

EMERITUS

The Australian National University Emeritus Faculty e-magazine

Expert council to advise on university governance

An Expert Council on University Governance would provide Australia's education ministers with 'with expert and technical governance advice' about improving university performance, the federal Minister for Education, Jason Clare, said last week.

Addressing the University Chancellors' Council's 13th National Conference on University Governance on 22 October, Mr Clare said the governance council was not intended to be a representative body or stakeholder forum.

It had been proposed by the chancellors' council, influenced by ideas in the Universities Accord.

Mr Clare's comments came as the National Tertiary Education Union called for a federal inquiry into governance, following announcements by the Australian National University and the University of Canberra of restructurings and job losses to reduce operating costs and debt (see following stories).

After the University of Canberra announced 200 job losses on 21 October, the NTEU called for a federal parliamentary inquiry into university governance.

'The federal government must hold an urgent parliamentary inquiry into university governance,' the NTEU's National President, Dr Alison Barnes, said.

'The lack of transparency is disgraceful. Staff are only finding out problems at their universities when it's too late and jobs are on the line.

'The problems we're seeing at ANU and UC aren't isolated to the ACT,' she said. 'National issues like shocking mismanagement leading to job losses, the corporate stacking of university governing bodies and industrial-scale wage theft require a national response.'

'Unless we see urgent governance reform, our cherished public universities will continue to suffer from the mismanagement of unaccountable and overpaid vice-chancellors.'

Mr Clare said that changes were about making Australia's universities 'as good as they can be'.

He said the expert council would focus on three areas.

First, ensuring that universities were good employers, providing a supportive workplace — ‘and, importantly, a workplace where staff can have confidence that they will not be underpaid for the important work they do.’

Secondly, it would ensure that governing bodies had the right expertise, including in the business of running universities.

Thirdly, ‘of critical importance’, making sure that universities were safe for their students and staff.

Mr Clare said his department was also talking to the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency to issue new guidance and requirements on workplace obligations for higher-education providers.

The department had also engaged an independent expert to support the National Tertiary Education Union, Universities Australia and the Australian Higher Education Industrial Association to help them identify and resolve issues and ensure that universities were exemplary employers.

The government would require universities to provide the government with additional data on casual staff numbers to increase transparency and understanding of workforce patterns and issues.

NTEU alleges ‘mismanagement’ as V-C calls for 15-month reset

The National Tertiary Education Union has pointed to ‘poor governance and financial mismanagement’ as factors influencing the Australian National University’s moves to cut jobs and restructure the institution in its effort to reduce annual operating costs by \$250 million by January 2026.

‘It is unconscionable for millionaire vice-chancellors to go to staff, cap in hand, to bail them out of financial problems caused by poor governance and financial mismanagement,’ the NTEU’s ACT Division Secretary, Dr Lachlan Clohesy, said in a media statement.

The comments came after a series of announcements by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Genevieve Bell, to bring about ‘a 15-month reset to get us on a sustainable footing by 2026’.

In a message to staff on 3 October, Professor Bell told staff that reform was necessary for the ANU to continue to deliver on its ‘national mission’.

‘The ANU Council has now directed us to make the changes necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability and financial viability of ANU as a high quality, world-leading institution,’ she said.

‘This includes reducing our recurring operating costs by \$250 million over the next 15 months. This will be achieved through reductions in salary and non-salary costs. This decision has not been taken lightly. All attempts are being

made to minimise the number of redundancies; however some job losses will be unavoidable.’ Support would be available for those who needed it.

Under proposed changes, ANU would move to a six-college structure from 1 January next year, and while all 42 schools, centres and institutes would be retained, some would move into new colleges, and some existing colleges would be renamed. The College of Health and Medicine would be disestablished.

It is reported that the closure of the College of Health and Medicine will lead to the loss of 50 jobs.

