

EMERITUS

The Australian National University Emeritus Faculty e-magazine

Accord report welcomed, but investment critical to success

Tertiary education peak organisations have broadly welcomed the Australian Universities Accord Final Report, which was issued on 25 February. The report puts forward 47 recommendations to provide a more equitable and innovative system of higher education.

While generally endorsing the report, and supporting the idea that Australia needs to increase the participation rate in higher education, commentators agree that increased investment in higher education and research will be critical to achieving the recommended outcomes.

The comments by Professor Mark Scott, Chair of the Group of Eight, reflect this viewpoint. ‘The report has identified a significant national reform challenge,’ he said. ‘It is now important that, working with the sector, Government prioritises the funding model which will underpin both teaching and research and that we establish those timelines as expeditiously as possible.’

The Accord report is the result of a year’s work by an expert review panel chaired by Professor Mary O’Kane AC, which drew ideas from 820 public submissions and 180 meetings with stakeholders. A full copy of the report is at www.education.gov.au/australian-universities-accord/resources/final-report .

The report notes that the review was asked to create a long-term plan for reform. In doing so, its message is straightforward: ‘if Australia is to prosper in the years ahead, Australian participation, performance and investment in tertiary education needs to improve in order to generate the knowledge, skills and research our nation needs.’

‘The review found that significant changes are needed in Australian higher education to produce the skills, knowledge and intellectual ambition needed to meet the nation’s current and emerging social, economic and environmental challenges,’ the report says.

‘Pressure on the tertiary education system is already being felt every day through chronic shortages of skilled professionals, including early childhood educators, teachers, aged care workers, nurses, doctors, and more.

‘And increasingly, Australia is going to need greater numbers of engineers and others to transform our energy grid, advance our manufacturing sector, drive new discoveries and innovations, make our agriculture more sustainable and build new public infrastructure for our growing cities and regions.

‘Australia’s tertiary education system must be strong enough and agile enough to provide the answers. The review proposed large and significant changes to the tertiary education system to ensure that the system delivers for the nation.’

The recommendations include:

- Setting ambitious targets to improve workforce participation and productivity, including a tertiary education attainment target of at least 80 per cent of the working age population. This could be achieved by increasing the number of Commonwealth-supported places from around 860,000 today to 1.8 million in 2050;
- Creating a more flexible skills system, including a National Skills Passport to contain a record of someone’s formal qualifications, skills, prior learning and work experience;
- Setting participation targets for students from underrepresented backgrounds to achieve participation parity by 2050, including linking these attainment targets with Closing the Gap targets;
- Increasing the availability of fee-free preparatory courses and funding these places to match the cost of delivery;
- Adopting a needs-based funding model, including a per-student funding amount for under-represented students, that recognises the cost of additional support to succeed and a completion bonus for higher-education providers who meet completion targets;
- Setting fairer student contributions that better reflect the lifetime benefits that students will gain, and HELP loans with fairer and simpler indexation and repayment arrangements;
- Strengthening the international education system, with higher-quality courses that are better aligned with Australia’s skill and migration needs, drawing from more diverse source areas;
- Setting medium- and long-term targets for overall national spending on R&D as a percentage of GDP;
- Creating an Australian Tertiary Education Commission as a statutory, national body to plan and oversee the creation of a high-quality and cohesive tertiary education system; and
- Improving the workforce through professional learning and teaching standards for academics and minimum teaching qualifications for higher education teaching roles.

In the transition phase, the review calls for an implementation advisory committee to be set up while the recommendations are being implemented.

In his comments, Professor Scott said the review had identified that adequate funding and support for research was critical to Australia’s future. ‘We need to move towards fully funding research, to fund teaching more appropriately to reflect different student need, and to build more diverse institutions to focus specifically on teaching and research specialisations,’ he said.

‘The report exposed a fundamental problem in our higher education system — two decades of underfunding in teaching and research.’

However, he said, one concerning element of the report was that the only revenue-raising measure proposed was a tax on universities, Australia's most successful services export sector. 'This is extremely poor public policy and taxing the very system the report identified as underfunded is not a solution.

'This tax has the potential to undermine the vision of the Accord report by taxing university engagement with industry, philanthropy, and international education — all activities promoted in the rest of the report.'

Universities Australia acknowledged the work of the expert panel and stakeholders to prepare the report, and urged the government to quickly establish the advisory committee so that change could begin while universities had policy and funding certainty.

UA's Chief Executive Officer, Luke Sheehy, said a report of this scope needed 'appropriate and thorough interrogation and reflection' as institutions identified their preferred priorities in the government's response.

The National President of the National Tertiary Education Union, Dr Alison Barnes, welcomed the release of the report, seeing it as an 'ambitious reform blueprint'. It had the potential to create better universities, 'but only if it is implemented correctly and funded properly',

'The NTEU will examine the final report closely and work with members to determine a comprehensive response, given the enormous scope of reform proposed,' she said.

'The report is crystal clear that we need solutions to the insecure work crisis to protect quality and ensure staff retention and recruitment.'

Peak body calls for policy, funding to secure nation's workplace needs

Australian Government policy and funding settings should be designed help universities to prepare the next generation of Australians to meet the nation's current and future workforce needs, Universities Australia says in its 2024-2025 Pre-Budget Submission.

The need to invest in universities is the central message of the submission, issued in January.

The forthcoming federal Budget will be the Albanese Government's 'first opportunity to respond in full to the Australian Universities Accord final report', the submission says. The report was issued on 25 February.

Universities Australia says the government must embrace the final report 'with both hands'. 'In a fast-changing strategic and economic environment, Australia needs more of what universities do — more skilled workers, more research and development and stronger regional ties.'

Among the 11 recommendations put forward in the pre-Budget submission, Universities Australia calls for funding 'some fee-free university places for disadvantaged students from January 2025 in areas of critical skills need to

drive university enrolments and future economic growth'. This would match funding of \$493 million provided for 180,000 fee-free TAFE places.

The submission argues that this would help to address the 'slide' in domestic enrolments at universities, from 1,161,912 in 2021 to 1,102,683 in 2022. While the nation needed more university-educated workers to drive economic growth and prosperity, fewer Australians were now going to university, it says.

One area that particularly needed attention was the technology sector, the submission says. The government had targeted this area with its fee-free TAFE initiative, recognising the fact that Australia needed to produce 60,000 new technology workers each year to meet demand.

'Australians responded overwhelming to the government's offer of fee-free TAFE in areas of priority skills needs, with almost 300,000 students enrolled to 30 September last year, smashing the initial 2023 target of 180,000 enrolments,' the submission says. 'A further 300,000 places are being offered from 2024.'

Against this, university course completions in information technology fell from 32,829 in 2021 to 26,747 in 2022, the submission says. Replicating the TAFE policy for university places 'could help attract more students to university to help ease Australia's skill shortages'.

