



Asian Studies
Association
of Australia

May 2020 ASAA Newsletter: statement on racism, Asian Studies Review delays, reports on Asian studies in Australian universities, new Asian Currents posts

Dear ASAA Members,

We hope you and your loved ones have remained safe and well, and coping with the ever-changing “new normal”.

This month’s newsletter reflects the challenges still ahead, with delays and discrimination featuring, but also time to look at our sector and the position Asian studies occupies across Australian universities as we face unprecedented upheavals.

Stay well,
Elly Kent
ASAA Digital Officer

ASAA statement on racism – a message from the executive

The Asian Studies Association of Australia notes recent reports of attacks and intimidation directed against people of Asian backgrounds in Australia in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the attribution of blame by some people to Chinese and, by extension, all Asian people, for the virus. This blaming of people of Asian background for a global pandemic recalls long histories of racism and exclusion in Australia. As an Association whose members work towards achieving greater understanding of Asian societies in Australia, we affirm our absolute commitment to opposition to all forms of racism and discrimination, and deplore these incidents. Such attacks have no place in a tolerant and inclusive society such as we seek to build in Australia. Racism is deplorable under any circumstance, but is particularly damaging at a time of global crisis when people of good will are called upon to work together to confront our common challenges. Noting that some of these incidents have been directed at students from Asian countries, we express our particular support for international students and the role they play as a vital and positive part of Australia’s higher education system and community. The Association calls upon all members, universities, relevant authorities and members of the wider community to stand against racism and to work together in pursuit of an inclusive and diverse society. We salute efforts to challenge racism, including the following petition initiated by prominent Asian-

Australian leaders.

<https://www.change.org/p/denounce-racist-attacks-on-asian-australians-unityoverfear-during-covid-19>

Professor Edward Aspinal, President, on behalf of the ASAA Executive.

7 May 2020

Nominations close 31 May: John Legge prize for the best PhD thesis on Asia in 2019

We are currently seeking nominations for the John Legge prize for best PhD thesis on Asia. The prize consists of a cash award of \$2,000. A prize of \$1,000 may be awarded to a second outstanding thesis.

The prize is for a thesis that was conferred by an Australian university in 2019, deals wholly with a country or countries of Asia or with Australia's relationship with Asia, and which is in a humanities or social sciences discipline (or disciplines) broadly defined. Each nomination must be made by two members of the ASAA, and each member may make only one nomination.

Please do nominate any PhD thesis you believe deserves consideration. Follow this link: <http://asaa.asn.au/presidents-prize-regulations/> for the online nomination form and further details.

Delayed distribution of Asian Studies Review

One of the benefits of your membership of the ASAA is that you receive both hard-copy and electronic access to our flagship journal, *Asian Studies Review*. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the production schedules and procedures of our publisher, Taylor & Francis, have been badly affected. To date, the impact on *Asian Studies Review* has been minimal, but it is possible that the delivery of some copies of the journal may have been affected in the early months of the year, and it might also slow delivery of the upcoming issue.

We have been informed by the publisher that all problems have now been resolved, and we look forward to normal production and delivery schedules resuming soon. If you

would like to receive the hard copy then you'll need to make sure that your preferences and mailing address have been updated via the ASAA website.

Thank you again for your support for ASR and the Association.

Best wishes,

David Hundt
Editor-in-Chief, ASR
ASAA Executive

Reviewing the State of Asian Studies in Australian Universities

What is the state of teaching and research on Asia-related topics at Australian universities? Do students have more or less opportunity to learn about Asia than in the past? Is there much variation in Asia content across disciplines? Which Asian languages are in decline at our universities and which are on the rise? What are the trends in funding and support for Asia-related research? How is the growth of Asian diasporas in Australia transforming the study of Asia in our universities – if at all? Is Asia literacy – or, for that matter, the concept of Asian Studies itself – still a relevant concept in twenty-first century Australia?

To arm Asia specialists with the updated knowledge we need when making the case for deep knowledge of Asia to university administrators, governments, and the wider community, we believe it's time for a systematic review. Over past weeks we have published posts covering how Asia features in a range of disciplines studied at Australian universities, and looking at research and teaching on particular Asian languages, countries, and regions, as well as specialist topics such as the role of Asian diasporas, the place of postgraduate students, and research support. These pieces are authored by a range of Australia's leading Asia experts, and the Association thanks them for their contributions. – Professor Edward Aspinall, president of the ASAA.

Asian politics in Australian universities, by Michael Barr

Evolution of Mainland Southeast Asian Studies Over the Last 20 Years, by Patrick Jory

20 Years of Korean Studies in Australia, by Ruth Barraclough

Chinese Studies in Australian Universities: A Problem of Balance, by Anne McLaren

Australian International Relations and Asia, by Mathew Davies and Jennifer Canfield

Anthropology of/with Asia in Australia, by Tanya Jakimow

Asian Law in Australian universities: research centres as critical institutional commitments, by Melissa Crouch

South Asian Studies in Australia, by Priya Chacko

The state of Indonesian language in Australian universities: the past 20 years, by David Hill