Subsequently, on 15 October, Professor Bell said that she had told the ANU Council that she would immediately reduce her salary by 10 per cent, and had asked senior leaders on Performance Based Employment Contracts (PBEs) to consider foregoing the 2.5 per cent salary increase due in December. This would save around \$1.2 million.

She would also ask staff to consider forgoing the upcoming 2.5 per cent December pay increase. If a majority of staff employed under the ANU Enterprise Agreement agreed, staff would still receive a 16 per cent pay increase over the life of the enterprise agreement. She emphasised that she was asking that staff only forgo the December 2024 pay increase,

Forgoing both the EA and PBE December 2024 increases could reduce the salary savings the university needed to find in 2025 by up to \$15 million. ‘This will save jobs,’ she Professor Bell said.

Then on 17 October, the university said it would cut a further 87 jobs as part of its drive to reduce its salary costs by \$100 million per year. It said it did not intend further job cuts this year.

Dr Clohesy said it was ‘staggering that a vice-chancellor thinks they can convince staff that giving up their pay will save jobs, while at the same time announcing further job cuts.’

His comments were echoed by the NTEU’s ANU Branch President, Millan Pintos-Lopez, who said that staff had been asked to give up pay to save jobs in 2020. ‘It didn’t save jobs then, and it won’t save jobs this time around,’ he said.

‘ANU staff are furious that a vice-chancellor is promising to save jobs while cutting them.

‘We think the Vice Chancellor should not proceed with a ballot to vary the enterprise agreement, which was signed less than a year ago, and should instead listen to ANU staff. If it does go to ballot, we’ll campaign strongly for ANU staff to send a resounding message by voting no.’

Professor Bell has extended her thanks to staff for their dedication and understanding in the task of building ‘a stronger, more resilient ANU’.

‘The rest of 2024 and 2025 will continue to be a period of transformation for ANU as we adapt to the modern expectations of universities in Australia,’ she said.

Continuing information about proposed changes is to be made available at the Renew ANU website: <https://www.anu.edu.au/news/all-news/renew-anu>.

UC ‘sustainable’ but cost-saving effort will cost 200 positions, Parker says

The University of Canberra was sustainable on its current funding levels if managed ‘prudently’, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Stephen Parker, said on 21 October, when announcing an ‘urgent and significant’ cost-saving overhaul.

Professor Parker said the university needed to save about \$50 million in recurrent expenditure by the end of next year, involving measures that would affect all levels of the institution.

‘Probably the majority’ of savings would come from staff cuts, he said. That was expected to include the loss of at least 200 staffing positions from the university's five faculties by the middle of next year. Redundancies were ‘inevitable’, but he would not propose that members of staff forgo pay rises.

Cost-saving measures were already underway, he said, including reducing the senior executive and cutting senior manager roles.

Although funding had been affected by recent government decisions to cap international student numbers, Professor Parker said the university was ‘spending beyond its means’.

‘The university itself is responsible for this unsustainable position,’ he said.

‘We cannot expect any external assistance and must take urgent and significant measures to re-balance the institution. There is no point in blaming others.’

Ahead lay a complex task that had to be performed in a short space of time and as consultatively as possible, he said.

He apologised ‘unreservedly’ for the need to undertake the overhaul and committed to consultation with students, staff and unions.

In an email, he assured students that their education would be protected.

‘In terms of student experience and delivery of your courses and units, you have my assurance that these will be safeguarded throughout the process,’ he said.

The university’s National Tertiary Education Union branch president, Craig Applegate, said staff were understandably shocked by the news.

‘In a cost-of-living crisis, many UC staff will head into the Christmas break not knowing whether they'll have a job to come back to in the new year,’ he said.

NTEU ACT division secretary Lachlan Clohesy said the issue showed the university sector as a whole needed more oversight over governance.

Before the recent ACT election, both Labor and the Greens committed to a governance review of the university.

The NTEU has called on the federal government to hold an urgent parliamentary inquiry into university governance nationally.

