

**THE ANU EMERITUS FACULTY
CHAIR'S REPORT TO THE 2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

In 2024, the ANU Emeritus Faculty had a full year of activities. We held our collegiate lunchtime lectures each month and, in some months, managed two or more lectures. We had a particularly diverse but engaging Projects Symposium and a well-attended Annual Dinner at the Commonwealth Club. We also published eleven issues of *Emeritus* with excellent coverage of developments in the University and with the continuing publication of official ANU obituaries.

We were also able to rectify the 'beheading' that occurred last year on the 30th of November when the bronze head of our founder, John Molony was stolen from its plinth outside the Emeritus Faculty Building. Ante Dabro, who donated the original bust to the Emeritus Faculty, was able to recast it. His work in recasting the bust was generously paid for by donation from Stephen Byron and the Snow Foundation and the new bust has been re-erected – more securely – on its plinth with a new plaque. There will now be more elaborate security on the part of the University to thwart theft.

Collegiate Lunchtime Lectures

Ian Keen has continued to organize our wide-ranging series of lunchtime lectures which have become the focus of our activities each month. As such, we are able to maintain our university function as a lively forum of debate and discussion.

7 February Peter Bellwood

“How did language families originate, and how did they spread?”

6 March Borge Bakken

“Justice and Injustice in China: the Death Penalty against Yang Hengjun: Cultural and Political Roots.”

3 April Christine Helliwell

“Semut: an Australian secret operation in WWII Borneo.”

17 April Michael Walsh

“The rise and rise of Australian Languages.”

5 June Margaret Jolly

“Spiralling Visions: The Decolonial Oceanic Arts of Yuki Kihara and Taloi Havini in the Anthropocene.”

19 June Alan Rumsey

“Children’s Language Learning and the Making of Human Life Worlds.”

7 August Francesca Merlan

“Anthropology and Change over the Land Rights Era: Towards Treaties?”

21 August Tim Hatton

“Migrant Voyages to Australia 1848-1913.”

18 September Fyfe Bygrave

“Insights into Parkinsons and Alzheimers Disease and their relation to Dementia.”

2 October Ian Keen

“Variation in First Nations Kin Terminologies: Cross Cousins.”

16 October Fyfe Bygrave

“The 2024 Ignoble Prizes.”

13 November

Launch of Mario Daniel Martin’s book: *Iridio Ennui vs the Boltzmann Brains*.

20 November Mark O’Connor

“The great Australian smallpox debate.”

27 November: Julian Cribb

“The need for an Earth System Treaty and an Earth Standard Currency.”

4 December 2024 Jeff Bennett

“Avoiding Hayek's 'Road to Serfdom' in striving for 'sustainability’”

As in the past, this year’s lectures were varied and engaging. They represent the breadth of interests that exists among our members and are generally well attended. Attendance was helped by the availability of parking at the Vice Chancellor’s official residence when the lectures were held.

Projects Symposium

The Emeritus Faculty Projects Symposium is a day-long event in which members present accounts of recent research and other activities. Again, Ian Keen was responsible for organizing this year’s Symposium, which took place in the Molony Room from 9:30am to 4:30pm on Wednesday, 17th of July. In my judgment, this was an exceptional gathering. Presentations and the discussion that followed each presentation were some of the best that we have ever had.

The list of these presentations is as follows:

Adrian Gibbs “How long have there been plant viruses in Australia.”

James Fox “Tracing Austronesian Migrations: the Anthropological-Linguistic Evidence.”

Lawrence Cram “Forensic Bibliometrics.”

Bradley Pillans “The East Coast Project.”

Michael Smithson “The Psychology of Ignorance.”

Patrick De Deckker “Commemorating an Aboriginal soldier who died during WWI in Belgium, both in Australia and in Belgium.”

Andrew Stewart “Adventures of a Polyphiloprogenitive Lieutenant-Governor.”

Peter Grabosky “Dark Humour and Euphemism as Facilitators of State Excess.”

Judith Cameron “Neolithic craft specialisation in the lower Yangzi Valley 7,000 years ago.”

Coyote Catering provided excellent cut-lunches and desserts.

