

# EMERITUS

*The Australian National University Emeritus Faculty e-magazine*

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## Higher international visa fee ‘threat’ to sector, Go8 says

The Group of Eight universities has criticised the Federal Government’s increase in the visa fee for international students, describing it as ‘a blatant revenue-raising move masked as deterring low-quality students’.

‘The government is making a critical mistake by using international students as a scapegoat to manage a short-term spike in migration and ease housing pressure,’ the organisation’s Chief Executive, Vicki Thomson, said in a statement on 1 July.

In a media statement that day the Minister for Education, Jason Clare, and ministerial colleagues said international student visas would increase from \$710 to \$1,600 from that date. The increase reflected ‘the increasing value of education in Australia and the Albanese Government’s commitment to restoring integrity in the international education sector’.

Ms Thomson noted that Parliament had also begun considering the Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment (Quality and Integrity) Bill which, among its measures, would empower the Minister for Education to manage sector enrolments.

Mr Clare told Parliament last month that the Bill would allow the minister to make enrolment limits by legislative instrument, or by individual notice, for providers. ‘These may relate to a provider level “total enrolment limit”, or at the course level imposing a “course enrolment limit”, or a combination of the two,’ he said.

The Bill would also introduce a range of measures for education agents, and also take into account the supply of ‘purpose-built student accommodation’.

Ms Thomson said ‘pulling two aggressive levers simultaneously represents a considerable threat to the sector’s global reputation and our capacity to attract the highest-quality students’.

‘This increase in visa fees will reverse the diversification of countries from which students come, at the very time the Federal Government is encouraging our universities to attract quality students from the ASEAN region,’ she said.

‘Yet again our international students are being used as cash cows to prop up the economy, the national research effort and now to fund other Government initiatives.

‘It is death by a thousand cuts to our most successful services export sector.’

She noted that international education had ‘propped up’ the economy after COVID, with a National Australia Bank analysis showing that spending by international students had been responsible for an 0.8 percentage point increase in GDP in 2023, over half of the recorded economic growth for that year.

‘If Go8 universities are capped to a pre-COVID 2019 level of international students, then conservatively benchmarking against 2023 figures, this would have a potential immediate impact of \$5.35 billion and over 22,500 jobs in the economy,’ she said.

The Go8 did not advocate an ‘open slather approach’, but argued that this combination of policies would have damaging consequences for the national economy, and Australia’s skilled workforce and reputation. Ms Thomson said public education providers must be removed from the ESOS Bill and 2025 be used for intense consultation on international education.

The government said the visa fee increase reflected the increasing value of education in Australia and the government’s commitment to restoring integrity in the international education sector.

The increase would also help to fund several education and migration initiatives, including measures recommended by the Universities Accord to make HECS fairer and FEE-Free Uni Ready courses. It would also support Vocational Education and Training measures, including financial support for apprentices and their employers.

Concurrently, a number of previously announced elements of the government’s Migration Strategy would come into effect, including increasing the Temporary Skilled Migration Income Threshold (TSMIT) from \$70,000 to \$73,150, based on annual indexation; shortening the duration of Temporary Graduate Visas and reducing the age eligibility; ending ‘visa hopping’ by closing loopholes that allow students and other temporary visa holders to continuously extend their stay in Australia; and improving mobility for temporary skilled migrants by trebling the time they can remain in Australia between employer sponsors.

‘International education is an incredibly important national asset and we need to ensure its integrity and quality,’ Mr Clare said.

‘These changes will strengthen integrity in the international education system and help to fund important reforms recommended by the Universities Accord.’

The Minister for Home Affairs and Cyber Security, Clare O’Neil, said that reform of the migration and international education systems was essential to eliminate ‘ports and exploitation’.

‘This sector has the power to drive growth and opportunity for our country, but to get there, we’ve got to work with quality providers to clean it up,’ she said.

# ANU researchers show value of ‘batteries on wheels’ in emergency

Major storms in Victoria in mid-February that cut electricity to tens of thousands of homes gave researchers at the Australian National University the opportunity to show that electric vehicles can feed power back into the national grid during an emergency.

The event showed that ‘electric vehicles can provide the backup we need in an emergency like this,’ according to Senior Research Fellow Dr Bjorn Sturmberg, lead author of a study of the event. It was the first time in the world that this type of vehicle-to-grid response to an emergency had been demonstrated, he said.

‘We have a fleet of 51 EVs across Canberra that monitor the grid whenever they’re plugged in and can quickly inject short bursts of power to rebalance the system if the national grid rapidly loses power. They’re essentially big batteries on wheels,’ Dr Sturmberg said.

‘The event in February, caused by storms in Victoria, was the first real-world test of our vehicles and chargers. We now know a vehicle-to-grid system can work.’

At the time 16 EVs were plugged in at properties across Canberra. Four were charging, while 12 were idle.

‘These vehicles quickly stopped charging and within seconds started discharging power into the grid, as they’ve been programmed to do,’ Dr Sturmberg said.

‘In total, they provided 107 kilowatts of support to the national grid. To put that in perspective, 105,000 vehicles responding in this way would fully cover the backup required for the whole of the ACT and NSW.

‘For context, there were just under 100,000 EVs sold in Australia last year.’