Underfunding pinpointed as universities' global rankings slip

Academic commentators have identified underfunding as an important factor in the relative decline of British and American universities' teaching and research reputations

The comments come after the release of the *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings 2025 in early October. Australian universities shared in that decline, with some major institutions dropping several places.

The Australian National University was ranked 73rd in the world, down from 67th in the previous rankings.

While British and American universities took the top ten places, the *THE* said data revealed 'a more worrisome trend', with both countries seeing a rapid decline in their average research and teaching reputations. At the same time, China, France and Germany had risen.

Rankings are based on more than 93,000 responses to *THE's* Academic Reputation Survey, in which academics choose up to 15 institutions they believe excel in teaching and, separately, research.

This year's survey found that United Kingdom's teaching reputation had dropped by 3 per cent since 2023 and research reputation by 5 per cent, based on more than 93,000 responses.

British institutions now take 13 per cent of the share of votes for teaching and 12.8 per cent for research: a steady decline over the past decade from 18.9 per cent and 18.1 per cent respectively. The fall is not wholly explained by a broader distribution of votes as scholars from more countries have taken part in recent years.

Nick Hillman, the Director of Britain's Higher Education Policy Institute, said the decline in teaching reputation was due to underfunding.

'When you underfund university teaching, as we have been doing, the result is often worse staff-to-student ratios, problems with marking and evaluation and inadequate contact hours or class sizes. If you do this while other countries take the opposite route, your relative position is bound to deteriorate,' he said.

Professor Simon Marginson, Professor of Higher Education at Oxford University, said the trends mainly reflected 'other systems coming up [rather] than the US and UK declining'.

He said one longer-term factor was the comparative rise in resources and capability of national systems in Western Europe and East and Southeast Asia. He believed that China's rise in reputation was 'very much driven by increasing levels of government investment'.

Where Australian universities were concerned, the rankings were 'the canary in the coalmine for the higher education sector', the Group of Eight's Chief Executive, Vicki Thomson, said.

‘The Australian Parliament should heed the warning before it’s too late,’ she said.

She said Australia’s research-intensive universities had retained top 100 rankings despite what she described as ‘an onslaught in recent years which has undermined our universities and our international reputation’.

Six Go8 universities are still in the global top 100 but, she said, the introduction of international student caps put these rankings and the national economy at great risk.

‘Universities, leading economists, business and industry have consistently warned the government that a blunt cap on international students will be disastrous for our \$50 billion international education sector,’ Ms Thomson said.

‘Of the 38 Australian universities ranked this year, 17 have declined in performance and only four have improved their positions. *THE* rankings highlight international education policy as a key reason for the decline.’

The University of Melbourne was the top-ranked Australian institution, at 39th place, down two places from the preceding year. Monash University was ranked at 58 (down from 54), followed by the University of Sydney (61, down from 60), ANU 73 (67), the University of Queensland 77 (70). The University of NSW improved its position, from 84 to 83.

Globally, the top ten universities were Oxford 1 (2024 – 1), Massachusetts Institute of Technology 2 (3), Harvard 3 (4), Princeton 4 (6), Cambridge 5 (5), Stanford 6 (2), California Institute of Technology 7 (7), University of California, Berkeley 8 (9), Imperial College, London 9 (8), Yale 10 (10).

Bill to wipe out \$3 billion in student debt moves to Senate for approval

Federal Government plans to eliminate about \$3 billion in student debt moved forward on 10 October when the *Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024* passed through the House of Representatives.

If passed by the Senate, the legislation will wipe the student debt of more than three million Australians. It will cap the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) indexation rate at the lower of either the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or the Wage Price Index (WPI) with effect from 1 June 2023.

The government will backdate this relief to all HELP, VET Student Loan, Australian Apprenticeship Support Loan and other student support loan accounts that were indexed on 1 June last year.

According to the Minister for Education, Jason Clare, the move will benefit all Australians with a student debt, fixing last year’s spike in the indexation of 7.1 per cent and preventing indexation from outpacing wages in the future.