East Coast Project

Monthly meetings were held throughout the year, chaired by Brad Pillans. Project members include Brian Lees, Verna Rosling, Nikolaus Fominas, Andrew Eliason, Marjorie Sullivan and Philip Hughes. In February, Brad Pillans visited the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, in Wellington, to view a 16th century iron helmet that had been dredged from Wellington Harbour more than 100 years ago. The helmet is plausibly an artefact from a Spanish Expedition, led by Juan Fernandez, that may have reached New Zealand from South America in 1576. Andrew Eliason published a paper in *The Globe*, entitled “Coastlines of the South China Sea in western Java and in western Java la Grande on the Dieppe maps”.

Annual Emeritus Faculty Dinner

Since University House, our usual venue, has remained closed, we again held our Annual Emeritus Dinner in a private dining room at the Commonwealth Club. Our dinner was on the 6th of September this year. Our guest speaker was Colin Steele AM who entertained us with his talk: *Celebrity Memories of ‘Meet the Author’*.

Colin recalled celebrity moments from behind the scenes of nearly 40 years of the ANU Canberra Times Meet the Author events, and shared reminiscences of some ANU luminaries which never made the official ANU histories.

Colin has been Convener of the ANU/Canberra Times ‘Meet the Author’ events since 1987. Before that, he was Chair of the Australian National Word Festival held at University House from 1983 to 1987.

Continuing Efforts to Document ANU’s History

We have continued to advance our documentation of ANU’s history from a personal perspective. The Executive Committee has provided a subvention to support Jill Waterhouse’s

research for her book on *The Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors of the Australian National University*. This will be a major volume covering all the ANU's Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors. 'The Emeritus Faculty hopes to publish this major volume in time for the ANU's 80th anniversary.'

Financial Statement 2024

The ANU Emeritus Faculty's full financial statements and audit report are submitted to the Annual General Meeting as separate items for consideration and approval. As a record for this year, Peter Scardoni has written the following:

“The Emeritus Faculty had good financial operations throughout the 2024 Financial Year and adequately covered all its operation expenses. Although it reported a deficit of \$2029.18 for the Financial Year, this was as a result of the Committee's approval to bolster the Education Fund by \$10,000 to a closing total of \$33,408.60.”

The John Molony History Prize

The John Molony History Prize was established in perpetuity through a donation to the ANU by the Emeritus Faculty. The prize is awarded annually to a student enrolled in the postdoctoral degree program who, in the previous year, submitted the best thesis in history.

During the Covid period, the award of the Molony Prize was delayed and the History Department is now in the process of catching up on its award of the Prize.

The 2022 John Molony History Prize was awarded to Jessica Urwin for her thesis:

Chain Reactions: Nuclear Colonialism in South Australia.

Abstract

During South Australia's short settler history, it has hosted almost every aspect of the nuclear fuel cycle. The state's nuclear past is an internationally pertinent and illustrative example of how the nuclear order has been historically entwined with colonialism. Nevertheless, historians have been slow to take up and adequately investigate 'nuclear colonialism' in an Australian context. In applying international scholarship on nuclear colonialism to Australia for the first time, this thesis explores the relationships inherent to nuclear colonialism in South Australia by focusing on the interactions between nuclear processes - radium and uranium extraction, nuclear weapons testing and radioactive waste disposal - and South Australia's Aboriginal peoples. It addresses the question: in what ways has the nuclear order interacted with, co-opted, or facilitated colonialism in South Australia? In answering this question, this thesis uses a wide range of state and national government archival material, manuscript collections, printed sources, and oral history interviews with both Aboriginal nuclear survivors and non-Indigenous people to argue that Australia's nuclear order has been historically influenced by the pursuit of national development and geopolitical power. These are