Call for sustainable funding framework

Among the recommendations to help to develop a skilled workforce, the submission recommends gradually increasing the number of Commonwealth-supported places to meet future needs and provide a sustainable funding framework to support university operations; expanding placement capacity and quality supervision in nursing and other health professions; and providing cost-of-living support for students undertaking compulsory placements in areas of skills shortages.

Where research is concerned, the submission calls for increased government investment in research and development to reach at least the OECD average of 0.65 per cent of GDP; to provide research and development tax incentives; and to raise the level of PhD stipends to better support higher-degree research students 'whose work is vital to the nation's future'.

It also calls for the government to fund Australian leaders on learning and development opportunities in their professional or study fields to enhance knowledge and build relationships with strategically important partner countries. At the same time, it urges more investment in activities that will counter foreign interference in universities.

'With the first major review of Australia's higher education system complete, it is imperative that the government throws its full support behind a sector that serves Australia's interests,' the submission says.

'To that end, the budget should contain commitments to underpin the future of our universities and foster an environment — through the provision of funding and favourable policy settings — in which they can continue delivering for the nation.'

ANU researchers discover ‘most luminous’ object in the universe

An enormous black hole ‘500 trillion times brighter than our sun’ has been detected by researchers at the Australian National University.

The fastest-growing black hole ever recorded devours the equivalent of one sun every day, according to findings published on 19 February in *Nature Astronomy*.

The lead author, Associate Professor Christian Wolf, of the ANU’s College of Science, said the object’s astounding rate of growth ‘also means a huge release of light and heat’. ‘This is also the most luminous known object in the universe.’

Co-author Dr Christopher Onken said: ‘It’s a surprise it remained undetected until now, given what we know about many other, less impressive black holes. It was hiding in plain sight.’

The black hole has a mass roughly 17 billion times that of our solar system’s sun.

It was first detected using a 2.3 metre telescope at the ANU Siding Spring Observatory near Coonabarabran in NSW. The research team then turned to one of the largest telescopes in the world, the European Southern Observatory’s Very Large Telescope in the Atacama Desert, Chile, to confirm the full nature of the black hole and measure its mass.

The research was done in collaboration with the ESO, the University of Melbourne and the Sorbonne Université in France.

‘The light from this black hole has travelled over 12 billion years to reach us,’ Professor Rachel Webster from the University of Melbourne said.

‘In the adolescent universe, matter was moving chaotically and feeding hungry black holes. Today, stars are moving orderly at safe distances and only rarely plunge into black holes.’

Intense radiation comes from the accretion disc around the black hole, which is the holding pattern for all the material waiting to be devoured.

‘It looks like a gigantic and magnetic storm cell with temperatures of 10,000 degrees Celsius, lightning everywhere and winds blowing so fast they would go around Earth in a second,’ Associate Professor Wolf said.

‘This storm cell is seven light years across, which is 50 per cent more than the distance from our solar system to the next star in the Galaxy, Alpha Centauri.

‘We were only able to make these discoveries because of the Australian government’s 10-year partnership with the European Southern Observatory.’

Climate drivers cause ‘alarming’ loss of Antarctica’s ice mass

Antarctica continued to lose mass into the oceans ‘at an alarming rate, according to the lead author of a study of ice-mass change on the southern land mass, but scientists now know more about what is driving both the trend and its shorter-term ‘bumps and wiggles’.

A research team led by Professor Matt King, Director of the ARC Australian Centre for Excellence in Antarctic Science (ACEAS) at the University of Tasmania, has determined that climate variability, specifically the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and the Southern Annular Mode, had played a significant role in changes observed in the Antarctic Ice Sheet over the past 20 years.

Their findings were published in the paper ‘Climate variability a key driver of recent Antarctic ice-mass change’ in *Nature Geoscience* late in 2023.

Professor King and his team used satellite-based estimates of the changes in mass of Antarctic land ice to analyse its variation over time. They then linked the findings with fluctuations in ENSO (El Niño and La Niña) and the Southern Annular Mode.

The researchers found that for the past 20 years, melting ice from Antarctica added extra water into the ocean at a rate of about 150 billion tonnes per year. That rate has not been steady, however, for reasons directly related to ENSO and the Southern Annular Mode.

‘While we already knew that these climate drivers have an impact on the Antarctic Ice Sheet, this is the first time their precise fingerprints have been comprehensively and precisely observed,’ Professor King said.

The ENSO impacts that hit Australia hit the Antarctic Ice Sheet a few months later. Meanwhile the Southern Annular Mode shifts the wind patterns between southern Australia and Antarctica, moving moisture and heat around with it.

The Southern Annular Mode is now in its most positive phase for at least 1,000 years, due partly to increasing amounts of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

‘In the past 20 years, about 40 per cent of the overall change in ice mass across the whole ice sheet is attributed to a persistent forcing from a positive Southern Annular Mode. This is linked to altered winds, snowfall, and ocean heat,’ Professor King said.

‘Our discovery is crucial as it provides a pathway to partially attributing ice sheet changes to human activity, given that the long-term shift toward a positive Southern Annular Mode is largely due to human impacts on the atmosphere.’

The results of the study underscore the importance of understanding the impact of climate change and variability on ice mass changes, which has significant implications for sea-level rise.

Co-author Dr Xuebin Zhang of CSIRO Environment in Hobart said the research ‘represents a significant step forward in our understanding of the complex relationship between climate variability and Antarctic contribution to sea level’.

Professor King said the study ‘reminds us yet again that humans need to stop adding CO2 into the atmosphere if we are to avoid the worst of climate change’.

Australia Day honour for Colin Steele

Emeritus Faculty member Colin Steele was named a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2024 Australia Day honours list ‘for significant service to librarianship, and to digital information sharing’.

Colin was University Librarian from 1980 till 2022, when he was appointed Director for Scholarly Information Strategies. He has been an influential supporter of literary and communications activities in Canberra and at the university for more than 40 years. He is current organiser of the ANU/*Canberra Times* Meet the Author events.

Colin was born in Hartlepool, County Durham, England, and graduated in 1965 with honours from Liverpool University, specialising in Latin American and North American history. He then took a postgraduate degree in Library and Information Studies at University College, London, specialising in Latin American bibliography.

In August 1967 he was appointed as an Assistant Librarian at the Foreign Accessions Department at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. His work there led to several books, including *Independent Mexico* with Professor Michael Costeloe. In 1974 a British Academy American Fellowship took him to the Newberry Library in Chicago, where he completed *English Interpreters of the Iberian New World*, published in 1975, and for which he was awarded a Masters degree by Liverpool University. Another major publication was *Major Libraries of the World* in 1976 — one of seven books that he has written or edited during his career.

Colin took up duties as Deputy University Librarian at ANU in August 1976 and was appointed University Librarian in September 1980. In the early 1990s the ANU Library became a leader in library automation and web access, and in 1994 was awarded the national VALA Award for innovation in computing and networking. Colin has been involved in the National Scholarly Communications Forum since 1993, and was Convenor of the National Forums from 2005 to 2017. He was instrumental in establishing the ANU Press with an open access electronic access framework.