‘We are one step closer to wiping out around \$3 billion in student debt from more than three million Australians,’ Mr Clare said.

‘The Universities Accord recommended indexing HELP loans to whatever is lower out of CPI and WPI. We are doing this, and going further. We are backdating this reform to last year. This will wipe out what happened last year and make sure it never happens again.’

Under the measure, someone with an average HELP debt of \$26,500 will see up to \$1,200 wiped from their outstanding HELP loans.

After the legislation passes the Parliament, the Australian Taxation Office will automatically apply a credit for the difference between the current indexation rate and the new indexation rate to outstanding student loans.

Someone who has fully repaid their HELP debt after 2023 or 2024 indexation was applied will receive the credit in the form of a refund to their bank account (assuming there are no outstanding tax debts).

The Bill also introduces the Commonwealth Prac Payment from 1 July 2025 to provide financial support for around 68,000 higher education teaching, nursing, midwifery and social work students in the practical part of their degree.

It also expands FEE-FREE University Ready Courses, which act as a bridge between school and university.

Academy Fellows awarded PM’s prizes for scientific achievement

Two Fellows of the Australian Academy of Science have received the Prime Minister’s Prize for 2024 for their achievements in science. The prizes were awarded by the Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, in the Great Hall of Parliament House on 8 October.

Astrophysicist Professor Matthew Bailes, who gained his doctorate from the Australian National University, has been awarded the 2024 Prime Minister’s Prize for Science for his world-first discovery of fast radio bursts (FRBs).

In 2007 he was part of a team that identified the ‘Lorimer Burst’, the first example of FRBs. The discovery is now helping to determine how much normal matter exists in the universe.

Professor Bailes is a Professor at the Centre for Astrophysics and Supercomputing, Swinburne University of Technology, and Director of OzGrav, the ARC Centre of Excellence for Gravitational Wave Discovery. The prize also recognises his leadership of Australian astronomy research centres. He was elected to the Academy in 2022.

Academy Fellow Professor Andrew Wilks is the joint recipient of the 2024 Prime Minister’s Prize for Innovation, alongside his colleague Dr Christopher Burns.

They are recognised for inventing and commercialising a drug called momelotinib that is used to treat myelofibrosis, a rare form of blood cancer.

‘Our work is very much a team sport,’ said Professor Wilks, Honorary Enterprise Professor at Melbourne University’s Department of Biochemistry and Pharmacology. He was elected to the Academy in 2023.

‘It is a great privilege to have been part of this collaboration to discover these important intracellular JAK enzymes and help invent momelotinib.’

Tianyi Ma, Distinguished Professor in the School of Science at RMIT University, received the 2024 Malcolm McIntosh Prize for Physical Scientist of the Year, in recognition of his groundbreaking work in renewable energy. In 2023 he received the Academy’s Le Fèvre Medal and was also Australia’s nominee for the 2023 ASPIRE Prize.

‘All the Prime Minister’s Prize recipients are exceptional, and I congratulate them all,’ the President of the Academy, Professor Chennupati Jagadish, said at a breakfast to honour the group.

He also acknowledged recipients of the Prime Minister’s Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary Schools, Daniel Edwards, and the Prime Minister’s Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Secondary Schools, Alice Leung.

Dr Andrew Horsley, co-founder of Quantum Brilliance, received the 2024 Prize for New Innovators, and Professor Britta Regli-von Ungern-Sternberg, a consultant anaesthetist at the Perth Children’s Hospital and Chair of Paediatric Anaesthesia at The University of Western Australia, received the 2024 Frank Fenner Prize for Life Scientist of the Year.

Diary dates

Meet the Author events

October 29, 6pm: Prizewinning Italian author Paolo Giordano will talk with Marco Lazzarino about his writing and his latest book, *Tasmania*. Brian Schmidt will give the vote of thanks. 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, 6pm: Shaun Micallef will talk about his new book, *Slivers, Shards and Skerricks*, with Andrew Leigh. Llewellyn Hall, ANU School of Music.