pursuits fundamentally underpinned by the imperial and colonial ambitions of both Australia and Britain, and which have been facilitated through a variety of colonial mechanisms. Demonstrating the varied manifestations and developments of nuclear colonialism across the twentieth century, the chapters within this thesis present seven unique but entwined case studies. The thesis begins by placing early radioactive mineral exploration in the Flinders Ranges in its colonial and geopolitical contexts before examining the paternalistic Aboriginal welfare policies that enabled Britain's in-land nuclear tests in the 1950s. It then investigates Australia's anti-imperial responses to France's first Pacific nuclear tests, the intersection between uranium mining at Olympic Dam and the burgeoning land rights movement, and the multi-faceted politics of the Royal Commission into British Nuclear Tests in Australia (1984-85). Finally, the thesis considers the relationships forged among Indigenous nuclear survivors in Australia and beyond during the 1980s and 90s, and Aboriginal resistance to a proposed nuclear waste dump near Coober Pedy from 1998. The case studies examined in this thesis demonstrate that nuclear colonialism has developed in response to various historical influences and challenges, from Cold War nuclear ambitions to the development of the land rights movement. So too do they highlight the centrality of Aboriginal political mobilisation to the history of nuclear colonialism in South Australia, a history that necessarily flows between local, state, national and international scales. By charting a history of nuclear colonialism in South Australia through the course of the twentieth century, this thesis takes up one of environmental humanities scholarship's contemporary challenges: considering and accounting for the interactions between the nuclear order and those upon whom it impacts, namely Indigenous peoples. Addressing this challenge offers insight into the historical persistence of colonial structures and ambitions, places Australia firmly into international conversations about the disproportionate - and decidedly colonial - nature of the nuclear order and demonstrates how nuclear colonialism is not just imposed, but also experienced and resisted.

Emeritus

Peter Fuller initially indicated that he would retire as editor of *Emeritus* at the beginning of this year but was persuaded to continue for 2024. Assisted by Kevin Windle, Peter has done an exceptional job in producing our monthly newsletter. Peter has kept us all informed of matters relevant to the Emeritus Faculty in a timely fashion. All of the ANU obituaries prepared by the Emeritus Faculty are published, as a formal record, in *Emeritus*.

Peter has definitely decided that he will retire from this position at the end of the year, and we continue to search for his successor.

Obituaries

The following seventeen obituaries of ANU members were published in *Emeritus* during the year. These obituaries are available in issues of the *Emeritus* on our website:

Ranajit Guha

February

Mark Elvin	February
Hugh Saddler	February
Niel Gunson	March
Petr Herel	March
Cedric Mims	March
Charles George Fane	April
Jack Golson	April
Alison Murray	April
Robert 'Jerry' Schwab	May
Deryk Scarr	June
Graeme Clarke	June
Wal Ambrose	July
John Francis Morrison	September
Rosh Ireland	September
Stewart Harris	December
Larry Saha	December

More than a dozen obituaries are still in preparation.

All of these obituaries have been added to an archive. We expect to publish a follow-up to our previous *Life Celebrations* in the course of the ANU's 80th anniversary celebrations.

New Members for 2024

Our membership for 2024 was 267. Our new members are:

Mervyn Aston
 Jennifer Corbett
 Timothy Hatton
 Margaret Jolly
 Benedict Kerkvliet
 Martha Kinsman
 Andrew McWilliam
 John Monfries
 Anthony Patis
 Timothy Rowse
 Alan Rumsey

Special Thanks

As Chair of the Emeritus Faculty, I want to extend special thanks to Peter Fuller for his contribution to the Emeritus Faculty as Editor of *Emeritus*. We all benefited from his work. I would personally like to record what a pleasure it has been to deal with him over the past years. Peter has done an exceptional job and since he is now leaving this position, we wish him well in his future endeavours. We acknowledge our debt to Peter Fuller for his efforts in putting together our monthly *Emeritus* and to Kevin Windle for his assistance in this important undertaking.

I also want to thank all the members of our Executive Committee who have worked diligently through this year with me. My thanks go to: Brad Pillans, Robert Burne, Prame Chopra, Dorothy Horsfield, Ian Keen, Brian Lees, Jan O'Connor, Kathryn Robinson, Larry Saha, Peter Scardoni, Ailsa Solley and David Williams and to Verna Rosling and Patrick De Deckker whom we co-opted to join us on the Executive Committee.

Particular thanks should go to Ian Keen for his excellent organization of our lunchtime lectures and our Projects Symposium and to Jan O'Connor for her steady hand and patience in dealing with the ANU administration and for her prompt responses to all queries and alarms.

I also want to extend a special thanks to Nikolaus Fominas for his invaluable assistance with our computer systems, website maintenance and other internet activities without which it would be impossible to reach our membership.

The sudden death of Larry Saha, who had served as our Deputy Chair since 2015, came as a shock and a loss to us all. Larry was a scholar with deep understanding and affection for the ANU which he carried forth into his retirement and in his engagement with the Emeritus Faculty. We will miss him.

James J. Fox
Chair, ANU Emeritus Faculty
3 December 2024