Colin was the first Chair of the Australian National Word Festival (1983-1987) and subsequently established the Meet the Author series. In 2014 he received the Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Advancing the Reputation of the University.

Colin has been Secretary of the ACT Oxford University Alumni Association since 1977. He was Secretary of the Magellan Society, established in 1980, to promote the cultural activities of Spain, Portugal and Latin America in Canberra. Its activities gradually merged with the Australian National Centre for Latin American Studies. Colin was awarded the Knight Cross of Queen

Isabella la Católica in 1984 for his work establishing the Magellan Society and for his critically acclaimed books on Spain and Latin America.

He is an Honorary Fellow of University House and of the Australian Academy of Humanities and in 2001 was awarded the Australian Centennial Medal for his work on scholarly communication. He is a Fellow of both the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (UK) and the Australian Library and Information Association.

Obituaries

Ranajit Guha

23 May 1923 – 28 April 2023

Ranajit Guha, the renowned anti-colonial historian of South Asia and the founder of the series *Subaltern Studies* and the historiography associated with it, passed away peacefully in Vienna on 28 April 2023, a few days short of his hundredth birthday. He is survived by his wife, Dr. Mechthild Guha, an anthropologist and a librarian. Guha spent the last phase of his working life from 1980 to 1988 as a Senior Research Fellow in the former South Asian History Section of the Research School of Pacific Studies of the Institute of Advanced Studies at the Australian National University. After he officially retired from this position, he remained associated with the Anthropology department in the same School till 1999 when he and his wife moved to Vienna, Austria — the country his wife was from. He passed the final years of his life in Purkersdorf, a woodsy neighborhood on the outskirts of that historic city.

Guha was born on 23 May 1923 to a landed family in the Siddhakati village in the district of Barisal in colonial Bengal. The place of his birth now belongs to Bangladesh. After some years of schooling in the village, Guha was sent off to the city of Calcutta for his high-school and tertiary education. The decade that saw Guha emerge as a young Bengali intellectual also turned out to be the last ten years of British rule in India. Beginning in 1938 with his undergraduate years at the pre-eminent colonial educational institution, the Presidency College, Calcutta, followed by his postgraduate years at the University of Calcutta, from which in 1946 he obtained a first-class master's degree in history, like many other young people (mostly men) of his time, Guha felt drawn to the anti-colonial and egalitarian ideals of communism. He later named his teacher, the famous Marxist Bengali historian Susobhan Sarkar, as one of the most important inspirations of his student days. On completing his education, Guha joined the Communist Party of India as full-time worker.

This was a tumultuous time in Bengal and India. The Quit India movement of 1942, directed against the British, had aroused strongly anti-colonial sentiments in the young. In 1943 Bengal had been rocked by a terrible famine, resulting mainly from the military mobilisations during the war. Calcutta witnessed the ghastly riots breaking out between Hindus and Muslims in 1946 over the question of the impending partition of the country into India and Pakistan in the following year. Talk about the end of British rule was in the air. It was not surprising that many Bengali intellectuals of Guha's generation looked to the

idea of communism for solutions to the problems of caste, class, and religion that had dogged modern Indian politics ever since its inception during the Raj.

With hindsight, it may be said that it was the Communist movement that first brought 'the world' into Guha's life and gave him a cosmopolitan outlook. In 1947, a year after he joined, the party sent him to Paris as its representative to the secretariat of the World Federation of Democratic Youth. Guha spent the next six years traveling in various parts of Europe — and in China — in that capacity. It was during one of these sojourns in Poland that he met his first wife, Marta, a Polish-Jewish woman whose family had suffered in the Holocaust. They returned to India in 1953, and after a few years of teaching in various Calcutta institutions and researching the history of colonial land settlements in Bengal, Guha left for England in 1958 for a one-year fellowship at the University of Manchester. The person instrumental in helping Guha obtain this fellowship was the eminent social historian of Victorian Britain, Asa Briggs (later Lord Briggs), who had met Guha in 1957 on a British Council-sponsored trip to India that had taken him to Calcutta. Guha was already admired by the city's cognoscenti as a bright, young researcher in history and had made a name for himself through his contributions to political and scholarly disputations in Calcutta's left-leaning magazines. Briggs was sufficiently impressed by Guha to recommend him for the fellowship. His first marriage broke up around this time. After the 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary, he also had become disillusioned with Stalinist ideologies.

He spent the next few years, into the early 1960s, holding temporary or visiting positions at the University of Manchester, Cornell University, and the University of Chicago, where he struck up a life-long friendship with the famous anthropologist of South Asia, Bernard S. Cohn. Cohn would later contribute to the *Subaltern Studies* project and Guha penned a powerful introduction to the first anthology of Cohn's writings, *An Anthropologist Among the Historians and Other Essays* (1987). The early 1960s also saw the publication of Guha's first monograph, now considered a classic: *A Rule of Property for Bengal: An Essay on the Idea of Permanent Settlement* (Paris: Mouton, 1963).

ANU years 'one of the defining periods'

His most important break in terms of employment at this time came when Britain built her 'red brick' universities in the 1960s. Asa Briggs, who had moved to the University of Sussex in 1961 as one of its 'founding fathers', was instrumental in securing for Guha a permanent lectureship in the newly established School of African and Asian Studies there. While there is no publicly available information showing when exactly Guha joined the teaching staff at Sussex University, it was probably sometime in the first half of the 1960s. He is clearly named as a member in a list of teaching staff of the School of African and Asian Studies in 1966. He met his second wife, Mechthild Guha (*née* Jungwirth) at Sussex University, where she had come to pursue post-doctoral research in African anthropology. They were married in 1970. Guha continued at Sussex until 1980 when Professor D.A. Low, the then Vice-Chancellor of ANU and formerly Guha's colleague and a Dean of the School of African and Asian Studies at Sussex, invited him to a fixed-term Senior Research Fellowship in the South Asian History Section of the Research School

of Pacific Studies at ANU. Guha held this position until 1988. He formally retired from the university in 1982.

The years at ANU marked one of the defining periods in Guha's career. He gathered around himself a global group of younger scholars — David Arnold and David Hardiman from the UK (both did their doctoral theses with Professor Low at Sussex), Partha Chatterjee and Gautam Bhadra in Calcutta, Shahid Amin and Gyan Pandey in Delhi, and the present writer (then a Ph.D student of Professor Low's at ANU) in Canberra. Together they created a series of publications titled *Subaltern Studies: Writings on Society and History in India*, which were published by Oxford University Press in Delhi.