November 12, 6pm: John Safran will talk about his new book, *Squat*. Harry Hartog bookshop, Kambri Cultural Centre.

November 14, 6pm: Eminent economist Ross Garnaut will talk about his new book, *Let's Tax Carbon: And Other Ideas for a Better Australia*, with writer and politician Barry Jones. Garnaut argues that Australia can become a full-employment, renewable-energy superpower, and says that change starts with taxing carbon. A levy on the big polluters will help fund Australia becoming a carbon-free energy giant, lower the cost of living and assist the world to cut emissions. In two linked arguments, Garnaut examines the underpinnings of

successful social democracy and traces when economic policy has worked for Australia and when it hasn't, and then sets out the low-carbon opportunity that Australia has before it. Emma Aisbett, Associate Professor ANU School of Law and Associate Director (Research) Zero-Carbon Energy for the Asia-Pacific Grand Challenge, will give the vote of thanks. RSCS Auditorium, ANU.

November 21, 6pm: Peter FitzSimons will talk about his new book, *The Legend of Albert Jacka*, with Matthew Trinca. Harry Hartog bookshop, Kambri Cultural Centre.

November 27, 6pm: George Megalogenis will talk about his Quarterly Essay, *Minority Report: The New Shape of Australian Politics*, with Niki Saava. John Warhurst will give the vote of thanks. Harry Hartog bookshop, Kambri Cultural Centre.

November 28, 6pm: David Marr will talk about his updated version of *My Country: Stories, Essays and Speeches*, with Andrew Leigh. Allan Behm will give the vote of thanks. Harry Hartog bookshop, Kambri Cultural Centre.

December 6: Leigh Sales and Annabel Crabb, Chat10 Looks three. Llewellyn Hall, ANU.

February 10, 6pm: Juno Gomes will talk about her new book, *Until Justice Comes*, with Linda Burney. Ann McGrath will mediate. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

February 18, 6pm: Andrew Dix will talk about his new book, *The Promise: How an Everyday Hero Made the Impossible Possible*. Cinema, Kambri Cultural Centre.

April 30, 6pm: Dervla McTiernan will talk about her new crime fiction novel. Vote of thanks by Anna Creer Cinema, 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/>.

Galleries and exhibitions

The National Gallery of Australia's latest major acquisition, sculptor Lindy Lee's immersive sculpture *Ouroboros*, has been installed in the gallery forecourt and is now open to visitors. The work is based on the ancient image of a snake eating its own tail, an image seen across cultures and millennia, symbolising cycles of birth, death and renewal. The exhibition 'Ever Present: First Peoples Art of Australia', offers a survey of historical and contemporary works of art by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, drawn from the national collection and Wesfarmers Collection of Australian Art. It runs until 25 August 2025. 'Masami Teraoka and Japanese Ukiyo-e Prints', which presents key examples of the Japanese-American artist's *ukiyo-e* style works alongside

historic *ukiyo-e* prints, delving into their visual, strategic and thematic connections, will be on show till 2 March next year.

The **National Archives of Australia** has two permanent exhibitions showcasing stories from the collection. 'Voices/Dhuniai' leads a visitor through the creation of the Australian Constitution, while 'Connections/Mura Gadi' looks at often surprising connections between Australians and their government, and reveals aspects of the history of Australia and its people. The Waterhouse Natural Science Art Prize exhibition runs until 10 November.

At the **National Portrait Gallery**, contemporary artist Joan Ross examines the consequences of colonialism in the exhibition 'Joan Ross: Those Trees Came Back to Me in My Dreams'. Until 2 February 2025. Ryan Presley's 'Paradise Won', a large-scale digital colour print dealing with political and social issues including youth incarceration, deaths in custody, urban displacement and mining on traditional lands, will be on show at the gallery entrance until May 2025.