Dr Sturmberg said work was still needed to balance the growing demand for vehicle charging with grid security: with the number of EVs increasing rapidly, the grid would not be able to cope with ‘everyone charging at the same time when they get home in the evening’, Dr Sturmberg said.

‘It may call for an industry adjustment, for instance, to require EV manufacturers to program their vehicles to stop charging during a grid emergency, with an option for drivers to override for urgent charging,’ he said.

‘Stopping just 6,000 EVs charging would have kept the power on for those 90,000 customers whose power was cut on February 13.

‘Our results show that vehicle-to-grid can be a powerful contributor to our power system’s security, and that all electric vehicles have an important role to play.’

# Clare issues consultation papers on tertiary commission, funding system

The Australian Government issued consultation papers late in June that will help to guide the implementation of the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) and a new higher-education funding system.

The changes stem from recommendations to implement the Universities Accord. The Minister for Education, Jason Clare, announced at the time of this year's Budget that the Secretary of the Department of Education, Tony Cook PSM, would chair the Implementation Advisory Committee that would consult universities about the legislative design of the ATEC and the Managed Growth Funding System.

The government sees the Accord as central to setting up the tertiary education sector for the future. The ATEC will be responsible for tertiary education system stewardship and driving reform over the longer term. It is expected that an interim body will be established by 1 July 2025, and formally established from 1 January 2026, pending passage of legislation.

It is intended that the new Managed Growth Funding System will better meet student demand, maintain sustainable growth and increase opportunity for people from underrepresented backgrounds.

The government's intention is for the new system to ensure long-term growth in funding arrangements for universities, allowing them to plan for the future, meet Australia's skills needs, prioritise resources and provide a better educational experience for more students.

The Accord's target is that by 2050, 80 per cent of Australian workers will have a TAFE or university qualification.

'To hit that target we have to break down that invisible barrier that stops a lot of people from disadvantaged backgrounds getting a crack at going to university,' Mr Clare said. 'Part of that is changing how we fund universities.'

'The Universities Accord is also bigger than one budget and bigger than one term of Parliament. It's a national project.'

'Targeted consultation and feedback from stakeholders across the education landscape will ensure we get the detailed design of these vital reforms right.'

The consultation papers can be found at <https://www.education.gov.au/australian-universities-accord/accord-202425-budget-measures/post-budget-implementation-consultation-papers>.

Feedback can be emailed to [AustralianUniversitiesAccord@education.gov.au](mailto:AustralianUniversitiesAccord@education.gov.au), with the feedback requested by Friday, 26 July.

# Universities' Berlin Statement urges collaboration on global challenges

A gathering of the world's leading research universities has called for collaboration on shared global challenges and urged governments to help to realise the potential of the research, innovation and partnerships the universities offer.

The call emerged in the form of the Berlin Statement from the recent meeting of the Global Research-Intensive Universities Network (GRIUN) in Berlin. The body represents 168 top globally ranked universities from Australia, the European Union, United Kingdom, United States, Japan and Canada.

'Recent years have seen rising geopolitical tensions, a global pandemic, mass migrations, clear evidence of climate change, and greater polarisation as both opinion and rhetoric push more towards the extremes,' the statement says.

'These global challenges require global efforts and global leadership to address, even if their immediate impacts may be more regional or local,' it says.

'Our research-intensive universities play a fundamental key role in this endeavour, bringing our expertise and resources together with the goal of creating the capacity for effective global cooperation.'

'Now more than ever it is incumbent on our universities to provide the next generation with the knowledge and tools to find solutions to new and emerging challenges, the skills to "disagree well" and the drive to contribute to economic and social prosperity.'

As the world confronts increasing challenges, the statement says, universities are working relentlessly to develop solutions and striving to create new opportunities.

'On the occasion of our meeting in Berlin, we reaffirm the principles upon which we stand and continuously strive for. We call upon governments around the world to work with us and our partners to ensure we can realise the full potential of the distinctive research, innovation, and partnerships our universities offer,' the statement says.

The Chief Executive of the Group of Eight, Vicki Thomson, said her organisation and its global partners would continue to support societies at times of conflict, health emergencies, and economic and social disruptions. 'Our collective expertise and resources are vital to this and to find solutions to global challenges. Our strength is our research intensity,' she said.

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## Chinese honour for head of Academy

The President of the Australian Academy of Science, Professor Chennupati Jagadish AC, was inducted into the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) as a Foreign Member at a ceremony in Beijing on 23 June 2024.

He is one of 180 Foreign Members elected to the CAS. Foreign members are people who are not Chinese citizens but have been recognised for their distinguished scientific or engineering work.

Speaking at the 21st General Assembly of CAS members on 23 June, Professor Jagadish stressed the importance of fostering collaboration and partnerships with international scientific organisations and researchers.

‘International scientific cooperation is essential for addressing global challenges,’ he said.

‘By combining resources, expertise, and efforts across borders, the global scientific community can develop more effective, inclusive, and sustainable solutions to the pressing issues facing humanity.’

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## Tertiary peak bodies welcome creation of independent research council board

University peak bodies have welcomed the appointment of the new independent Australian Research Council Board, whose members were announced in late June by the Minister for Education, Jason Clare.

The appointment of the board gives effect to recommendations made by the independent Review of the Australian Research Council Act 2001, led by Professor Margaret Sheil AO. The new board, instead of the Minister, will be responsible for approving most research grants within the National Competitive Grants Program.

