney and Cynthia Nolan absorbed in their creative research, and a group of works lent by Duncan Reeder. Runs until 2 April.

## Items of note

### *Astronomers find radio 'bridge' between galaxies*

A group of international radio astronomers led by the Italian National Institute of Astrophysics (INAF), and including Australian Astronomical Optics (AAO) Macquarie, have discovered radio emission that was acting as a "bridge" between a cluster of galaxies and a group of galaxies. The discovery was the result of a multi-frequency and multi-band study of the Shapley Supercluster, the largest constellation of galaxies in the local universe.

The observations, published in *Astronomy & Astrophysics*, were carried out with the Australian ASKAP radio telescope in Western Australia, the South African MeerKAT radio telescope, and the Indian Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT). Optical data collected with ESO's VLT Survey Telescope (VST) and X-ray data from ESA's XMM-Newton space telescope completed the study.

"The emission was triggered by the collision of these separate groupings of galaxies," said co-author Professor Andrew Hopkins from AAO Macquarie. "Despite its difficulty to detect, this unique emission will now allow astronomers to better study the regions between clusters of galaxies."

## *ANU team creates a more efficient solar cell*

Researchers at ANU's College of Engineering and Computer Science have set a new efficiency record for solar cells that are also cheaper to produce and easier to manufacture.

The study, led by Dr Jun Peng, focused on 1cm<sup>2</sup> solar cells made with perovskites, a family of materials with a specific crystal structure. Perovskite solar cells have the potential to be made more cheaply and simply than other solar cells, and to produce more power in a given area.

The team achieved an efficiency record of 22.6 per cent, meaning that the cells can convert 22.6 per cent of sunlight into energy. They also demonstrated a “fill factor” of more than 86 per cent, which is one measure of the quality of the solar cell.

“We're always trying to reach the highest efficiency we can. Commercialisation won't happen without high efficiency,” co-author Professor Kylie Catchpole said. “But we need a cheap process as well. This is an approach that definitely combines those two elements in a way that's different to how it's been achieved previously.”

## *'Supermountains' controlled evolution of life*

Researchers at the ANU believe that giant mountain ranges at least as high as the Himalayas and stretching up to 8,000 kilometres across entire supercontinents played a crucial role in the evolution of early life on Earth.

They tracked the formation of these “supermountains” throughout the Earth's history using traces of zircon with low lutetium content — a combination of mineral and rare earth elements found only in the roots of high mountains. The study found that supermountains formed only twice in Earth's history — the first between 2,000 and 1,800 million years ago and the second between 650 and 500 million years ago. Both mountain ranges rose during periods of supercontinent formation.

The lead author, ANU PhD candidate Ziyi Zhu, said there were links between these two occurrences and the two most important periods of evolution on Earth. “There's nothing like these two supermountains today. It's not just their height — if you can imagine the 2,400km-long Himalayas repeated three or four times you get an idea of the scale,” she said.

“We call the first example the Nuna Supermountain. It coincides with the likely appearance of eukaryotes, organisms that later gave rise to plants and animals. The second, known as the Transgondwanan Supermountain, coincides with the appearance of the first large animals 575 million years ago and the Cambrian explosion 45 million years later, when most animal groups appeared in the fossil record.”

Co-author Professor Jochen Brocks said: “What's stunning is the entire record of mountain-building through time is so clear. It shows these two huge spikes: one is linked to the emergence of animals and the other to the emergence of complex big cells.”

When the mountains eroded they provided essential nutrients like phosphorus and iron to the oceans, supercharging biological cycles and driving evolution to greater complexity. The supermountains may also have boosted oxygen levels in the atmosphere, needed for complex life to breathe.

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## Administration

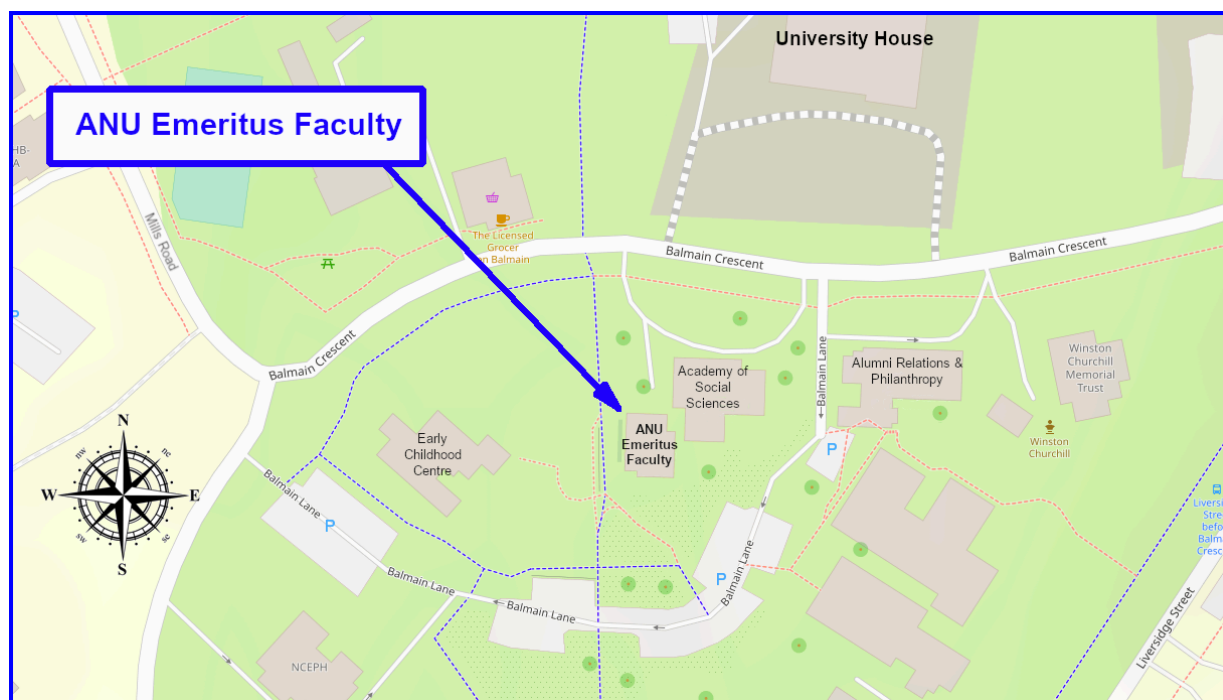
### Arrangements for ANUEF room bookings

Requests to book the Molony Room should be addressed to the Secretary of the ANU Emeritus Faculty, Jan O'Connor, at [jantancress@gmail.com](mailto:jantancress@gmail.com) or 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 22 Balmain Crescent (the Acton Early Childhood Centre) and 26 Balmain Crescent (the Academy of the Social Sciences). 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 issue of the Emeritus Faculty newsletter will be published in March.