Canberra Museum and Gallery. For the first time in two decades, all 31 crayon pastel drawings that make up Sidney Nolan's series 'For the Term of His Natural Life' will be on show at CMAG. Nolan created the series in August 1978, based on the events of Marcus Clarke's 1874 convict novel, *For the Term of His Natural Life*. Until 23 February next.

Music

Works by Biber, Corelli and Telemann are among the pieces featured in **Musica Alchemica's** concert for Musica Viva at the Llewellyn Hall at 7pm on Saturday, 9 November.

The **Canberra Symphony Orchestra** will present a program of works by Dvorak, Mozart, Haydn and Christopher Sainsbury at the Llewellyn Hall on Wednesday and Thursday, 13 and 14 November. Benjamin Bayl will conduct, and Andrew Bain will be soloist in Mozart's second horn concerto, K417.

On Saturday 16 November guitarist **Sean Shibe** will join the **Australian Chamber Orchestra** in Scotland Unbound, a program of traditional and new music, at the Llewellyn Hall. From 8pm.

Theatre

Tempo Theatre's production of Agatha Christie's *Love from a Stranger* runs at the Belconnen Community Theatre Until 2 November. Newly rich Cecily Harrington rushes into marriage with a charming stranger but, as they say, 'all is not what it seems'.

Canberra Rep will offer a country house mystery with a twist when it stages Ed Sala's *Bloody Murder* at Theatre 3 from 21 November to 7 December. Josh Wiseman directs this send-up of the classic crime conventions.

Items of note

Research enlarges knowledge of ocean heat's impact

Research has shown that marine heatwaves and colder periods are occurring both at the ocean surface and subsurface, findings that highlight a previously under-reported aspect of global warming.

Although marine heatwaves (MHWs) have been studied at the sea surface for more than a decade, new research published on 17 October in *Nature* has found 80 per cent of MHWs at depths below 100 metres were independent of surface events.

The study was conducted by Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation and the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

MHWs are prolonged temperature events that can cause severe damage to marine habitats, such as impacts to coral reefs and species displacement. These events are becoming more frequent due to global warming, with notable occurrences off Australia's East Coast and Tasmania, as well as the northeast Pacific coast and North Atlantic.

Traditionally, MHWs have been tracked via satellite data focusing on surface temperatures. This new research indicates that deep-water heatwaves may be significantly under-reported, revealing a critical gap in scientific understanding of their impact.

'Our research reveals that MHWs are often hidden below the surface and occur separately to those on the surface,' said the CSIRO's Dr Ming Feng.

The research also highlights the influence of ocean currents, in particular eddies, on MHWs. Eddies are swirling currents that alter the uptake, redistribution and storage of heat in the ocean. They play an important role in temperature variability, Dr Feng said.

'Global warming has intensified temperature extremes in eddies in our oceans in the past decades, mostly due to an increase in energy residing in eddies. This could result in more frequent and severe MHWs below the surface,' he said.

The research would also help to increase understanding of MHW impacts on the life cycle and distribution of marine organisms.

ARC indigenous grant to ANU researchers

Five researchers at the Australian National University have been awarded \$845,141 under the Australian Research Council's Discovery Indigenous scheme to identify ways to reduce prejudice and 'foster allyship' with indigenous Australians.

The funding, over four years, was one of 11 research projects totaling \$11 million announced by the ARC at the end of September.

Under the ANU grant, Dr Olivia Evans, Professor Tegan Cruwys, Professor Iain Walker, Professor Katherine Reynolds and Dr Hema Preya Selvanathan aim 'to

create significant new knowledge of the political and social levers that reduce prejudice and generate support for indigenous issues’.

Proposed outcomes include a better understanding of ‘allyship’ and effective intervention to reduce prejudice. It is anticipated that the findings will benefit social and political movements, particularly supporting indigenous Australian initiatives like the Uluru Statement. Potential policy benefits include informing governments on garnering public support for broader social policy initiatives like Closing the Gap.

