

EMERITUS

The Australian National University Emeritus Faculty e-magazine

Education crucial to restoring trust in democracy: Schmidt

Democracy cannot function effectively without evidence and knowledge, yet it is being paralysed by an environment ‘where invention and hard fact can sit indistinguishably side by side, one as credible as the other,’ the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Brian Schmidt, told the National Press Club in Canberra on 5 December.

In a wide-ranging speech on building resilient and resurgent democracies, Professor Schmidt suggested that declining trust ‘may be the biggest stumbling block in our democracy’, but said education and knowledge were crucial to strengthening our political systems.

He said the Australian Election Study, led by Professor Ian McAllister at ANU, showed that in 2019, only 59 per cent of Australians were satisfied with how their democracy was working. Levels of satisfaction improved only marginally after the 2023 election.

This prompted the question: what is happening to affect Australians’ perceptions of their democratic governance?

The study found that 54 per cent of Australians think that government is run for ‘a few big interests’, Professor Schmidt said. In contrast, just 12 per cent of Australians believed the government was run for ‘all of the people’. Seven in ten ‘think that people in government only look after themselves’.

‘And perhaps the thing that worries me most: only a quarter think that people in government *can* be trusted,’ he said.

‘This suggests Australian democracy itself is in peril. Democracies do not function without trust. And democracies cannot evolve without trust.’

This should be a wake-up call, he said. ‘We live in an age where there has never been greater access to information, nor greater doubt about its accuracy. An information explosion risks blowing apart the foundational workings of our democracy. Where we source our information from, who we listen to, who we trust, has changed.

‘You just have to look at your social media coverage of COVID-19 to understand the problem: warnings issued to followers that “drinking bleach” was not a medically sound treatment.’

In the recent past, government, universities and the media had been ‘society’s bulwark against crazy theories and flat-out lies’. Elected officials relied on highly curated information, often supplied by universities and the expertise of their graduates, to understand issues and make decisions.

News was reported by recognised media outlets that synthesised information about the world. ‘It wasn’t perfect — but it was, by and large, trustworthy,’ Professor Schmidt said.

‘Today we have a 24-hour news cycle that covers every moment and every decision across a dazzling array of providers with paralysing efficiency. It is fed by a quasi-infinite sea of information on the internet, catering to almost any pre-conceived notion on any subject — where everyone is an expert. And the genuine experts compete for airtime with the keyboard warriors, the armchair generals, and the graduates of Trump University.

‘Amid this chaos are stores of analyses and repositories of information that are the best that humanity has ever seen. But each citizen now gets to choose their own information sources, where content providers preferentially feed people things that they like and believe, leading to a deeply fragmented view of the world.’

Undermining trust in academe ‘corrosive’

Universities and news organisations had ‘privileged roles’ in democracies, with the principles of university autonomy, academic freedom and freedom of the press making them ‘the institutions responsible for holding our elected politicians to account, and keeping citizens informed.’

‘Amongst university leaders, I am not alone in worrying about our social license to operate given the rise of alternative facts, and political leaders (thankfully not in Australia) saying things like, “the people of this country have had enough of experts”,’ Professor Schmidt said.

Undermining trust in our academic institutions was ‘corrosive’, he said: ‘We are not flawless. But we pursue the truth without a political agenda or a paymaster. We follow the evidence and are transparent in our methods and outcomes. There has to be space in a functioning democracy for experts to debate — those places are called universities.

‘To achieve this, we must maintain our autonomy and the privilege of academic freedom.’

Universities were required to self-accredit against a set of standards, and Professor Schmidt asked whether a similar process might not be applied to the media, given that the ANUPoll on the Voice had found that trust in the mainstream media was ‘well below both that of government and parliament’.

‘Nothing less than the health of our democracy rests on restoring public trust in their news providers, and in maintaining it in our universities,’ he said.

Turning to artificial intelligence, Professor Schmidt noted that ANU had been working in the field for 50 years, although AI had only become a focus of global attention about a year ago, with the arrival of ChatGPT.

AI was a massive leap forward, but ‘guardrails’ were needed because the technology had flaws and inherent biases that needed to be understood before it went into widespread use.

This also touched the matter of trust. ‘We are entering the age of massive scale generative AI,’ he said, ‘where individuals, organisations and nations will be able to create manipulated or completely synthetic digital documents, images, videos and sound that will be almost impossible to discern from reality. Already we see individual clips that surprise us in their apparent authenticity.

‘But imagine a time when there is more fabricated digital content than real content — where no one can trust what is real, and what is not. That time is nearer than you might think — probably just a few years away.’

He hoped that universities and the media might work together to overcome these weaknesses, and restore the trust needed to help secure democracy.

Although he had focussed his remarks on Australia, Professor Schmidt said there was ‘a global urgency to my argument’.

Australian democracy ‘precious and worth preserving’

‘In 2024, 40 countries representing 3.2 billion people will have their elections. We should expect the beginnings of massive AI-generated misinformation campaigns to emerge in these elections, which include nearby Indonesia, as well as the United States.’

Australian democracy was ‘precious and worth preserving’, he said. As a dual US-Australian citizen, he had come to appreciate three key differences between the two democratic systems that worked in Australia’s favour. They were mandatory voting, preferential voting, and the Australian Electoral Commission and the independence it brought to elections.

Our democratic system was under stress, and it had delivered disappointments and dilemmas, ‘but it may have far greater tests of its resilience ahead in the turbulent 21st century. We need to act quickly to shore it up,’ he said.

‘Education is the single easiest tool we have to help. It is the most powerful weapon to change and reshape the world.

‘We know that trust in government increases markedly with education, as does essentially every other measure from health to happiness.

‘So, while the government considers where it will take our sector through the Universities Accord process, let me close by saying this: government faces hard choices, and I do not envy it.