In a statement, Universities Australia said the board would play a critical role in ensuring the integrity of the nation’s research system. The change addressed long-standing issues of political interference and delays that have previously impeded researchers’ work.

A strong research system built on governance, peer review and transparency would ensure that universities and researchers could continue work that would help to guide Australia through forthcoming challenges and opportunities, it said.

Vicki Thomson, Chief Executive of the Group of Eight, said the independent board would improve accountability and transparency in decision making.

‘The importance of this cannot be overstated,’ she said. ‘The need to depoliticise ARC funding, while maintaining national security oversight of grants through parliament, was highlighted by the Go8 as key to maintaining our international reputation, and our capacity to attract and retain world leading researchers.’

Under the new arrangement, the minister will retain the power to approve nationally significant investments that foster research capability, such as ARC Centres of Excellence.

The minister will also have the power to direct the board not to approve a grant, or to terminate funding to research grants, based on national security concerns. Parliament must be notified of these decisions.

The ARC Board is: Professor Peter Shergold AC (Chair), Professor Susan Dodds FAHA (Deputy Chair), Distinguished Professor Maggie Walter, Professor Cindy Shannon AM, Professor Paul Wellings CBE, Emeritus Professor Margaret Harding, Mr Mark Stickells AM, and Ms Sally-Ann Williams FTSE.

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## Humanity should thank Steffen, collaborator says in inaugural lecture

Emeritus Professor Will Steffen, who died in January 2023, has been remembered as a ‘giant’ of the scientific community at the inaugural lecture held in his name at the Australian National University on 4 July.

The inaugural address was delivered by Professor Steffen’s long-time collaborator, Professor Johan Rockström from the University of Potsdam, who remembered his colleague not only as a brilliant scientist, but as a selfless mentor and gifted communicator.

‘I know I speak on behalf of the global sustainability and climate science community in saying that we owe so much to our dear colleague and friend Will Steffen, Professor Rockström said.

‘His work is now at the frontier of cutting-edge earth systems science.’

Professor Steffen was the former Director of the Fenner School of Environment and Society and the inaugural Director of the University’s Climate Change Institute.

In his lecture, Professor Rockström outlined their work on the planetary boundaries framework, which presents a set of nine planetary boundaries within which humanity can continue to develop and thrive for generations to come.

‘The framework was not initially published as a finalised theory — it was a challenge to the world to scrutinise the nine planetary boundaries that we proposed,’ he said.

‘Will then updated this research in 2015, quantifying six of the nine boundaries. He was a fantastic spokesperson for the science.

‘Today we feel more confident than ever that if we are stewards of these nine planetary boundaries, we have a good chance of handing over to future generations a planet with good life support and healthy resilience.

‘But Will and I also wanted to explore what happens when we transgress these boundaries, for example, if we burn fossil fuels to a point where we reach two degrees of human-caused global warming, what will the planet’s response be?

‘The conclusion was that already at two degrees warming we risk bumping up that warming to 2.4 degrees just through earth systems feedback of a planet that is losing resilience — and at that point you risk causing a domino effect.

‘The presentation of this work required courage, and Will really represented intellectual robustness combined with courage.

‘He is very much alive in our academic endeavours today. Humanity should thank him as well.’

Several of Professor Steffen’s close colleagues also took to the stage to speak about his legacy, including Professor Emerita and Pro-Chancellor at Macquarie University, Lesley Hughes, Professor Brian Walker and Distinguished Honorary Professor Penny Sackett.

## Obituary

### **Wallace Raymond Ambrose** **25 July 1933 – 9 January 2024**

Wal Ambrose, a member of the ANU community for 60 years, died in January 2024. Affectionately described in his family’s funeral announcement as experimental archaeologist, inventor, artist, photographer, builder, wine connoisseur, and cricket and tennis tragic, all of these talents and enthusiasms were manifest in his life at ANU.

Wal grew up in Auckland. After a Diploma of Fine Arts in painting and a year looking at European art galleries, he returned to New Zealand in 1955 to join Jack Golson’s burgeoning crew of amateur archaeologists, at a time when university-based professional archaeology was beginning to take root. Wal finished a teaching diploma in fine arts but abandoned life as a teacher for a job as technician/photographer/cartographer/illustrator in the Anthropology Department at Auckland University. He also enrolled for further study, taking units in anthropology and geology towards a bachelor’s degree, and quickly became an influential participant in the new institutions and research ventures that transformed New Zealand archaeology as an expert excavator, pioneer of new techniques of recording threatened rock art, writer and editor of academic papers, and respected colleague.

In 1963 Wal was persuaded to join Jack Golson in the Anthropology Department of the Research School of Pacific Studies, ANU, as research assistant in prehistory, with a brief to establish a laboratory for the conservation of archaeological materials and a photographic studio and darkroom. Since ANU refused to recognise his Auckland anthropology credits for a science degree, or his geology credits for an arts degree, he gave up on undergraduate studies. Instead Wal, his wife Janet, another recruit from fine arts to archaeology, and their two young children spent two years in London, Wal taking the two-year Diploma of Archaeological Conservation at the Institute of Archaeology, with distinction. On his return to Canberra, prehistory was growing rapidly with research interests expanding in Australia and Papua New Guinea; his position was reclassified, and he chose to call himself Research Officer in Conservation and Experimental Archaeology. The archaeologists were at first housed in the Old Nurses Quarters on Mills Road. Then, in 1970, as



the independent Department of Prehistory in RSPacS settled into the Coombs building, the ground floor of the newly added Laboratory Wing became Wal's domain.