The ARC Discovery Indigenous scheme supports research programs led by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander researchers and develops the research capacity of higher-degree research students and early career researchers.

‘The ARC provides vital support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and research students through the ARC Discovery Indigenous scheme,’ the ARC’s Acting Chief Executive Officer, Dr Richard Johnson, said when announcing the grants.

‘The scheme has funded significant and impactful research for the social, economic and cultural benefit of the Australian community, and this year’s projects will continue to deliver on these important scheme objectives,’ he said.

New CSIRO fabric improves chemical, biological safety

A new material that can give a wearer improved protection from chemical and biological threats has been developed by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.

The innovative material, which uses nanofibres, is a lightweight fabric that effectively filters out harmful particles while remaining lightweight and breathable, keeping the wearer comfortable in extreme temperatures.

The prototype uniform has the potential to significantly improve the level of protection for soldiers, emergency responders and hazmat crews. It will now move to field testing.

The CSIRO’s Manufacturing Research Unit Director, Dr Marcus Zipper said the textile innovation was the result of collaboration with industry and research partners.

The initial phase of the project was funded by the Department of Defence. The successful suit prototype was coordinated by DMTC Limited (formerly Defence Materials Technology Centre). Support also came from Bruck Textiles, Defence Science and Technology Group and RMIT University.

‘Our nanofibre technology, pioneered by CSIRO scientists, has the potential to significantly improve the level of protection soldiers’ uniforms provide and can also be used for non-military applications, including protecting emergency responders and hazmat crews,’ Dr Zipper said.

The Head of Program Management at DMTC, Deepak Ganga, said the prototype uniform could offer better comfort and mobility in harsh environments.

‘This project demonstrates the power of collaboration. CSIRO’s scientific excellence in nanofibre research has been matched with the expertise of our partners in textiles, defence science, and manufacturing,’ he said.

‘This has resulted in a groundbreaking solution that offers benefits for Australian troops, for the first-responder community and, potentially for Australia’s alliance partners.’

CSIRO’s project lead, Dr Yen Truong, said key to the prototype’s success lay in its innovative nanofibre technology.

Bookshelf

‘My Own Sort of Heaven’ A Life of Rosalie Gascoigne

By Nicola Francis

ANU Press, October 2024. ISBN (print) 9781760466558; ISBN (online) 9781760466565. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22459/MOSH.2024>

Rosalie Gascoigne first exhibited in 1974, at the age of 57. and rapidly achieved critical acclaim for her assemblages which were her response to the Monaro landscape surrounding Canberra. The great blonde paddocks, vast skies and big raucous birds contrasted with the familiar lush green harbour city of Auckland she had left behind. Her medium: weathered discards from the landscape. By her death in 1999, her work had been purchased for major public art collections in Australia, New Zealand and New York, and had been exhibited across Europe and Asia.

Gascoigne’s story is often cast in simple terms—an inspirational tale of an older woman ‘finding herself’ later in life and gaining artistic acclaim. But the reality is much more complex. This biography explores Gascoigne’s achievement of her ‘own sort of heaven’ through the frame of the narrative she told once she had gained fame, using a series of interviews she gave from 1980 to 1998. It revolves around her frequently stated sense of feeling an outsider, her belief that artists are born not made, and other factors central to the development and impact of her work. Gascoigne, who migrated to Australia from New Zealand in 1943, experienced the dramatic social changes of the 1960s and 1970s and benefited from the growth of cultural life in Canberra, a developing Australian art industry, and changing conceptions of aesthetic beauty.

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ASEAN's rise as the cornerstone of regional diplomacy and security in the 1990s may have seemed improbable, but it was crucial. Today, a shifting regional geopolitical landscape challenges ASEAN’s relevance. Great-power competition and waning global political commitment to multilateral arrangements threaten its role as East Asia’s 'steering committee'. This edition of *East Asia Forum Quarterly* explores how ASEAN can maintain its centrality, calling for active leadership and stronger regional cooperation.