‘But the greatest investment you can make in our society, our happiness, our wellbeing, our Reconciliation journey, and our democracy, is education.

‘Amid the noise and chaos of democratic debate, I hope that that is the message you hear today. And I hope you have the courage to make your answer “yes”.’

The full text of the speech is at <https://www.anu.edu.au/news/all-news/building-resilient-and-resurgent-democracies-for-the-21st-century-0>

Government's migration overhaul tightens international student rules

The Australian Government will increase the English-language requirement for international students wishing to study in Australia, and tighten scrutiny of student visa applications from those deemed to be high-risk international education providers.

These are among a series of changes affecting international students that were announced in the government's *Immigration Strategy*, issued on 11 December. The changes have been broadly welcomed by the university sector.

The *Strategy* notes that Australia is a destination of choice for hundreds of thousands of international students seeking high-quality education every year. The students are a valuable part of the nation's social and economic fabric, and are generally full-fee paying. Like domestic students, they 'should be able to count on an excellent education experience and protection from both unscrupulous employers and education providers', the *Strategy* says

International students contribute \$30 billion annually to the economy and are a source of talent that can help to lift productivity, meet critical skills needs and drive exports. Student and temporary graduate visa holders also make a significant contribution to the labour market, the *Strategy* says. After New Zealand, they are the largest component of Australia's temporary migration system and the single biggest feeder into its permanent program. Thus it was critical that the relationship between the international education and the migration systems be carefully managed.

However, while Australia had experienced sustained growth in the number of student and graduate visa holders since 2010, growth post-Covid had been 'partly driven by non-genuine students and unscrupulous education providers subverting aspects of the current regulatory and compliance framework,' the *Strategy* says.

Reviews had identified a number of problems, including in the VET sector, where there was evidence of non-genuine education providers, or 'ghost schools', where 'students allegedly maintain enrolment without attending classes'. The *Strategy* says it is incumbent on Australia to mitigate these risks, and to strengthen the quality and appeal of the education sector. It should also provide a path for students to apply their skills more fully, while dealing more clearly with those who have less prospect of remaining permanently, and ensuring that visa-holders are not exploited in the workplace.

As a first step, the government has already closed a loophole that allowed international students to switch to lower-quality education providers to be able to work in Australia. It had increased by 17 per cent the amount of savings needed to be eligible for a student visa. It is also introducing a series of administrative measures to strengthen standards and accountability measures for providers and agents.

In new commitments, from early next year the government will increase English-language requirements for Student and Temporary Graduate visas with

a view to improving students' educational experience, strengthening the integrity of the sector, and reducing workplace exploitation.

In addition, the government the Government will introduce a new Genuine Student test to encourage applications from genuine students and discourage those whose primary intention is to work in Australia rather than study.

The government will also strengthen the Home Affairs Department unit responsible for visa integrity, strengthen requirements for international education providers, and restrict 'visa-hopping', whereby students move from visa to visa to extend their stay even though they have little prospect of permanent residency. The *Strategy* says this practice has led to a growing number of 'permanently temporary' former international students living in Australia.

Finally, it will strengthen and simplify the rules around Temporary Graduate visas, which give former international students full work rights after graduation so that they can gain work experience.

A review found that more than 50 per cent of Temporary Graduate visa holders were in low-skilled jobs that did not provide the experience they needed to become eligible for a skilled permanent visa. Some 19,000 students and graduates have been onshore for nine or more years but could not fully establish a life in Australia. They also faced barriers in the labour market.

University peak bodies back changes

In response, the government will adjust the length and eligibility of post-study work rights so that graduates have enough time to demonstrate their ability to succeed in the skilled labour market and establish a career. This will also set boundaries for those with low prospects of becoming permanent residents. Where graduates are working in skilled jobs, they will be able to apply for the new Skills in Demand visa or a permanent skilled visa.

The Group of Eight universities backed the changes, noting that quality and integrity were at the heart of the reforms to support areas of priority and strategic need.

'Australia needs high-quality, high-achieving graduates who will contribute to our economic and social prosperity,' the Go8 Chief Executive, Vicki Thomson, said. 'In a global economy where competition for talent is intense, particularly in areas such as cyber security and artificial intelligence, improving our migration planning process and fast-tracking application processes in areas of greatest need is key to Australia remaining attractive to prospective students.'

Universities Australia's Chief Executive, Catriona Jackson, said the group was pleased that the government had accepted its call for a genuine student test to replace the temporary entry requirement. 'This will ensure we are getting the right people with genuine ambitions to attend university in Australia,' she said.

'The creation of new visa streams to attract researchers to our universities and keep more international graduates in Australia is also a good thing.

'Importantly, the strategy acknowledges how vital international education is to the economy and Australia's prosperity,' she said.

After Covid, Emeritus Faculty welcomes return of full program of lectures

This year, for the first time since the Covid outbreak, the Emeritus Faculty had been able to hold a full program of collegiate lunchtime lectures, the Faculty Chair, Emeritus Professor James J. Fox, said in his report to the annual general meeting on 13 December.

In all, 13 lectures had been held, covering a range of topics from archaeology and anthropology to Australian politics and international conflict.

Seven Projects Symposium meetings had been held, while Professor Andrew Podger had presented the annual Emeritus Lecture, in which he examined the role of markets in delivering public services, and argued for a rebalancing that recognised the important role of government in a thriving liberal democracy.

The John Molony History Prize had been brought up-to-date this year with the award of two prizes after a hiatus caused by the Covid outbreak, The awards this year went to Daniel May and Thomas Joseph Lalevé.

The Molony prize is awarded annually by the Emeritus Faculty to a postdoctoral degree student who, in the previous year, has submitted the best history thesis.