Guha's academic collaboration with some of these younger scholars had begun in the 1970s at Sussex University. The first volume of *Subaltern Studies* came out in 1982 and created quite a stir in the world of South Asian history, hitherto dominated by debates on nationalism. Guha had created a theoretically sophisticated and innovative framework for studying the politics of 'subaltern classes' — socially subordinated groups — by drawing eclectically but creatively on different and overlapping strands of Marxism, structural anthropology, linguistics, structuralism, post-structuralism, continental philosophy, and Indian philosophies of language and grammar. Guha's own monograph, a foundational text for *Subaltern Studies*, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press), was published in 1983. All this coincided with the publication of Edward Said's classic text *Orientalism* (1978), Benedict Anderson's critical study of nationalism, *Imagined Communities* (1982), and Ashis Nandy's *The Intimate Enemy* (1983). Understandably, *Subaltern Studies* and Guha's own masterwork soon came to be seen as an integral part of the post-colonial scholarly rebellion in the Western, especially Anglophone, academy that was initiated in the 1980s and 90s by, among others, Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Stuart Hall, and Paul Gilroy. In the Australian context, this also coincided with the rise of cultural studies and Indigenous history led by scholars such as Meaghan Morris, Stephen Muecke, and Henry Reynolds. *Subaltern Studies* was celebrated, debated, and contested all over the world. Guha was hailed as the guru and the creative mind behind this group. He edited the first six volumes of the series, leaving the task to his younger colleagues for the last six volumes. The collective expanded in these later years to include Gyan Prakash, Ajay Skaria, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Susie Tharu, and Shail Mayaram.

Guha had no formal teaching duties at ANU except for supervising doctoral students. Among these students were Raghavendra Chattopadhyay from Calcutta and Ahmed Kamal from Dhaka. He also served, along with Professor Eugene Kamenka, as a co-supervisor for Sanjay Seth. They all turned out to be successful academics who pursued their respective careers and studies in Calcutta, Dhaka, and London. The present writer gladly accepted Guha as a mentor (along with Anthony Low) and owes much to his teaching style that was, characteristically, Socratic. Guha was also a regular presence at several seminars at ANU where his sharp, penetrating, original, and sometimes acerbic comments always livened up the proceedings. He developed some close intellectual friendships in Canberra. The present writer remembers the political theorist, the late Barry Hindess, and anthropologists, the late Roger

Keesing, James J. Fox, and Christopher Gregory, and scholars of southeast Asia, notably Anthony Milner and Craig Reynolds, as close associates of Guha.

Guha wrote his last book in English after retirement in 2002: *History and the Limit of World History* (New York: Columbia University Press). This was a grand statement about literature being a far better communicator of senses of the past in the Indian subcontinent than the European discipline of history that had come to India as a practice of the colonial state and could never erase that birthmark from its body. All Indian history of the disciplinary kind, Guha argued, was statist in inspiration and far from the everyday lives of ordinary human beings. This book thus signalled his farewell to the discipline of history that had been his main preoccupation since his student days in Calcutta. He also bade goodbye to writing in English. In the last ten or fifteen years of his life Guha wrote several books and essays in Bengali and went to on win a prestigious literary prize in Calcutta. All these books and articles focused on philosophical, and mainly existential, aspects of human life and drew on the Indian epics, modern poetry, and other literary and grammatical traditions available in Bengali and Sanskrit.

'... no votary of any kind of economic determinism'

In retrospect, Guha's intellectual-academic life seems to have had four distinct phases. He began as a Communist Party activist and intellectual who was an admirer of Stalin and the Soviet Union till 1956. Disappointed with political communism, he turned to historical research that would produce a searing critique of his own class, the landed elites of rural Bengal, at the same time as it critiqued the failure of the British to produce a political economy of development in colonial Bengal. This book, *A Rule of Property for Bengal*, showed an early awareness of the importance of ideas in economic history. He was clearly no votary of any kind of economic determinism, and this position he would maintain till the end of his life. In the years of *Subaltern Studies*, when he also wrote his field-defining *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, he retained his belief in the goal of human emancipation from oppression and exploitation by other humans but had no faith in the capacity of official communist parties to achieve this goal. Then came his last writings in English, especially an essay called 'The Small Voice of History' and the book *History at the Limit of World History*. He seems to have lost faith in emancipatory politics and developed a deeply humanistic sense of sympathy for the everyday tales of weal and woe that filled up the lives of ordinary people without access to power and pelf. What concerned him most in this last phase of his work were the existential and eternal questions of human life. He executed this final turn by making a conscious decision not to write in English anymore, and to return to Bengali, the language he always loved, and in which he has left a treasure trove for scholars of the future who may, one day, be interested in exploring the life and work of this extraordinary intellectual of our time.

— Dipesh Chakrabarty



Hugh Saddler

24 December 1943 - 29 June 2023

When long-time Canberra resident and energy system expert Dr Hugh Saddler died on 29 June last year, *The Guardian* remembered him as ‘an energy transition titan’ and as someone who had a profound influence on generations of Australian energy researchers, industry experts and policy-makers. It was an assessment supported by a number of other newspapers, institutions and colleagues.

It was not widely reported, however, that Hugh’s energy-policy research had begun at the Australian National University, nor that he had retained links to and positions within the ANU throughout much of his subsequent work on facilitating the transition to low- and zero-emission energy systems. These ANU connections will be the focus of this remembering of his life and work.

Hugh was born on 24 December 1943 in Adelaide. He was also born into the world of electricity, his father Bruce having been an engineer who helped design and build the post-war South Australian electricity system under the Playford Government. Hugh retained his interest in electricity throughout his life.

He graduated from the University of Adelaide and then continued his studies at Cambridge University and was awarded a prize-winning PhD in plant cell biology and membrane physiology. His interests then shifted to politics, society and the environment and for some years he worked in London on transport and industrial development policy. That is also where he met his future wife, Marilyn Chalkley.

In 1974 Hugh returned to Australia to take up a research fellowship at The University of Sydney. He subsequently joined the research team of the Whitlam Government’s Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry.

In 1977 Hugh, with Marilyn and their infant son Owen, moved to Canberra to take up a research fellowship at the ANU’s recently established Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies (CRES).

CRES was a multi-disciplinary research institution, led by the distinguished virologist Professor Frank Fenner, that covered energy, resource and water issues and with an orientation to the environment, society and policy. Hugh worked in its Resource Economics unit, headed by Professor Stuart Harris. Another distinguished presence at CRES was Dr H. C.(Nugget) Coombs, a Visiting Fellow engaged in research on issues for Central Australian Aboriginal communities (and an always engaging presence in the tea room!). And, uncannily, two CRES researchers from that time, Jenny Macklin and Warren Snowden, would go on to become outstanding Labor politicians in Canberra, first as Members of the House of Representatives and then as ministers.

Hugh’s main project at CRES was a ground-breaking, timely and influential study, *Energy in Australia – Politics and Economics* (George Allen & Unwin, 1981). The book is also an excellent window onto Hugh’s mind and character.

He conceived the project in the wake of OPEC’s 1973 imposition of a fourfold increase in the price of crude oil in response to an earlier concerted unilateral oil-price cut imposed by the big oil companies. As Hugh observed, the OPEC

response was an action of world historical scale that gave energy policy an importance that it would likely never lose.

Hugh defined the objectives of *Energy in Australia* as, first, to contribute to a more informed public debate on energy policy, ‘currently dominated by self-interested and politically conservative groups’, by presenting basic facts about energy science and technology and the Australian energy system; and second, to explain why energy policy debate was important and to provide his views on the direction it should take to better meet the public interest.