This issue features a special section from researchers in Nigeria, reflecting on the political and cultural influences on, and responses to, social and environmental devastation in the oil-producing Niger Delta region. In other essays, John Schooneveldt describes a methodology for reframing how we perceive the agency of other organisms; Rosalind Warner refines and develops governance principles for assisted species migration; and Acheng Zhang and Shanwen Guo explore informal institutions in China and their role in mediating pro-environmental behaviour.

Administration

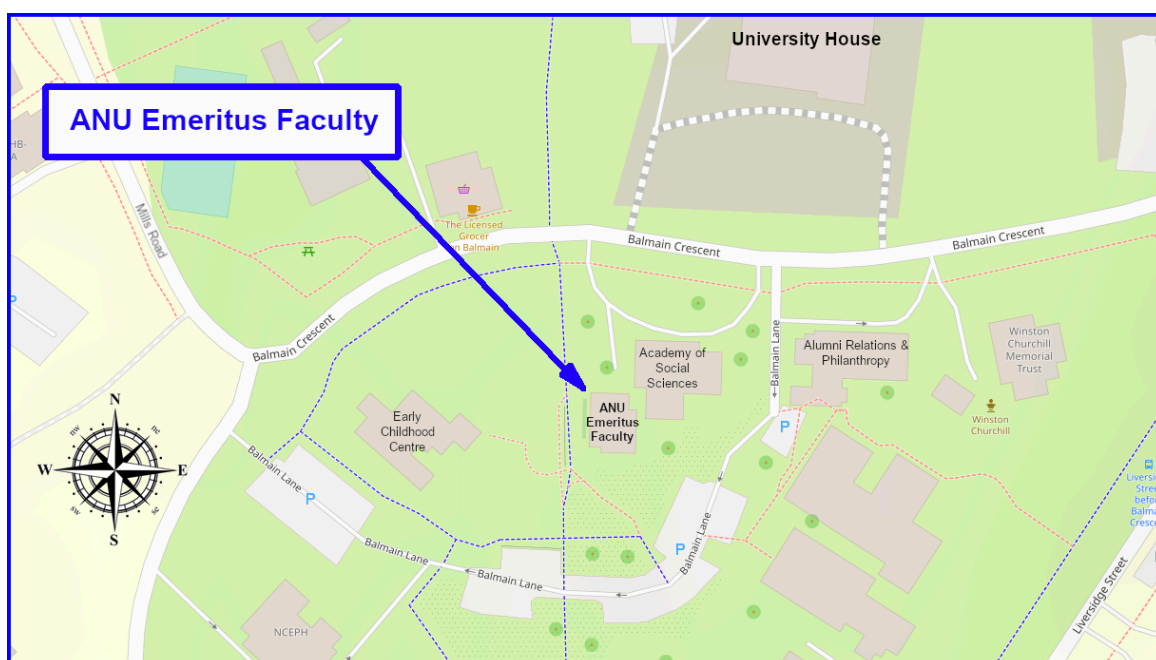
Arrangements for ANUEF room bookings

Requests to book the Molony Room should be addressed to the Secretary of the ANU Emeritus Faculty, Jan O'Connor, at jantancess@gmail.com or 6247 3341.

Finding the Molony Room

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

It is Building 1c on <https://tinyurl.com/yckuknbj>, set back between 22 Balmain Crescent (the Acton Early Childhood Centre) and 26 Balmain Crescent (the Academy of the Social Sciences). Four free car parking spaces reserved for ANUEF members visiting the Molony Room in the Balmain Lane Car Park immediately south of the Molony Room. The room is marked on: <https://tinyurl.com/y7gsyqgh>



Editorial

Editor: Peter Fuller

Mobile: 0416-02.12.06

Email: wordsnpix@netspeed.com.au

Assistant Editor: Kevin Windle

Email: Kevin.Windle@anu.edu.au

Postal Address:

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

Web: emeritus.anu.edu.au

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

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