Fieldwork with Jack Golson continued, initially in Australia, then increasingly in Papua New Guinea. Wal was from the first involved in the research centred on Kuk Swamp in the Highlands that established ancient, independent foundations of agriculture in PNG. In 1970 Wal and his family spent six months in Port Moresby, establishing an archaeological lab in the Department of Anthropology, University of Papua New Guinea, and working with Jim Allen at Motupore.

Wal's dedication to the practical immediacies of archaeological fieldwork combined with his continuing academic interests in both science and humanities, circumstances which initially blocked his entry into a normal academic career, gradually became his unique strength as contemporary archaeology embraced more and more scientific techniques, necessarily outsourced because few archaeologists beyond Wal fully understood them.

ANU excavations in swamps in both South Australia and the New Guinea Highlands produced various wooden artefacts, including ancient spades from the Kuk site that required urgent conservation to prevent their disintegration. Wal knew from earlier work in New Zealand and his UK studies that available solutions were unsatisfactory. He developed a new method of impregnation with a stabilising preservative solution and freeze-drying under vacuum, which became widely adopted. The vacuum chamber that he built from salvaged parts was too long, so that the back door of his lab was jammed slightly open for decades.

The success of his freeze-drying technique led him to look for ways to deal with larger timbers and structures, leading to experimental work in Antarctica in the 1990s, harnessing the cold, dry atmosphere of the Australian Antarctic base at Davis, one of the driest sites on the world's driest continent. To get the dry Antarctic air, often blasting in blizzard conditions, to circulate over frozen materials and promote sublimation without introducing snow or ice particles, Wal's solution was a venturi-type suction system installed above a buried container. After a successful trial the procedure was applied to the removal of ice and snow from historic Antarctic buildings, including Mawson's hut and another at the abandoned Wilkes Station, and their maintenance ice-free. This was a great improvement over the previous brute-force method using ice picks and chainsaws. The importance of Wal's work to the conservation of Antarctic heritage has been recognised not only by the Australian authorities, but also by the British Antarctic Survey.

Wal became the leader in the characterisation of obsidian from different Melanesian sources, producing data that demonstrated prehistoric linkages between sites far beyond those recorded ethnographically, illuminating past networks of social interaction in the region. Again, this was based on earlier work in New Zealand. He was the first to demonstrate that the four or five major source areas in Melanesia could be differentiated by density measurement, and he went on to develop more refined techniques of non-destructive chemical characterisation of different obsidians (and also pottery), in conjunction with scientists from the then Atomic Energy Commission at

Lucas Heights in Sydney. While next-generation researchers have carried on and expanded Wal's work in this area, many archaeologists across the world who source their excavated obsidian flakes use techniques descended from Wal's original research and draw upon his collection of reference standards.

Curiosity about the chemistry of obsidian also led him further into obsidian hydration dating, a topic that occupied several decades of his professional research life, running experiments that continued for more than 25 years. Wal noted early that the claim that the procedure was simple, fast and cheap was a false promise. The variables that determine hydration rate needed careful measurement to disentangle their effects. His experimental tanks at standard temperatures allowed measurement of the hydration rates of chemically different samples, under realistic conditions. While the maintenance of these tanks and their heaters was not difficult, persistence over 25 years would have deterred most people. His results have been noticed by scientists whose interests in glass had no connection to archaeology. Wal also developed methods to cope with the problem of erosion of the hydration layer on obsidian artefacts in chemically aggressive soils: fissures in obsidian caused by flaking can hold measurable uneroded hydration layers, which he showed experimentally correlate well with dates from independent methods. More recently, he applied himself to the difficulties of optical measurement, using instead digital imaging to enhance the contrast of the hydrated/unhydrated interface.

### *Lifelong fascination with Lapita pottery decoration*

One largely overlooked problem of chemical dating techniques, including obsidian hydration and others such as amino acid racemisation, is that of variable ground temperature. This was solved by Wal's brilliant invention of hydration cells. These, slightly larger than golf balls, are buried in sites and register temperature by the uptake of ground moisture over set time periods. Sets of these cells — known universally as Wal's balls — buried at different depths allow the calculation of mean and extreme site temperatures. The cells were relatively cheap to produce and could be used in large numbers to measure not only temperature but also humidity and salinity, enabling their expanded use for other climatological and environmental purposes around the world. The demand was sufficient that Wal patented the idea in several countries and had the cells produced commercially.

Another area of research with which Wal maintained a lifelong fascination was the intricate dentate-stamped decoration of Lapita pottery. He first encountered dentate-stamped sherds excavated by Jack Golson in Tonga in 1957, illustrating them in a seminal paper Jack published (in French) 67 years ago. Lapita dentate-stamping tools have never been recovered archaeologically, and there has been plenty of speculation about them. Wal proposed that they were made from turtle scute. He showed that experimental tools made of this, with teeth cut before and after bending, reproduced the minute details of Lapita design elements. Using silicone moulds of dentate-stamped sherds, he was also able to demonstrate that alternative decorative techniques such as rouletting could be discounted.