Unusually but commendably, Hugh also emphasised that the selection of facts and their placement within an analytical framework would necessarily be influenced by the author’s values and, therefore, that those values should be clearly stated. His values were ‘that society should accord very high priority to distributional equity, that people should have the opportunity to make decisions on matters that affect their lives and that, given the opportunity, most people are innately capable of co-operating in creative harmony with others to do so’.

Energy in Australia succeeded because of the depth of Hugh’s understanding of the system, the clarity of his objectives and the quality, not only of his reasoning and evidence, but also of his writing. Hugh’s talent for clear and engaging writing undoubtedly benefited from his much wider reading interests, including poetry, fiction, history and political analysis. But above all, and in line with his deeply democratic character, he was a communicator — he wrote with his future readers firmly in mind and with the intention of making the energy system, and his proposed reforms to it, as readily comprehensible to them as possible.

Early call in public debate on global warming

In just over two hundred pages Hugh takes the reader on a policy-focussed journey from first principles (energy science and technology) through energy supply and use for each fuel to a critical assessment of contemporary Australian energy policy. His critique includes comparisons with superior policies elsewhere: for example, Australia’s failure to establish a national oil company, unlike countries such as Canada and Norway, which would be able to acquire the technical and financial industry information on oil development, extraction, processing and sale that was required for informed government regulation and taxing the largely foreign energy companies. The book found a ready readership and sold well, and the statistics show that even today it has a steady continuing library readership.

Hugh also flagged what he characterised as ‘potentially the most far-reaching energy-environmental problem of all, apart from the hazards of nuclear energy’: the emission of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels. This early call in the Australian public debate on global warming also foreshadowed the main focus of Hugh’s future work: facilitating the transition to low and non-emission technology.

Hugh also contributed to other energy research projects during his time at CRES. This included the three-year Petroleum Industry Research Project that he and Warwick Richards, a colleague at the University of Sydney, established in 1978. The NSW and South Australian Labor Governments funded CRES and

the University of Sydney to undertake research and analysis that would inform their submissions on petroleum pricing to the then Prices Justification Tribunal.

Hugh needed research assistance for this project and he engaged me. In addition to my research, my position at CRES also allowed me to observe Hugh's energy policy work and to get at least a glimpse of the outside interest that it, as well as the oil industry project, was generating. For example, I witnessed frequent visits to Hugh's office by journalists (I recall visits by Paul Malone and Michael Stutchbury from the *Australian Financial Review*) and by Canberra political actors and advisors, and recall that the Sydney launch of a 1980 policy document on the oil industry attracted and engaged the then Commonwealth shadow minister for minerals, resources and energy, Paul Keating.

My experience with Hugh led me in 1983 to apply, successfully, to join the Hawke Government's newly created Department of Resources and Energy, where Bernie Fraser, the head of the new National Energy Office, was leading the design and creation of the government's comprehensive new OPEC-era energy policy. This also allowed me to glimpse something of Hugh's influence on policy. In the mid-1980s our new Minister for Resources and Energy, Gareth Evans, impressed by *Energy in Australia*, initiated a detailed departmental review of each of the elements of its energy policy. Titled 'Energy 2000', Prime Minister Hawke launched the report at a national conference in Canberra in 1987. The Minister also appointed Hugh, as an expert on energy-related environmental, social and economic issues, to the Commonwealth's recently established national energy R&D Council.

Hugh had a long and close association with the Australian National University (ANU). More recently he was Adjunct Professor at the ANU Crawford School, and an active member of the Institute for Climate, Energy and Disaster Solutions (ICEDS) and, in earlier years, the ANU Energy Change Institute. Hugh was an informal advisor and mentor to many academics and students at ANU.

In 2006 Hugh developed a methodology for tracking Australia's energy emissions with a lag of only a few weeks. This work evolved into a regular update on energy emissions, published first by Pitt&Sherry, then the Australia Institute, and most recently by ANU as the *Australian Energy Emissions Monitor*. Hugh's research contributed to the Australian Energy Market Operator's *Integrated System Plan*, a global benchmark planning tool for energy system transitions to 100% renewables.

My other, and more important relationship with Hugh was as a friend, so I will add some random observations about him from that perspective:

Hugh was, among many other things, a deeply loyal friend, a pillar, a principled 'man of his word'; a committed bike-rider (for example, almost every day, Canberra winters included, between his Yarralumla home and his ANU office); and someone who assumed the best in others, including in the tough and navigation-intensive sport of rogain, in which he excelled and, as I discovered, I did not (but we won our section anyway).

He was a lover and protector of our natural world, a keen bushwalker who mourned what had disappeared since the early explorers documented what they had seen. He was a high-value-adding user of energy in the kitchen, especially with his desserts and renowned jam-making, as well as an accomplished and thoughtful polymath and a provider of many a conversational oasis on the sidelines of flagging social events.

He was a dear friend whose absence from my life grieves me and whose absence from our world makes it that much less safe.

The last time that I saw Hugh was in mid-June last year, just after he had returned home to Marilyn from the extremes of his illnesses, treatments and operations during many weeks in hospitals in Canberra and Sydney. It was also just before Anh-Thu and I set off overseas for two months. He was exceedingly frail. He told us in his frail voice how relieved he was to be back home with Marilyn and his family and friends ... and, I was astounded to hear, 'back at his desk!' Hugh explained that he had been using his conscious time in hospital to 'write in my head and then remember' the story of his life's work and the research by those who had worked with him (mine included, he hastened to assure me!) Yes, Hugh, in extremis, was impatient to be back at work, to commit his story to permanence and, finally, escape from the burden of mental writing and remembering.

But for now, he was getting tired and it was time for us to leave. As we said our uncertain farewells, I started to think he might just pull it off ...

— Roger Stuart



Mark Elvin

18 August 1938 - 6 December 2023

With the passing of Emeritus Professor Mark Elvin in December 2023, the Australian National University and the academic community internationally have lost one of the most eminent, erudite and innovative scholars of Chinese history. A meticulous historian, Mark Elvin was also perhaps best known for his capacity to take a broad view of the landscape of the Chinese past, perceiving far-reaching social and environmental patterns which transformed scholarship in his field.

John Mark Dutton Elvin was born on 18 August 1938 in Cambridge, the son of the prominent educator and later Principal of Ruskin College, Oxford, Herbert Lionel Elvin, and US-born clinical psychologist Mona Elvin (née Dutton). With the outbreak of the Second World War a year after Mark's birth, Mona Elvin took her infant son to live in California. On their return to England, Mark became a pupil at the Dragon School in Oxford, where he recalled being 'extremely rebellious and utterly unpersuadable'. He later went on to study at St. Paul's School, London, and at King's College Cambridge, graduating in 1959. It was during his time as an undergraduate that he encountered Chinese history, in which he immersed himself during his postgraduate years at Harvard and at the University of Cambridge.