May's thesis examines the historical and contemporary politics of fire and their relation to changing understanding of Indigenous burning in Australia and the United States in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Lalevé's thesis offers new insights into the search for a 'science of society' during and after the French Revolution, a revised interpretation of the history of the concept of perfectibility, and a fresh perspective on the ongoing contest between science, religion and politics in a turbulent period of French history.

Professor Fox said there had been no new developments in efforts to recover Ante Dabro's bronze bust of John Molony, which had been removed from its plinth in November.

He reported that Faculty membership in 2023 stood at 267.

The committee for 2024 is Bob Burne, Prame Chopra, James Fox, Dorothy Horsfield, Ian Keen, Brian Lees, Jan O'Connor, Brad Pillans, Kathryn Robinson, Larry Saha, Ailsa Solley and David Williams. Verna Rosling was seconded to the Committee. James Fox was re-elected as Chair.

The meeting voted to receive the report. The meeting also adopted the treasurer's report and annual financial statements, which showed that the Faculty recorded a surplus of \$2,856.91 for the year and held assets of \$10,828.72.

Experts call for national strategy to develop nuclear science capability

Australia's nuclear science sector needs a national strategy that creates new knowledge and infrastructure and equips Australians for jobs in an expanding sector, according to an online national nuclear science roundtable held recently by the Australian Academy of Science.

The expert group concluded that it would not be possible to defend Australia, meet the nation's ambitions in space or maintain the population's general health through medical research and care unless nuclear science capabilities were improved.

The roundtable, chaired by Emeritus Professor Lawrence Cram, Visiting Fellow in the Research School of Physics at the Australian National University, brought together multidisciplinary experts from fields including nuclear physics, nuclear medicine, radiation science, space, nuclear waste management, environmental science, and nuclear regulation and diplomacy.

'Basic research is key to Australia's ability to have a successful applied nuclear science sector and to be able to benefit from new technological developments and mitigate sovereign risk,' Emeritus Professor Cram said.

'There is also a critical need for informed debate and respectful deliberation to inform decision-making and improve public understanding of nuclear science and the benefits it can bring to Australia.'

The experts believed that new technologies and hands-on experience would inspire students and improve nuclear science literacy in schools. Nuclear science would provide new careers, requiring additional undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

Participants in the national roundtable called for the creation of an independent knowledge broker between academia, industry and government to advise on national needs and opportunities in all dimensions of nuclear science

They sought a national strategy that identified opportunities to develop education pathways, detailed the infrastructure required to train nuclear scientists, conduct foundational and applied research, and promote collaborations between sectors.

The Academy's President, Professor Chennupati Jagadish, said the AUKUS agreement had increased awareness of critical gaps in Australia's fundamental and applied nuclear science capabilities.

'A scaling up of nuclear science capabilities is needed to transform our ageing nuclear science infrastructure and to plug the current deficits in our knowledge and skills so that we can meet our national ambitions,' Professor Jagadish said.

The Academy will publish a summary of the group's deliberations next year.

CSIRO signs climate-change memorandum for the Pacific

Scientific cooperation to improve climate-change risk and adaptation management, environmental protection and sustainable development is enshrined in a five-year Memorandum of Understanding signed at the COP26 conference in Dubai by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP).

The agreement builds on the partnership, established in 2016, which has yielded programs like the Vanuatu Climate Futures Portal which provides climate information, projections and decision-making tools to help adaptation and action in agriculture, infrastructure, fisheries and tourism.

The partnership emphasises joint design and delivery of Pacific research programs involving climate-change resilience, island and ocean ecosystems, environmental monitoring, waste management, and pollution control.

SPREP is the lead regional organisation for the protection and sustainable development of Pacific island environments. Its headquarters in Apia, Samoa, serve 26 member countries and territories.

The jointly designed and delivered programs will support environmental science in risk management and decision-making in a range of areas, including climate-change science and services, assessment of climate impact, vulnerability and risk, fisheries and marine coastal resources and ecosystems, and monitoring, modelling and assessment of ocean-scale physical systems.

The MOU will also encompass food-systems modelling, analysis and assessment planning, management of plastics and other waste, water security, and modelling, assessment and planning energy transition.

SPREP's Director General, Mr Sefanaia Nawadra, said SPREP was honoured to continue the partnership with CSIRO.

'SPREP's focus isn't just around helping Pacific island countries address climate change,' he said. 'We're also seeking to tackle the biodiversity, environmental governance, waste and pollution issues that Pacific island countries face.'

'SPREP brings a convening capacity to enable the translation of science into tangible actions. We are very excited to continue this collaboration, which will undoubtedly yield more benefits in policy and steps taken to address climate change.'

The Director of CSIRO's Climate Science Centre, Dr Jaci Brown, said the agreement allowed both parties to build on the synergies, successes and lessons learnt, applying them to a range of regional environmental issues while drawing on the scope of CSIRO's technical capability.

Minister leads tributes to retiring chief executive of research council

Leaders in tertiary education have paid tribute to the former Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Research Council, Ms Judi Zielke PSM, who retired from the position early in December due to a health issue.

Announcing her retirement, the ARC said that Ms Zielke's leadership had established a clear pathway forward for the organisation to continue to build and develop, and to continue its ongoing role in improving Australia's research landscape. In particular, the increase in transparency and engagement has helped to build the relationship with the research sector and improved its outcomes.

The Minister for Education, Jason Clare, thanked Ms Zielke for her leadership and for helping to set the organisation up for the future.

'Ms Zielke has been a great source of advice and has guided the ARC through a period of positive change,' Mr Clare said.

'I wish Ms Zielke the best of health and thank her for everything she has done for research in Australia.'

Universities Australia's Chief Executive, Catriona Jackson, said the sector was sad to learn of Ms Zielke's resignation.