Wal's curiosity and independence often led him to puncture holes in accepted paradigms; he did so with such tact and humility that the thoroughness of his revisions was sometimes underappreciated. Such was his dismantling of the long-held idea of supposedly 'clear' connections between tattooing traditions and Lapita designs. In his last published paper on Lapita, comprehensive as ever, he argued for the overwhelming prior influence of basketry and plaiting in Oceanic artistic inspiration and expression, rather than, as many had argued, their derivation from Lapita.

By 1982 Wal was indistinguishable from any other academic in the ANU Prehistory Department (although achieving more than most: he had also designed and built a family house in Canberra and another at the coast). But he was still officially a Senior Research Officer on the technical pay scale. Even at the top of this scale, he was earning significantly less than his academic colleagues and had no upward pathway. Attempts to rectify this by having him transferred to the academic list foundered on Wal's lack of a degree. A way around this was found by creating a unique position neither technical nor academic but attached to the academic pay scale. This position was ratified before the ANU administration recognised what was happening; when they did, their complaints were long and loud, as Wal no longer fitted into existing pigeonholes. Until retirement Wal carried the unique title of Experimental Archaeologist. The day he retired the administration abolished the position and closed the loophole forever.

In 2006 the ANU conferred on Wallace Ambrose the degree of Doctor of Letters — eight years after his formal retirement from the university. The degree was assessed on 42 submitted papers sorted into four categories. It was difficult to persuade Wal to apply for this, another demonstration of the professional modesty that marked all of his life. When he did apply, in characteristic detail, the examiners were effusive in their praise, one suggesting that any of the four groups of papers was a sufficient basis to award the degree. They touched on all the characteristics of Wal's professional work — the depth and breadth of his scholarship, spanning science and the humanities, the originality of his ideas, the meticulous nature of his analyses and the flair with which he perceived extensions of his work into other world problems.

In retirement, Wal continued active engagement with colleagues and students and was an invited speaker at multiple international conferences, not all archaeological. He received an excellence award from the International Association for Obsidian Studies presented at an American Archaeological Association annual meeting in 1997. He continued researching and writing archaeological articles throughout his retirement and had a new one in production when he fell ill late last year. We look forward to reading it.

— **Jean Kennedy, Stuart Bedford and Jim Allen**

## Diary dates

### *Boyd returns to the Shoalhaven*

Readers with an interest in Australian landscape might be rewarded with a visit to the Bundanon Art Museum, near Nowra, to see the exhibition *Wilder Times: Arthur Boyd and the Mid 1980s Landscape*, which brings together more than 60 works in various media by Australian artists who were working around that period. The core of the exhibition is the series of 14 paintings of the Shoalhaven landscape which Boyd was commissioned to create for the new Arts Centre Melbourne in 1984. The paintings return to Bundanon for the first time since the museum's creation. The exhibition intends to show a period of cultural dynamism in Australia, when ideas of landscape, land ownership and environmental protection were actively interrogated. The art museum is open Wednesdays to Sundays from 10am to 5pm. The exhibition is open till 13 October. Cost is \$18 for adults, \$12 for concession holders, and \$40 for families.

### *CSO marks Beethoven's Choral bicentenary*

The Canberra Symphony Orchestra will mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9 in D minor*, the Choral, when Jessica Cottis conducts performances of the epochal work in the Llewellyn Hall, Canberra School of Music, on Wednesday and Thursday, 7 and 8 August. The CSO Chorus and soloists Emma Pearson (soprano), Ashlyn Tymms (mezzo), James Egglestone (tenor) and Adrian Tamburini (bass) will sing the vocal fourth movement, which sets Friedrich Schiller's 'Ode to Joy' to music. The Choral had its premiere in Vienna on 7 May 1824. The Canberra concert will also feature a premiere: *Daughters of Elysium*, by Miriama Young, an Australian and New Zealand composer and sound artist. The work takes its title and inspiration from the text of Schiller's ode. The concerts begin at 7.30pm.

### *Gauguin, life, art and legacy at the NGA*

The life, art and legacy of French post-impressionist master Paul Gauguin are explored in talks, public programs, a podcast series and films that are part of the major exhibition of the exhibition *Gauguin's World: Tōna Iho, Tōna Ao*, running at the National Gallery of Australia till 7 October. Henri Loyrette, curator and former director of the Louvre Museum and Musée d'Orsay, has drawn on painting, drawing, engraving, sculpture and the decorative arts to trace the artist's development, from his impressionist beginnings to his Polynesian visions. During the exhibition season there also will be a display of works by contemporary artists from the Pacific and further afield.

### *Meet the Author events*

**August 5, 6.30pm:** Michelle Arrow and Leigh Boucher will talk with Frank Bongiorno about their new book, *Personal Politics; Sexuality, Gender and the Remaking of Citizenship in Australia*. RSSS Auditorium, ANU.

**August 7, 6pm:** Paul Ham will discuss his new book, *The Soul: The History of the Human Mind*, with Hugh Mackay. The vote of thanks will be given by Allan Behm. RSSL auditorium, ANU.

**August 13, 6pm:** Andrew Ford will discuss his new book, *The Shortest History of Music*, with Malcolm Gillies. Robyn Holmes will give the vote of thanks. Harry Hartog bookshop, Kambri Cultural Centre.