By the time he was a postgraduate student he was already developing the ideas which he set out in his highly influential book, *The Pattern of the Chinese Past: A Social and Economic Interpretation*, published in 1973. This presented comprehensive re-interpretations of key themes in Chinese history. In the first part of the book, Elvin re-examined the factors which allowed the Chinese empire (unlike all other empires of comparable size) to survive so long without being subject to the forces of fragmentation. He then went on to explore the origins of the transformation which has been described as China's 'mediaeval economic revolution', and to propose the notion of a 'high equilibrium trap', still widely debated today. To simplify, Elvin argued that it was the very success of the Chinese system in developing highly effective production and distribution technologies up to the time of the early Ming Dynasty that led to its subsequent relative stagnation in technological innovation.

While still completing his doctoral thesis, Mark Elvin took up an assistant lectureship at Cambridge, and then held academic positions at the Universities of Glasgow and Oxford before moving to the Australian National University in 1990. He played a central part in the life of the Division of Pacific and Asian History, serving as Divisional Convenor from 1995 to 1997. In 1993 he was elected to the Fellowship of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

Much of Elvin's work during his sixteen years at ANU focused on Chinese population dynamics, on which he led an ARC-funded Discovery Project, and on environmental history, about which he published works including his magisterial and award-winning study *The Retreat of the Elephants: An Environmental History of China* (2004). Like *The Pattern of the Chinese Past*, this offered a very long-term overview of the 4,000-year sweep of Chinese history, in this case drawing on a wide range of historical and literary sources to elucidate the economic and cultural forces behind the human transformation of the Chinese environment. The book also reflected Elvin's deeply humanistic approach to the study of Chinese history. As he wrote, immersing oneself in another mental world can 'provide a vantage point from which to look at one's own mental world from the outside'.

Adventures 'into all kinds of unexpected realms'

While pioneering new areas of research in Chinese Studies, Mark also supported the research of others. He supervised a number of PhD students working in the fields of Chinese economic and social history and the history of ideas in China. He helped to launch the ANU-based journal *East Asian History*, and organised several international collaborative projects and conferences. One of the largest of these led to the publication of *Sediments of Time: Environment and Society in Chinese History* (1998), coedited with Liu Ts'ui Jung of the Academia Sinica, Taipei. Mark was a member of the Board of the Graduate Program in History, as well as serving on the editorial boards of scholarly journals, including *The China Journal* and *Environment and History*.

Mark Elvin maintained extensive international networks, cooperating closely with scholars of China globally, but particularly in Japan and Western Europe. I had the pleasure of taking part in the conference which he co-organised on Lantau Island in Hong Kong as part of his Chinese environmental history project, and recall how exciting it was to share ideas with the remarkable group

of scholars from around the world whom Mark had managed to bring together for that event. In addition to his extensive connections to research institutions in East Asia, he was a Fellow of St. Anthony's College, Oxford, and in 1993 was Inaugural Holder of the Chaire Européenne at the École Normale Supérieure, Paris, as well as holding a visiting professorial post at the University of Heidelberg in 2003-2004. These global links were balanced by a love of the local life of the small rural community where he and his wife Dian lived for much his time at the ANU.

Former colleagues of Mark Elvin at the ANU will always remember the astonishing range of his linguistic and cultural knowledge, which made conversations with him an adventure into all kinds of unexpected realms of historical, social and scientific ideas. Colleague Craig Reynolds recalls discussions on everything ranging from the moves of Russian chess grand masters (chess was one of Mark's passions) to the history of the pneumatic tyre. Anthony Reid remembers being particularly impressed by Mark's combination of elegant erudition and straightforwardness, and his willingness to debate and share insights into big ideas in Asian history. Mark's erudite observations were often delivered with a twinkle in the eye and a quietly subversive sense of humour.

His passionate enthusiasm for research and for free-ranging exchanges of ideas across disciplinary boundaries was complemented by a deep dislike of academic bureaucracy and factionalism. He was troubled by the rise of managerialism in universities, and even once joined a picket line to protest against staff cuts which he believed to have been carried out without proper respect for scholarly values and natural justice. As he wrote in the preface to his 1996 collection of writings *Another History: Essays on China from a European Perspective* (in words that resonate in the present):

In the battery-chook academic world of today it is a struggle to keep much sense of enjoyment alive. Bureaucratisation of the soul is nurtured by incessant reviews and evaluations in terms of sterile success-indicators. A sub-culture of skilful semi-misrepresentation has developed around the competition for short-term research grants. There is a numerolatrous belief in published output for published output's sake, with an implicit contempt for content. It is not just nostalgia to take pleasure in recalling a time when this was much less so. Enjoyment is also an input.

After his retirement from ANU in 2006, Mark Elvin (again demonstrating the remarkable range of his intellectual interests and talents) increasingly shifted his focus to the study of enlightenment-era European scientific ideas, and particularly of the work of the seventeenth-to-eighteenth-century German botanist Rudolf Jakob Camerarius. His death on 6 December 2023 is deeply mourned by many around the world, but his legacy as a historian, colleague, mentor and friend continues to inspire all those who share his love of research and his fascination with East Asia's past and rapidly changing present.

— Tessa Morris-Suzuki

Diary dates

Ancient Egypt at the National Museum

A range of notable artefacts from the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden make up the Discovering Ancient Egypt exhibition at the National Museum of Australia until 8 September. The exhibition includes sculptures, coffins, jewellery and scrolls of the Book of the Dead, and features a recreated facade of the temple of Taffeh. It offers a survey of the everyday lives of ancient Egyptians, including their social systems, religious beliefs, and the importance of the afterlife. The Dutch museum's extensive collection dates from the 1740s. Visitors are advised to book in advance. Entry is: adults \$25, concessions \$20, children 5–16 years \$12.50, families (two adults and two children) \$62.50, Friends \$17.50.

Master portraitist's work on show next month

The work of the internationally renowned portraitist will be on show in 'Ralph Heimans: Portraiture. Power. Influence' at the National Portrait Gallery, the first major exhibition of the Sydney-born artist's oeuvre in his home country. Heimans's meticulously realised paintings are regarded as having revitalised the tradition of portraiture, besides providing insights into the lives of prominent and powerful people. The exhibition will include portraits lent from private and public collections in Australia and overseas, some of which have not been exhibited publicly in Australia. The exhibition runs from 15 March to 27 May 2024, with admission being \$20 (adult), \$18 (concession), 16 (Circle of Friends). No charge for children under 18.

Namatjira's Australia in colour

The first survey exhibition of the work of Western Aranda artist Vincent Namatjira will run at the National Gallery of Australia from 2 March to 21 July. *Vincent Namatjira: Australia in Colour*, charts the artist's career which has established him as a celebrated portraitist and a satirical chronicler of Australian identity. The exhibition brings together paintings, works on paper and moving images from public and private collections, and will also feature a selection of watercolours by the artist's great-grandfather, Albert Namatjira. The exhibition of the works of Emily Kam Kngwarray will continue until 28 April.