'We are thankful for Judi's collaborative and consultative approach to the role, and for the way she has steered the ARC in a positive direction through change and new opportunities,' Ms Jackson said.

'Judi has, at all times, led with professionalism, care and respect for the sector.

'She leaves just as the ARC enters a new phase, including an almost complete end to political interference in merit-based decisions and the establishment of an independent board.

'We regret that she will not be in place to oversee these important changes. Judi goes with our sincere best wishes for a swift recovery.'

Dr Richard Johnson will be Acting CEO until a permanent appointment is made.

Obituaries

Victor George Elliott

5 March 1945 – 12 September 2023

Vic Elliott, born in New Zealand on 5 March 1945, died at Lakes District Hospital, Queenstown, on 12 September 2023, aged 78 years. Vic is survived by his wife, Alison, their children Frances and David, and their partners, Ben Thomas and Amy Elliott.

Vic graduated from Victoria University of Wellington with a BA in 1965, and an MA with First Class Honours in English in 1966, before completing an MLitt on Milton at Worcester College, Oxford, in 1970. He then worked in England as a bibliographic assistant at J. Whittaker & Son and at Brunel University library before returning to New Zealand, where he obtained a Diploma in Librarianship at the New Zealand Library School in Wellington in 1972.

Vic subsequently took up positions in at the Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, before becoming Deputy Librarian of Victoria University of Wellington in June 1985. After a period as Acting Librarian he became University Librarian in April 1986, a position he held until December 1997, when he was appointed Librarian of the University of Tasmania in January 1998. He was subsequently appointed University Librarian and Director of Scholarly Information Services of the Australian National University in February 2003, a position he held until retirement in 2011.

In all his positions, Vic was a quiet achiever and a consummate and collegial professional. At Wellington, among many other achievements, Vic introduced the first automated library system; at Tasmania he rebuilt the profile of the library within the university community and accelerated access to electronic information. At ANU, Vic steered the library through the administrative and cultural complexities of being part of a complex Division of Information which also included supercomputing, software development and educational technology. Vic's achievements included the development of the ANU E-press and a major new off-campus storage facility.

Vic also faced environmental upheavals such as the 2003 Canberra bushfires, which devastated the University's Mt Stromlo observatory and the library about a month before Vic took up his position, and the 2007 flooding of the Chifley Library, which damaged around over 1000 books and parts of the building, although sadly this was only a foretaste of the massive flooding of the Chifley building in 2018.

Vic played a major role in national and international professional associations. He served as President of the Library and Information Association of New Zealand/Aotearoa Te Rau Herenga O Aotearoa (LIANZA). From 1990–1991 he was a member of the Board of Directors of CAUL, the Council of Australia University Librarians, and was Chair of CAUL's Electronic Information Resources Committee, and a member of the Steering Committee of the Australian National Data Service (ANDS). More widely, he became chair of the OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) Asia-Pacific Regional Council and a member of the Board of Directors of CLOCKSS, a digital archive for academic publishers and research libraries.

On a personal level, Vic was keen to promote the virtues of New Zealand viticulture and all New Zealand sporting endeavours, especially rugby. Always a late-night person rather than an early-morning starter, Vic was a keen devotee of rugby shows on Foxtel sports, which occasionally drew comments, in the early hours of the morning, from his apartment neighbours to turn the volume down.

— Colin Steele

Raghendra Jha

9 August 1953 – 20 November 2023

Raghendra Jha was an Emeritus Professor of Economics in the Arndt-Corden Department of Economics at the Crawford School of Public Policy. He was a Fellow of the World Innovation Foundation and specialised in development economics, macroeconomics, and public economics.

‘Raghav’ Jha, who unexpectedly passed away on 20 November 2023, was a leading scholar of the Indian economy and in several fields of economics. He published no fewer than 32 books (both authored and edited) on various aspects of the Indian economy, society, and public policy; on South Asia; and in economics more generally. His interests were exceptionally diverse, including macroeconomics, public economics, agriculture, poverty and living standards, political economy, and much else. Raghav’s work was primarily motivated by the major development challenges and issues of the day. His work was analytically grounded and informed by the global development literature, with careful attention to data and a keen eye on the historical context.

Raghav attracted many graduate students who wanted to learn from and work with him, many of whom subsequently became personal friends and co-authors. During his 20 years at the Australian National University alone he was primary supervisor for 15 PhD graduates, and on the panels of others too. He was primary supervisor for another 11 PhD graduates in earlier roles. His broad global network of leading academics and officials is illustrated by the exceptional quality of Narayanan Oration speakers who accepted his invitation to present on key aspects of contemporary India.

Born in Chaibasa, Raghav attended school in Patna, where his father held a senior administrative position. Tragedy hit the family early when both parents passed away in their forties. Raghav was brought up by his older sister and rode a bicycle to school. India’s founding president, Dr Rajendra Prasad, lived in the district. Raghav admired him greatly and could vividly recall at least two occasions when he was invited to Dr Prasad’s home for a chat.

Raghav excelled academically. He gained entry to the prestigious St Stephen’s College at the University of Delhi and subsequently to the famous Delhi School of Economics. His stellar performance led in turn to a PhD scholarship at Columbia University, where he studied under Professor Edmund Phelps, a demanding but appreciative supervisor who was subsequently awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences. Aged just 25 years at graduation, Raghav then embarked on his academic career.

For over two decades he enjoyed a peripatetic academic life, holding positions at institutions including the Delhi School of Economics, the Indira Gandhi Institute for Development Research (Mumbai), Williams College, Queens University, and the University of Warwick. In 2001 he took up the Rajiv Gandhi Chair of South Asian Economics at the Australian National University, which would become his academic home for the rest of his life. At the ANU he was the long-serving Executive Director of the Australia South Asia Research Centre (ASARC), as well as serving as Head of the Arndt-Corden Department of Economics (ACDE) for several years.