**August 16, 6pm:** Norman Swan will talk with Laura Tingle about his new book, *So You Want to Know What's Good for Your Kids?* Alex Sloan will give the vote of thanks. Llewellyn Hall, ANU School of Music.

**August 20, 6pm:** Hayley Scrivenor will talk with Chris Hammer about her new novel, *Girl Falling*. Anna Creer will give the vote of thanks. Harry Hartog bookshop, Kambri Cultural Centre.

**August 27, 6.30pm:** Catherine Fox will talk about her new book, *Breaking the Boss Bias: How to Get More Women into Leadership*, with Michelle Ryan. Virginia Haussegger will give the vote of thanks. RSSL auditorium, ANU.

**September 2, 6pm:** Nina Jankowicz will talk about her books *How to Lose the Information War* and *How to Be a Woman Online*, with Van Badham and Andrew Leigh. Molonglo Theatre, Crawford School, ANU.

**September 9, 6pm:** Darren Rix and Craig Cormick will talk about their new book, *Warra Warra Wai: How Indigenous Australians Discovered Captain Cook, and What They Tell of the Coming of the Ghost People*. The vote of thanks will be given by Kate Fullagar. Harry Hartog bookshop, Kambri Cultural Centre.

**September 12, 6pm:** Kevin Bell will talk with Kim Rubenstein about his new book, *Housing: The Great Australian Right*. In his book, Bell argues that governments have the capacity and the power to resolve the national housing shortage, and that the first step is for Australia to rethink its approach to housing policy and recognise access to having a home is a fundamental human right. Liz Allen will give the vote of thanks. RSSL auditorium, ANU.

**September 17, 6pm:** Don Watson will be in conversation about his Quarterly Essay, *The US Election*, with Mark Kenny. Harry Hartog bookshop, ANU.

**September 24, 6pm:** Rebecca Huntley will talk about her new book, *Sassafras*, with Karen Middleton. Jeanne Ryckmans will give the vote of thanks. Harry Hartog bookshop, Kambri Cultural Centre.

**September 30, 6pm:** Virginia Trioli will talk about her new book, *A Bit on the Side*, with Virginia Haussegger. Street Theatre, 15 Childers Street.

**October 1, 6pm:** Dr Karl Kruszelnicki will present his memoir, *A Periodic Tale*. Street Theatre, 15 Childers Street.

**October 10, 6pm:** Gina Chick will discuss her new book, *We Are the Stars*. Jeanne Ryckmans will give the vote of thanks. Street Theatre, 15 Childers Street.

**October 14, 6pm:** Amin Saikal will talk with Virginia Haussegger about his new book, *How to Lose a War: The Story of America's Intervention in Afghanistan*. Harry Hartog bookshop, Kambri Cultural Centre.

**October 15, 6pm:** Andrew Leigh will talk about the new version of his 2013 book *Battlers and Billionaires*. Harry Hartog bookshop, Kambri Cultural Centre.

**October 20, 6pm:** Tim Winton will talk about his new novel, *Juice*. Presented in association with the Canberra Writers Festival. Llewellyn Hall.

**October 29, 6pm:** Best-selling Italian author Paolo Giordano will talk about his life and books. Harry Hartog bookshop, Kambri Cultural Centre.

**November 4, 6pm:** Benjamin Stevenson will discuss his new novel, *Everyone this Christmas has a Secret*, with Jack Heath. Karen Viggers will give the vote of thanks. Harry Hartog bookshop, Kambri Cultural Centre.

**November 6, 7pm:** Shaun Micallef will talk about his new book, *Slivers, Shards and Skerricks*, with Andrew Leigh. Llewellyn Hall, ANU School of Music.

**November 21, 6pm:** Peter Fitzsimons will discuss his new book, *The Legend of Albert Jacka*. Harry Hartog bookshop, 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](http://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](mailto: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/>.

## *Science and art exploring the natural world*

The exhibition of the Waterhouse Natural Science Art Prize continues at the National Archives of Australia's Kings Avenue building. Since 2002 the South Australian Museum has invited established and emerging artists to enter the prize, named after the South Australian Museum's first curator, Frederick George Waterhouse. The biennial prize recognises the interplay between scientific research and the creative arts. This visiting exhibition invites audiences to explore works, ranging from those by illustrators and sculptors who help to describe and depict specimens, to contemporary artists who invite visitors to think about the environment and human impact on the natural world.

## *Ancient Egyptian lives across the centuries*

The sweep of ancient Egyptian history, from Predynastic times to the Roman period, are covered in the exhibition *Discovering Ancient Egypt* at the National Museum of Australia. The exhibition features a rich assembly of sculptures, coffins, jewellery, stelae and mummies on loan from the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, and surveys the everyday lives of ancient Egyptians, including their social systems, religious beliefs, and the importance of the afterlife. Entry is: adults \$25, concessions \$20, children 5–16 years \$12.50, families (two adults and two children) \$62.50, Friends \$17.50. Until 8 September.

## Australia's history, jingling in your pocket

A little over a month remains to visit the special exhibition Change: Stories from your Pocket, curated by the Royal Australian Mint at the Canberra Museum and Gallery. The exhibition shows how the coins in your purse or pocket reflect Australia's changing history. Partly a tale of technical innovation, it also reflects everyday currency's celebratory and commemorative aspects. Closes on 31 August.