Six decades of the nation's life in focus

The exhibition of the work of photographers who worked for Australian Government agencies over six decades continues at the National Archives' National Office in Kings Avenue. 'Focus: Australian Government Photographers', shows images taken by photographers, many of whom worked for the Australian News and Information Bureau and its successor bodies, to

reflect the Australia way of life. The exhibition is open from 9am to 5pm Mondays to Friday, and from 10am till 4pm at weekends. The exhibition closes on 10 June, and admission is free.

Meet the Author events

March 5, 6pm: Dervla McTiernan in conversation with Chris Hammer on her new crime fiction novel, *What Happened to Nina*. Vote of thanks by Anna Creer. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

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

March 13, 6pm: Kathy Lette will talk about her new novel, *The Revenge Club*, with Karen Hardy. The vote of thanks will be given by Ginger Gorman. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

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

25 March, 6pm: Julia Baird will talk about her new book, *Bright Shining: How Grace Changes Everything*, with Katharine Murphy. Manning Clark Hall, Kambri Cultural Centre.

March 27, 6pm: David Lindenmayer will talk with Alex Sloan about his new book, *The Forest Wars*. Vote of thanks by David Pocock. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

April 2, 6pm: Louise Milligan will be in conversation with Amy Remeikis about her debut novel, *Pheasants Nest*. Vote of thanks by Sally Pryor. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

April 18, 6pm: Lech Blaine will be in conversation with Mark Kenny about his Quarterly Essay, *Peter Dutton and the Forgotten People*. John Warhurst will give the vote of thanks. T2, Kambri Cultural Centre.

April 30, 6pm: James Bradley will discuss his new non-fiction book, *Deep Water: The World in the Ocean*, with Beejay Silcox. The vote of thanks will be given by Tim Hollo. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

May 7, 6pm: Hugh Mackay will talk with Virginia Haussegger about his new book, *The Way We Are: Lessons from a Lifetime of Listening*. Frank Bongiorno will give the vote of thanks. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

May 13, 6pm: Miles Franklin award winner Shankari Chandran will talk about her new novel, *Safe Haven*, with Karen Viggers. Sally Pryor will give the vote of thanks. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

May 16, 6pm: Nick Dyrenfurth and Frank Bongiorno will discuss their new book, *A Little History of the Labour Party*, with Jennifer Rayner. The vote of thanks will be given by Bob McMullan. 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

Universities Australia's new CEO takes up duties

Luke Sheehy, the former Executive Director of the Australian Technology Network of Universities, has taken over as Chief Executive of Universities Australia for a five-year term.

Mr Sheehy has more than 20 years' experience in aspects of higher education, having held key education roles in government, working as an education and strategy consultant for the Asian Development Bank, and in senior management roles at Swinburne University.

The Chair of Universities Australia, Professor David Lloyd, said UA was pleased to appoint Mr Sheehy at the start of what will be a 'crucial period' for Australia's universities.

'His skills and knowledge will be of immense benefit to UA as we continue to work with government to foster an environment in which universities can continue delivering for the nation,' Professor Lloyd said.

Mr Sheehy succeeds Catriona Jackson, praised by Professor Lloyd for 'an outstanding job of leading UA', and leaving the organisation in a strong position.

Mr Sheehy said it was an honour to lead a sector as important and powerful as higher education. 'As the first member of my family to graduate from university, I know first-hand the power of education to transform lives and I am driven to ensure that opportunity is provided to as many people as possible,' he said.

Remembrance gathering for Katerina Clark

A gathering will be held at Manning Clark House on Sunday, 3 March, in remembrance of Professor Katerina Clark, who died at her home in Hamden, Connecticut, on 1 February.

Katerina, the second child and only daughter of Dymphna and Manning Clark, was the B.E. Bensinger Professor of Comparative Literature and Slavic Languages and Literatures at Yale University. She took her MA with honours at the ANU and later gained her PhD at Yale. She taught at several universities in the United States before taking up the Bensinger position.

A frequent visitor to her homeland, Professor Clark kept in touch with old friends and former colleagues from ANU, Melbourne University, Canberra High School and Ainslie Primary School.

People wishing to attend should send an RSVP to manningclarkhse@gmail.com.

Wagging — a tail of domestication?

Dog tail-wagging may be ‘one of the most visible, prevalent animal behaviours in the world’, but it has never been analysed in a systematic way, according to the authors of the paper ‘Why do dogs wag their tails’, published in The Royal Society Publishing’s *Biology Letters* on 22 January, 2024.

The authors set out to account for this ‘conspicuous behaviour’ in the estimated one billion domestic dogs (*Canis familiaris*) around the world, as well as suggesting avenues for further research. Though human beings attribute certain meanings to this behaviour, ‘its quantitative description and evolutionary history are rarely studied’, the authors say. ‘We summarize what is known about the mechanism, ontogeny, function and evolution of this behaviour.’

They put forward two hypotheses. The first is based on the observation that tamed silver foxes showed dog-like tail-wagging behaviour. They theorise that the domestication process, which may have begun about 35,000 years ago, may have led to behavioural and anatomical changes that similarly altered tail-wagging behaviour in dogs, such that dogs wag more often and in more contexts than non-domesticated canids. ‘This could have been due to a genetic link,’ they say ‘between the selection for tameness and tail anatomy.’

Alternatively, they suggest that tail-wagging behaviour may have been a ‘target of the domestication process’, with humans unconsciously selecting dogs that wagged their tails more often, and potentially more rhythmically. They call this the ‘domesticated rhythmic wagging’ hypothesis.

The authors note that tail-wagging is ‘a stereotyped, cyclical and rhythmic behaviour’, and that extensive multidisciplinary evidence has shown ‘that humans have remarkable abilities to perceive and produce rhythmic sequences, particularly isochronous patterns where events are evenly spaced in time’.

‘How this behavioural trait appeared in humans is still not clear,’ they say, ‘but cognitive neuroscience shows that human brains prefer rhythmic stimuli, which trigger pleasurable responses and engage brain networks that are part of the reward system.’

As for the pursuit of further avenues of research, they point out that the uniqueness, complexity and ubiquity of wagging have the potential to be associated with multiple functions, but its mechanisms and ontogeny are still poorly understood.

‘These knowledge gaps prevent us from fully understanding the evolutionary history of modern tail-wagging behaviour and what role humans played in the process. A more systematic and thorough investigation of tail wagging will not only better map this iconic dog behavioural display, but also provide indirect

evidence into the evolution of human traits, such as the perception and production of rhythmic stimuli.’

Taylor Swift as entertainer and activist

To understand the far-reaching influence of popular entertainers like Taylor Swift, ‘it is crucial to recognise that celebrities are entities beyond just entertainers’, Dr Hao Xu and Yuzheng Li write in a paper delivered to the Swiftposium, the academic conference held at the University of Melbourne in early February, coinciding with the American singer’s Australian tour.

Taylor Swift is ‘not only a music icon, but a cultural and economic phenomenon of the 21st century’, the authors say in ‘Ready for It?’: How Taylor is Changing Modern Society, one of several papers presented to the conference that was held to discuss the impact of the entertainer.