A sample of his book titles illustrates the diversity of his intellectual output and interests. His books included *Macroeconomics for Developing Countries*, *Modern Public Economics*, *Facets of India's Economy and Her Society* (Volumes I and II), *Handbook on Food: Demand, Supply, Sustainability and Security*, *The Economics of Food Security* (the latter two co-edited with his very close friend Dr Raghav Gaiha), his 2023 volume *Macroeconomics for Development: Prognosis and Prospects*, and the edited collection, *Twenty K.R. Narayanan Orations: Essays by Eminent Persons on the Rapidly Transforming Indian Economy*. He published prolifically in journals on topics including poverty alleviation, social protection, debt sustainability, inflation, and much more. His article 'Trevor Swan and Indian Planning: The Lessons of 1958/59', with Selwyn Cornish, won the 2019 Peter Groenewegen Prize for the best article in the *History of Economics Review* over the previous two years.

Although Raghav lived outside India for considerable periods, the country was central to his life and work. As Dr Raghav Gaiha observed, Raghav 'was a nationalist at heart and a devout Hindu, but committed to secularism and equity'. Moreover, he was a strong supporter of Prime Minister Narendra Modi (a photo of the two of them adorned his office) and his bold reform agenda, while expressing some concern about the repression of religious and ethnic minorities.

Raghav was a private but friendly and highly courteous person with a warm laugh. He was a most congenial and accessible colleague, with an office door that was often open. He was a voracious reader and invariably up for a friendly and lively discussion about something topical, from a recent academic paper to a story in the day's *New York Times*, and much else. As befits his rich and busy life, he and his wife and son had just arrived in Delhi, and he had been looking forward to a seminar on three decades of economic reform in India, when the end came.

Upon his transition to emeritus status in June 2021, Raghav wrote to his former PhD students to wish them well in their professional and personal lives and to share some thoughts and reflections. These included the imperative to 'not discount the future too much' and the importance of analysis and listening to different viewpoints. He remarked that while continuing his various research projects he also 'hoped to rest a bit' and 'spend some time travelling and in my home country, India'. Sadly, his retirement was all too short.

Raghav has left an enduring legacy through his extensive publications and the many students whom he taught and mentored. He will be deeply missed by his world-wide network of graduates, collaborators, and friends.

— **Paul J. Burke and Hal Hill**

We are grateful to friends and colleagues of Raghav for helpful discussions and information. Particular thanks go to Dr Raghav Gaiha, one of Raghav's closest friends.

Diary dates

Ancient Egypt comes to the National Museum

Objects associated with more than 3000 years of ancient Egyptian history are on display at the National Museum of Australia until September next year. The exhibition 'Discovering Ancient Egypt' has been drawn from the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities and allows visitors to explore religious beliefs, daily life along the Nile and the Egyptians' belief in the journey to the afterlife. Visitors can walk through a recreated life-sized temple and see depictions of the gods. The exhibition includes intricately decorated coffins, extracts from the *Book of the Dead*, art, jewellery and sculptures, as well as everyday artefacts including household pottery, objects for worship and an ancient board game. The exhibition also focuses on the history of discovery, inviting visitors to consider the role of museums in documenting and presenting ancient cultures. Entry is \$25 for adults, \$20 concession, \$12.50 for children 5 to 16 years, \$62.50 for a family of two adults and two children, and \$17.50 for Friends and exhibition members.

Focus on Australian lives, landscapes

Australia's people and landscapes over six decades are exposed in the exhibition 'Focus: Australian Government Photographers', at the National Archives' National Office in Kings Avenue. The exhibition showcases the work of photographers who worked for Australian Government agencies, many for the Australian News and Information Bureau and its successor bodies. From 1939 to 1996 the photographers were commissioned to capture images of the land and how Australians lived. 'Focus' delves into the work of talented individuals who helped to preserve our rich visual heritage, among them Harry Frauca, Max Dupain and Mervyn Bishop. The exhibition is open from 9am to 5pm Mondays to Friday, and from 10am till 4pm at weekends. Entry is free. In addition, free guided half-hour tours will run at 11am every Sunday. Bookings are required for these tours. The exhibition closes on 10 June.

NGA celebrates Kngwarray's life's work

The National Gallery of Australia's major summer exhibition celebrates the work of Anmatyerr artist Emily Kam Kngwarray, on show until 28 April next year. The exhibition celebrates the art of the eminent Australian artist and offers an extensive survey of her output, bringing together important works, from early batik textiles to later monumental paintings on canvas. The exhibition also features an audiovisual collaboration with the artist's community, with songs that informed Kngwarray's works woven through a series of immersive soundscapes and audio tours.

A century of Archibald portraiture

The National Portrait Gallery is hosting the Art Gallery of NSW's touring exhibition 'Archie 100: A Century of the Archibald Prize', until 28 January. The exhibition celebrates 100 years of Australia's oldest and most-prestigious portrait award and reflects upon the changing face of our nation. The exhibition includes portraits of renowned and lesser-known Australians and looks into the triumphs and controversies that have accompanied the prize, while honouring the artists who have made it the most sought-after accolade in Australian art. Entry is \$20 for adults, \$18 concession, and \$16 for Circle of Friends members. Free entry for people under 18 years of age.

William Yang and the Sydney Mardi Gras

William Yang's photography of the Sydney Mardi Gras festivals between 1981 and 2003 make up the collection-in-focus exhibition at the National Library's Treasures Gallery, until November next. Yang, a celebrated Australian photographer, performer, artist and filmmaker, began his career in fashion photography but quickly turned to social documentary photography. The display, curated by Allister Mills, explores the themes of protest, community, art and remembrance. Yang's striking photography recorded and defined the growth and success of the Sydney Mardi Gras. Entry to the gallery is free and bookings are not required.