## Items of note

### ANU research opens new knowledge of memory

International research involving scientists from the Australian National University has shown that a specific type of DNA structure could hold the key to regulating our memory.

The study, published in the *Journal of Neuroscience*, adds to our understanding of how human beings encode information and experiences, according to the lead author of the study, Dr Paul Marshall, of the ANU's College of Health and Medicine.

G-quadruplex DNA (G4-DNA) is generally found in cells when certain kinds of DNA sequences fold into a different, four-stranded structure. It is usually associated with DNA damage and frequently observed in cancer cells.

However, G4-DNA has now also been shown to play a role in transcribing memories.

'For decades, many scientists have considered the topic of DNA structure to be solved. But that's not the whole story,' Dr Marshall said.

'It doesn't just exist as the familiar double-helix; it can assume a variety of states. DNA is constantly changing and rather than being a liability, this is a key feature of our biological system and its adaptability.'

Dr Marshall said that while there was abundant evidence demonstrating G4-DNA's involvement in stalling some of our cells most basic functions, his is the first evidence of its role in making memories in an 'in vivo' study, done on living cells or organisms.

'We found that casually manipulating G4-DNA can lead to a substantial impairment in memory,' Dr Marshall said.

'But in other scenarios it can result in increased transcription. It can have different effects on memory depending on the area of the brain, and type of memory involved.'

The research team included scientists from The University of Queensland, Linköping University in Sweden, the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel, and the University of California.

## *Feedback sought on needs-based funding system*

On 12 July the Federal Government issued a consultation paper on the design of needs-based funding to help people who begin a degree to finish it.

The consultation paper will shape the design of a needs-based funding system to help students from disadvantaged backgrounds, students with a disability and Indigenous Australians to get extra support with university studies.

It is proposed that the new system will also direct funding to students at regional campuses, in recognition of the higher costs regional universities face to deliver courses.

These and related reforms are central to reaching the government's target of having 80 per cent of the workforce with a university degree or TAFE qualification by 2050, the Minister for Education, Jason Clare, said when issuing the paper. They form a key part of the government's first stage response to the Universities Accord.

The consultation paper can be found at:

<https://www.education.gov.au/australian-universities-accord/accord-202425-budget-measures/post-budget-implementation-consultation-papers>.

Feedback, which should be submitted by 9 August, can be emailed to [AustralianUniversitiesAccord@education.gov.au](mailto:AustralianUniversitiesAccord@education.gov.au).

## *Alliance to work on Indigenous empowerment*

A new alliance of committed Indigenous people, together with the Australian National University, will work to establish comprehensive economic empowerment for First Nations people in Australia.

The alliance, the first of its kind in Australia, was announced on 15 July and comes after two years of work and research on Indigenous economic empowerment undertaken by the ANU First Nations Portfolio.

Professor Peter Yu, Vice President (First Nations) at the ANU, said the First Nations Economic Empowerment Alliance would 'kick start a long overdue and much-needed conversation in Australia' that would place Indigenous economic prosperity at its heart.

'Australia has never pursued comprehensive macro-economic policy for Indigenous peoples,' Professor Yu said. 'As a people, as a community, we are all too aware of the consequences of this policy vacuum.'

'We cannot, as an implication of the referendum outcome, let the economic wellbeing of Indigenous communities fall by the wayside. The work to co-design national economic empowerment policies for First Peoples must start now.'

'That's exactly what we will do with as the First Nations Economic Empowerment Alliance.'



## Bookshelf

### *Small Islands in Peril?*

#### *Island Size and Island Lives in Melanesia*

Edited by Colin Filer

ANU Press, July 2024 (Asia-Pacific Environment Monograph 18). ISBN (print) 9781760466534, ISBN (online) 9781760466541, DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22459/SIP.2024>.

This book explores the idea that small island communities could be regarded as canaries in the coal mine of sustainable development because of scientific and anecdotal evidence of a common link between rapid population growth, degradation of the local resource base, and intensification of disputes over the ownership and use of terrestrial and marine resources. The authors are all anthropologists with a specific interest in the question of whether the economic and social ‘safety valves’ that have previously served to break some of the feedback loops between these trends appear to be losing their efficacy. While much of the debate about economy–society–environment relationships on small islands has been overtaken by a narrow focus on the problem of climate change, the authors show that there are many other factors at work in the transformation of island lives and livelihoods.

### *Capital Punishment, Clemency and Colonialism in Papua New Guinea, 1954–65*

By Murray Chisholm

ANU Press, July 2024. ISBN (print) 9781760466459, ISBN (online) 9781760466466, DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22459/CPCCPNG.2024>

This study builds on an examination of an archive of files that advised the Australian Commonwealth Executive on Papua New Guineans found guilty of capital offences in PNG between 1954 and 1965. The files provide insight into conceptions held by officials at different stages of the justice process into justice, savagery and civilisation, and colonialism and Australia’s role in the world. The combination of idealism and self-interest, liberalism and paternalism, and justice and authoritarianism becomes apparent. The files show Australia gathering the authority to grant mercy into the hands of the Commonwealth and then devolving it back to the territories. In these transitions, the capital case review files show the trajectory of Australian colonialism during a period when the administration was unsure of the duration and nature of its future relationship with PNG.