Dr Xu, a Lecturer in Media and Communications at the University of Melbourne, and Yuzheng Li, a PhD candidate in marketing at RMIT University, are working on a research project to understand the ‘co-creation process’ which implies that celebrities can empower their fans to make an active contribution to social change.

‘Celebrities and fans can work together to address social issues, enriching each other’s lives in the process,’ Xu and Li suggest.

Aside from her extraordinary professional success, Xu and Li write, Swift has used her fame to address political and social issues, like LGBTQ+ rights and voter registration in the US. This highlights ‘how the modern line between celebrity and activist is becoming increasingly blurred’.

‘More and more, celebrities are lending their voices to socio-political issues, prompting questions about how they use their immense platforms to raise awareness and co-create social value alongside their audiences,’ they write.

The theory of ‘social value co-creation’ suggests that whereas collaboration between businesses and stakeholders is often marked by power imbalances, ‘the relationship between celebrities and fans is arguably more symmetrical, making it a more genuine and collaborative co-creation process’.

‘When celebrities like Taylor Swift engage with their audiences on sensitive social issues, they can transcend their public personas and forge deeper connections. This then fuels the co-creation process and empowers fans to contribute actively to social change,’ the authors say.

Their study aims to not only ‘help understand the evolution of social movements but also reveal the complex relationship between the entertainment industry and the political sphere. It can give us an insight into how political discourse is influenced by pop culture and vice versa.’

Bookshelf

Redeveloping China's Villages in the Twenty-First Century The Dilemmas of Policy Implementation

By Lior Rosenberg

ISBN (print): 9781760466015

ISBN (online): 9781760466022

January 2024

ANU Press. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22459/RCVTFC.2023>

Implementing national policies is a crucial function of the local Chinese bureaucracy and an indispensable part of Beijing's overall state capacity, yet the specifics of how and why local officials interpret and implement such policies have so far escaped detailed attention. In *Redeveloping China's Villages in the Twenty-First Century*, Lior Rosenberg examines the national Village Redevelopment Program, a significant policy to promote rural change. Based on on-site research, this volume investigates the program's implementation in both the industrialised county of Chenggu, Shandong province, and the predominantly agricultural county of Beian, Anhui province. At the book's heart is a puzzle: the program was supposed to prioritise poorer villages, but in both Chenggu and Beian it has subsidised improved infrastructure and services in already industrialised and prosperous villages, while leaving behind poorer ones. In explaining this, Rosenberg elaborates on the larger economic, political and social environment in which local officials operate, and the pressures they face from above.

The Chinese Communist Party A 100-year Trajectory

Edited by Jérôme Doyon and Chloé Froissart

ISBN (print): 9781760466237

ISBN (online): 9781760466244

January 2024

ANU Press. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22459/CCP.2024>

This volume brings together an international team of prominent scholars from a range of disciplines to investigate the many facets of the Chinese Communist Party's 100-year trajectory. It combines a level of historical depth mostly found in single-authored monographs with the thematic and disciplinary breadth of an edited volume. This work stands out for its long-term approach, offering complex and nuanced insights, eschewing party grand narratives, and unravelling underlying trends and thinking, made up of adaptation but also contradictions, resistance and sometimes setbacks, that may be overlooked when focusing on the short term. The many perspectives presented in this volume highlight the complex internal dynamics of the party, its diverse roles in relation to the state, and its interaction with society.

Mandates and Missteps

Australian Government Scholarships to the Pacific – 1948 to 2018

By Anna Kent

ISBN (print): 9781760466152

ISBN (online): 9781760466169

February 2024

ANU Press, DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22459/MM.2024>

Mandates and Missteps is the first comprehensive history of Australian government scholarships to the Pacific, from the first scheme in 1948 to the Australia Awards of 2018. The study of scholarships provides a window into foreign and education policy-making across decades, and the affect these policies have had on individuals and communities. This work shows the broad role scholarships have played in bilateral relationships between Australia and Pacific Island territories and countries. The famed Colombo Plan is put into its context in international aid and international education history. Australian scholarship programs, it is argued, ultimately reflect Australia, and its perception of itself as a nation in the Pacific, more than the needs of Pacific Island nations. *Mandates and Missteps* traces Australia's role as both a coloniser in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea and a participant in the process of decolonisation across the Pacific.

Administration

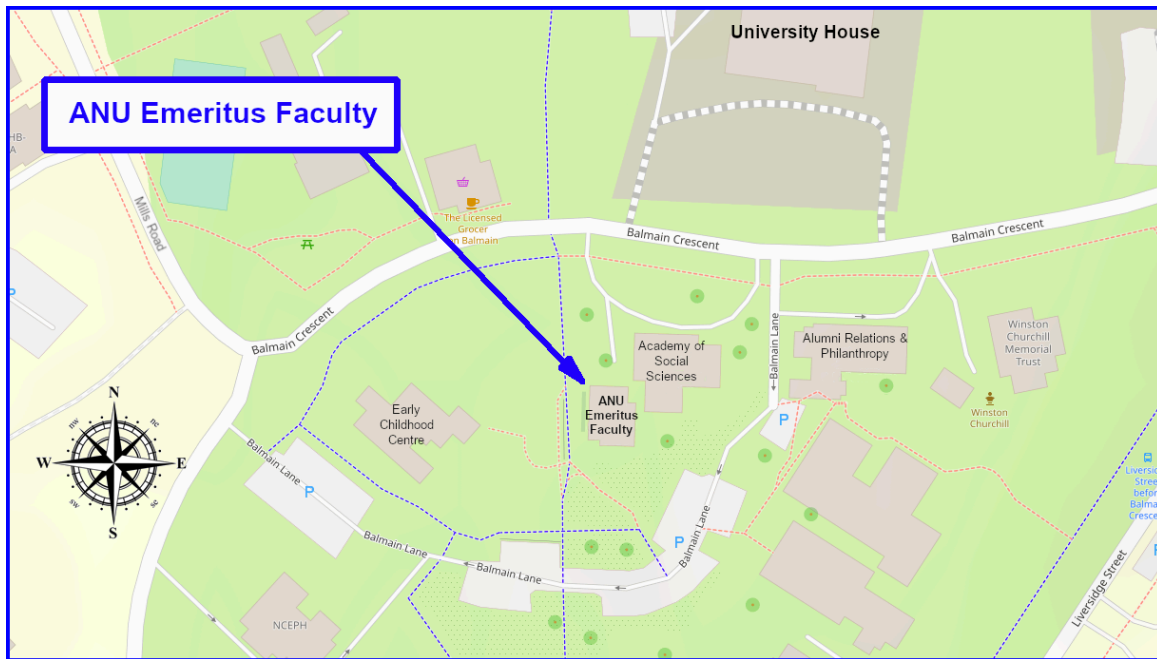
Arrangements for ANUEF room bookings

Requests to book the Molony Room should be addressed to the Secretary of the ANU Emeritus Faculty, Jan O'Connor, at jantanress@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

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