Getting a line on the year in politics

The work of established and emerging cartoonists is on show in the exhibition 'Behind the Lines 2023', the annual survey of the year's best political cartoons at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House. This exhibition highlights the significant contribution that the nation's cartoonists make to cultural and political debate through witty, insightful and often poignant satirical drawings, paintings, GIFs and sculptures. The theme, 'All Fun and Games', reflects a year in which political party games were being played in Parliament and featured in Australia's daily news. Open daily till late in 2024.

Meet the Author events

6 February 2024, 6pm: Lisa Millar will talk about her new book, *Muster Dogs 2*, with James Glenday. Alex Sloan will give the vote of thanks. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

22 February, 6pm: Karen Viggers will talk about her new novel, *Sidelines*, with Alex Sloan. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

5 March, 6pm: Dervla McTiernan will talk with Chris Hammer about her new crime novel, *What Happened to Nina?*. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

6 March, 6pm: Andrew Leigh will talk about his new book, *The Shortest History of Economics*, with Genevieve Bell. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

12 March, 6pm: Sarah Bailey will talk with Chris Hammer about her new crime fiction novel, *Body of Lies*. T2, Kambri Cultural Centre.

13 March, 6pm: Kathy Lette will talk about her new novel, *The Revenge Club*, with Karen Hardy. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

20 March, 6pm: Carla Wilshire and Ronli Sifris will talk with Kim Rubenstein about their books *Feminism in the Algorithm Age* and *Towards Reproductive Justice*. T2, Kambri Cultural Centre.

25 March, 6pm: Julia Baird will talk about her new book, *Bright Shining: How Grace Changes Everything*, with Katharine Murphy. Alex Sloan will give the vote of thanks. Manning Clark Auditorium, Kambri Cultural Centre.

2 April, 6pm: Louise Milligan will discuss her debut novel, *Pheasants Nest*. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

18 April, 6pm: Lech Blaine will talk about his new Quarterly Essay, *Peter Dutton and the Forgotten People*, with Mark Kenny. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

30 April, 6pm: James Bradley will talk about *Deep Water. The World in the Ocean*. Drawing on science, history and personal reflection, *Deep Water* explores the way the ocean connects all living beings, examines the origins of the unfolding environmental catastrophe, and asks what lies ahead. Author Tim Winton says of this title: 'Teeming with mysteries, wonders and heartbreaking facts, this beautiful, lucid hymn to the sea is a reminder of what we still have, what we stand to lose, and why we must never stop fighting to save our home.' Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

7 May, 6pm: Hugh Mackay will talk about his new book, *The Way We Are: Lessons from a Lifetime of Listening*. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

13 May, 6pm: Miles Franklin award-winner Shankari Chandran will talk about her new novel, *Safe Haven*, with Karen Viggers. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

16 May, 6pm: Nick Dyrenfurth and Frank Bongiorno will talk about their new book, *A Little History of the Labour Party*. T2, Kambri Cultural Centre.

ANU/*Canberra Times* Meet the Author events are held in association with Harry Hartog Bookshop. Books are available for purchase before and after each event. Pre-event book signings will be available from 5.30pm and again after the event. Registration is required and can be made at Registrations at anu.edu.au/events. In line with ANU's Covid policy, masks are no longer required. Enquiries to the convenor, Colin Steele, at colin.steele@anu.edu.au.

The Symposium by University House wine bar (Shop 13, 152 University Avenue, Acton, next to the Kambri cultural centre) will be open for dining after Meet the Author events. No bookings necessary. Food and wine details at <https://unihouse.anu.edu.au/eat/symposium/>.

Items of note

ANU to map move to an all-electric Canberra

Experts at the Australian National University will develop a map to guide the Australian Capital Territory's transition to an all-electric economy.

The study will show how cities like Canberra can achieve net zero emissions in a reliable and affordable way and, according to project lead Dr Bin Lu, provide a template for the rest of the country.

'Canberra is a national leader in the renewable energy transition. Things are happening much faster here than the rest of Australia,' Dr Lu said.

'Our target, net zero by 2045, is five years ahead of the national target, so there's a real opportunity for the rest of the states and territories to learn from the ACT's experience.'

Dr Lu and his team will develop detailed modelling for the electrification of ACT suburbs. That means looking at everything from electric cars and heating to electrifying industry.

'We will also need energy storage to support this transition,' Dr Lu said.

'We'll be working on data that shows how distributed energy-storage resources — things like electric car batteries, neighbourhood batteries and hot water storage — can play a big role.'

'We'll also aim to develop geographic information system (GIS)-based maps of these resources. GIS modelling will shed light on the geographic distribution of Canberra's distributed energy storage resources.'

'As outlined in the ACT Government's *Powering Canberra* report, the strategic use of distributed energy resources will play a vital role in maintaining grid stability and reducing peak energy demand,' co-investigator on the project, ANU Associate Professor Marnie Shaw, said.

Protein offers autoimmune, cancer hopes

The discovery of a protein in the immune system that helps to protect the body from fungal infections could also offer prospects of new treatments for people suffering some types of autoimmune diseases.

Scientists at the Australian National University have found that the protein, DECTIN-1, is responsible for increasing the severity of autoimmune diseases such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), type 1 diabetes, eczema and other chronic disorders.

The discovery could pave the way for more effective drugs without the unpleasant side-effects of existing treatments, offering new hope to more than one million Australians who suffer from some form of autoimmune disease. In addition, the breakthrough could also help treat all types of cancer.

The scientists discovered a previously unknown function of DECTIN-1, which in its mutated state limits the production of T regulatory cells, or so-called 'guardian' cells in the immune system.