### *A Team of Five Million?*

#### *The 2020 ‘Covid-19’ New Zealand General Election*

Edited by Jennifer Curtin, Lara Greaves and Jack Vowles

ANU Press, June 2024. ISBN (print) 9781760466473, ISBN (online) 9781760466480. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22459/TFM.2024>

New Zealand was one of the few countries that held a national election in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Its policy response stood out as remarkably successful. Indeed, several years on, in 2023 New Zealand still retained a record of no excess deaths. While New Zealanders were voting on October 17, 2020, their country had only recorded 25 confirmed deaths out of a population of five million. At that time support for the government's crisis management was at its height. Labour, the leading party in the incumbent coalition government, secured a historic election victory. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern had described New Zealanders as 'a team of five million' facing Covid-19 together. This book seeks to explain the success of the government's strategy through an analysis of the election campaign and outcome. The authors also explore the limits of the approach and the extent to which some voters felt alienated rather than connected with the 'team'. As the 2023 election neared, the party system looked much as it did before the pandemic, and Labour's success in 2020 was about to be dramatically reversed.

### *Salish Archipelago*

*Environment and Society in the Islands Within and Adjacent to the Salish Sea*

Edited by Moshe Rapoport

ANU Press, June 2024 (Asia-Pacific Environment Monograph 17). ISBN (print) 9781760466374, ISBN (online) 9781760466381, DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22459/SA.2024>

The Salish Archipelago includes more than 400 islands in the Salish Sea, an amalgamation of Canada's Georgia Strait, the United States' Puget Sound, and the shared Strait of Juan de Fuca. The sea and islands are named for the Coast Salish Indigenous Peoples whose homelands extend across the region. Holiday homes and services have in many places displaced pristine ecosystems, Indigenous communities, and historic farms. Will age-old island environments and communities withstand the forces of commodity-driven economies? This new, major scholarly undertaking provides the geographical and historical background for exploring such questions.

### *Remaking Supply Chains*

*East Asia Forum Vol. 16 No. 2, 2024*

ANU Press, June 2024. ISSN (print) 1837-5081, ISSN (online) 1837-509X, DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22459/EAFQ.16.02.2024>

Supply chains, critical in globalisation, connect producers to consumers across nations and specialisations. Recently geopolitics, the Covid-19 pandemic and European conflicts have reshaped these networks. Supply chains are increasingly influenced by statecraft and protectionism, moving away from multilateral cooperation. This issue of *East Asia Forum Quarterly* explores the rapid transformation of supply chains, the paradox of digital innovation in trade and the consequences of economic isolationism.

## Administration

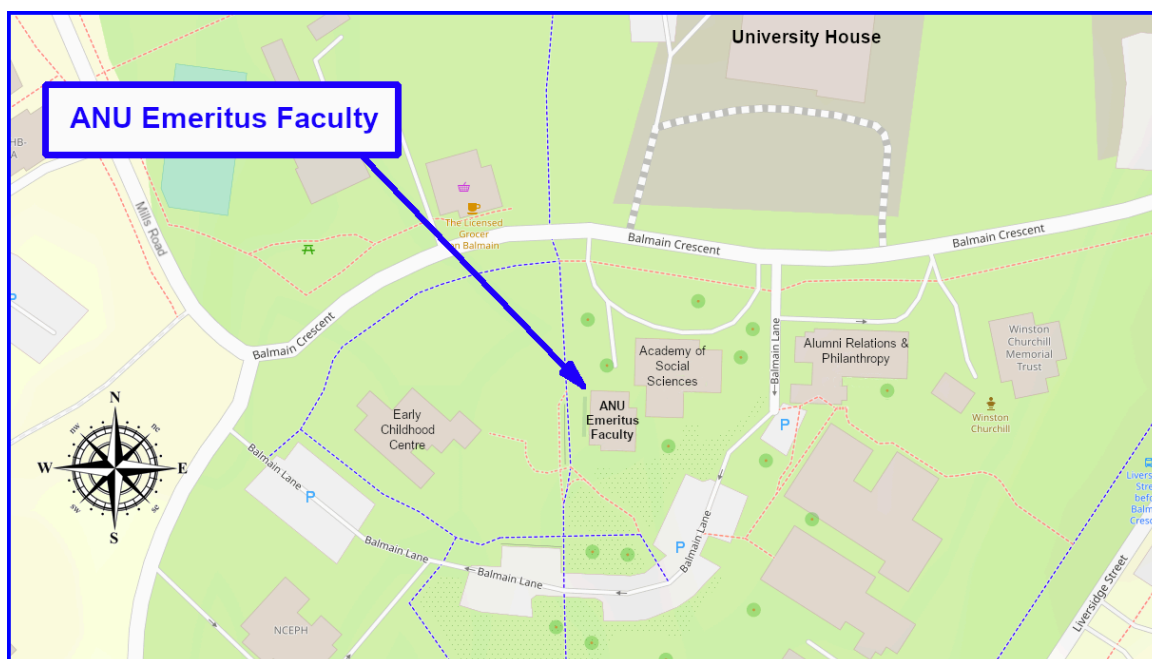
### Arrangements for ANUEF room bookings

Requests to book the Molony Room should be addressed to the Secretary of the ANU Emeritus Faculty, Jan O'Connor, at [jantancess@gmail.com](mailto:jantancess@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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*The next issue of the Emeritus Faculty newsletter will be published in August.*