These guardian cells are crucial in preventing autoimmune disease because they suppress the effects of a hyperactive immune system. The immune system usually protects the body from infection, but in severe cases it becomes overactivated and turns the body's natural defences against itself.

'When this happens, the immune system wrongly perceives healthy cells as a threat, causing it to attack the body and promote the onset of autoimmune disease,' lead author Dr Cynthia Turnbull said.

'Although the DECTIN-1 protein helps to fight fungal infections, in its mutated state it's also responsible for exacerbating severe autoimmune disease.

'Understanding how and why the mutated version of this protein causes autoimmunity in patients brings us a step closer to developing more effective drugs.'

The scientists believe they can control the immune system by turning the DECTIN-1 protein on and off, like a light switch. There have been few discoveries of so-called modifier proteins such as DECTIN-1, which can change the way the immune system behaves to the extent it can either cause or prevent a disease. According to Dr Turnbull, this means DECTIN-1 could play a key role in treating cancer.

CSIRO scientists use AI to find Alzheimer's key

Research scientists at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) have used artificial intelligence (AI) to further unlock the genetic secrets to Alzheimer's disease.

Using CSIRO tools VariantSpark and BitEpi, scientists at the Australian e-Health Centre have identified two new genetic variants associated with Alzheimer's disease, as well as 95 new gene interactions that may modulate the effects of variants in Alzheimer's.

Identifying variants helps to predict the occurrence, severity, and potential treatments of the neurodegenerative disease. However, the identified variants alone do not account for all heritability of Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases. Interactions between variants, known as epistasis, are thought to contribute to the onset of the disease.

CSIRO Research Scientist Dr Natalie Twine, the senior author of the paper published in *Scientific Reports*, said some interactions between genes could protect against Alzheimer's.

'By using BitEpi we can identify these interactions and explain some of the missing links in Alzheimer's heritability,' Dr Twine said.

Alzheimer's disease is the most prevalent form of dementia. In 2022 there were over 400,000 people living in Australia with dementia. With the growing and ageing population, rates are predicted to double by 2058.

ARC centre to shape better lives for older Australians

The Australian Research Council Training Centre for Optimal Ageing, which aims to boost research and training to help older Australians lead active and fulfilling lives, was opened in Melbourne on 20 November.

The centre, based at Monash University, ‘will put Australia at the forefront of creating innovative solutions that improve the wellbeing, independence and social connectedness of our ageing population’, the ARC’s Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Dr Richard Johnson, said.

The centre would train the next generation of digital health scientists while developing advanced technological solutions for older Australians, he said.

Its research team will work with industry partners on the challenges and opportunities that face the nation’s ageing population, including social connectedness, productivity, and overall quality of life.

It is expected that the centre will give research specialists knowledge and practical experience in data analytics, digital health commercialisation, and end-user engagement to ensure that they are equipped to work in the aged care sector. The centre is expected to attract 17 PhD students, four researchers, and 24 research fellows.

‘Training Centres funded by the ARC’s Industrial Transformation Research Program are vital in fostering collaboration between universities and industry to develop the most cutting-edge research in Australia and to provide an opportunity for intergenerational knowledge and skills transmission among researchers to build Australia’s capability,’ Dr Johnson said.

The ARC is investing more than \$4.5 million over five years under the Industrial Transformation Research Hubs scheme.

Education gives further boost to economy

Figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in December show the value of education has risen by 68 per cent in the 12 months to September, while total exports suffered a decline of 4.7 per cent.

Universities Australia commented that education was performing better than major goods exports, including coal, coke and other minerals.

Education added a further \$12.1 billion to the economy in the September quarter. The quarterly result meant that education had added \$34 billion to export revenue in 2023, putting it on track to eclipse the record \$41 billion it earned for the nation in 2019.

Universities Australia’s Chief Executive, Catriona Jackson, said education was ‘the biggest export we don’t dig out of the ground’.

‘It makes us tens of billions of dollars each year, supports tens of thousands of jobs and helps pay for the essential services all Australians rely on.

‘Beyond that, it makes us friends, acting as a bridge between nations and supporting regional stability which is only becoming more important in a fast-changing strategic environment.

‘Australia has developed a strong, competitive edge in the global battle for international students through our careful and strategic work over many decades.’

Bookshelf

Grassroots Law in Papua New Guinea

Edited by Melissa Demian

ISBN (print): 9781760466114

ISBN (online): 9781760466121

December 2023

ANU Press

Monographs in Anthropology

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22459/GLPNG.2023>

The introduction of village courts in Papua New Guinea in 1975 was an ambitious experiment in providing semi-formal legal access to the country’s rural population. Nearly 50 years later, the enthusiastic adoption of these courts has had a number of ramifications, some of them unanticipated. Arguably, the village courts have developed and are working exactly as they were supposed to do, adapted by local communities to reflect their own dispute-management sensibilities. But with little in the way of state oversight or support, most village courts have become, of necessity, nearly autonomous.

As they overlap with other sources of authority, so the line between what does and does not constitute a ‘court’ is often now indistinct. Rather than casting this as a problem, the contributors to this volume ask how, under conditions of state withdrawal, people seek to retain an understanding of law that holds out some promise of either keeping the attention of the state or reproducing the state’s authority.

After the Coup

Myanmar’s Political and Humanitarian Crises

Edited by Anthony Ware and Monique Skidmore

ISBN (print): 9781760466138

ISBN (online): 9781760466145

December 2023

ANU Press

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22459/AC.2023>

The coup in Myanmar on 1 February, 2021, reversed a decade-long exercise in economic and political freedoms. The country has since descended into civil war, the people have been plunged back into conflict and poverty, and the state is again characterised by fragility and human insecurity. The contributors argue that, as the people of Myanmar oppose the regime and fight for their rights, the international community must find ways to act in solidarity. There is an urgent need for new policy settings and for practical engagement with local partners and recipient groups.

The contributors offer insights into ways that international actors can try to reduce the suffering of a population under a brutal and self-serving regime. Chapters analyse topics including coercive statecraft, international justice, Rakhine State (Rohingya) dynamics, pandemic weaponisation, higher education, non-state welfare and aid delivery, activism from exile, self-determination and power sharing in the National Unity Government's alternative constitution, and the roles of China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

China between Peace and War

Mao, Chiang and the Americans, 1945-47

By Victor Cheng

ISBN (print): 9781760465711

ISBN (online): 9781760465728

November 2023

ANU Press

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22459/CBPW.2023>

Victor S. C. Cheng explores the history of peace talks and international negotiations from 1945 to 1947 that helped to determine the shape of the Chinese Civil War. The book focuses on the efforts of the two belligerent parties—the Chinese Nationalists, or Guomindang, and the Communists—to achieve an enduring peace. It presents previously unexplored major elements of the peace talks: ambiguous treaties, package deals and short-term solutions. It identifies the challenges to peacemaking, including the warring parties' high-risk decision-making styles and the temptation to veto agreements and resume fighting.

Cheng argues against popular notions that differences between the two belligerents in the Chinese Civil War were irreconcilable, that the failure of the peace talks was predetermined and that the US government mediators needed to remain neutral. Cheng also explores the military decision-making of the opposing sides, and highlights the contradictory role of political leaders who micromanaged the military, including their struggle to connect political objectives and military power, their rhetorical use of the 'decisive war' concept, and their pursuit of radical military-political goals at the expense of a negotiated peace.

Memory in Place

Locating Colonial Histories and Commemoration

Edited by Cameo Dalley and Ashley Barnwell

ISBN (print): 9781760466077

ISBN (online): 9781760466084

November 2023

ANU Press

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22459/MP.2023>

Memory in Place brings together Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and practitioners grappling with the continued potency of memories and experiences of colonialism. This collection charts how interactions between Indigenous people, settlers and their descendants are both remembered and forgotten in social, political, and cultural spaces. It offers diverse perspectives from a range of disciplines, including history, anthropology, memory studies, archaeology, and linguistics from both established and emerging scholars; from Indigenous and non-Indigenous contributors; and from academics as well as museum and cultural heritage practitioners.

Administration

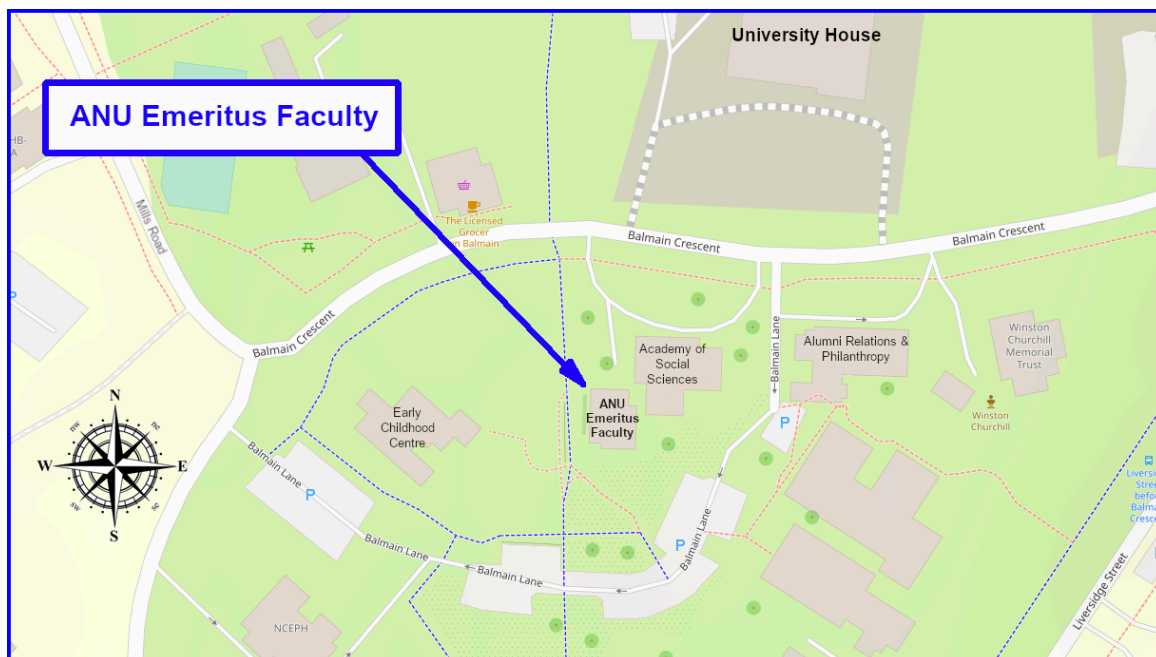
Arrangements for ANUEF room bookings

Requests to book the Molony Room should be addressed to the Secretary of the ANU Emeritus Faculty, Jan O'Connor, at jantancress@gmail.com 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>



Editorial

Editor: Peter Fuller

Mobile: 0416-02.12.06

Email: wordsnpix@netspeed.com.au

Assistant Editor: Kevin Windle

Email: Kevin.Windle@anu.edu.au

Postal Address:

ANU Emeritus Faculty, PO Box 6050,
O'Connor ACT 2602

Web: emeritus.anu.edu.au

Meetings venue: ANUEF Office,
Molony Room, ANU,
24 Balmain Crescent,
Acton, ACT 2600

The next issue of the Emeritus Faculty newsletter will be published in February 2024.