

Winner of the Wang Gungwu prize for 2019.

The ASAA is delighted to announce that an **article analysing notions of beauty and belonging among *waria* (transgender women) in Indonesian Papua** has won the Wang Gungwu prize for best article in *Asian Studies Review* in 2019. The author is [Terje Toomistu](#), a Research Fellow at the University of Tartu in Estonia.



Participant in the West Papuan waria beauty pageant, 2015.

The photograph is for illustrative purposes, taken with the consent of those portrayed, and does not purport to depict any of the individuals mentioned in the article.

Photo by the author

The article draws on the author's fieldwork in coastal Papua to examine the emergence of a *waria* community Papua, and analyses how the "practices of beauty that waria

embody and produce reflect the history of internal colonisation, the available imagined communities, and transnational beauty culture, all of which foster categories of belonging.” The chair of the judging panel, Associate Professor Kate McGregor (University of Melbourne and ASAA Vice President), described the article as an “engaging piece [which] examines embodied notions of belonging amongst waria in West Papua and contextualises this belonging. It considers ideas of belonging with careful attention to the annexation of Papua and tensions between settlers and Papuans. This is interestingly tied also to a sense of an international as well as specific Papuan ‘waria world’. The interview material is woven very nicely into the analysis. This is a highly original article offering detailed analysis of Papuan society from a minority perspective.”

The article, [“Embodied Notions of Belonging: Practices of Beauty among Waria in West Papua, Indonesia”](#) was published in Volume 43, Issue 4 of *Asian Studies Review*, and will shortly be made available for free download on the journal website.

The Wang Gungwu Prize was established by the ASAA in 2013 to recognise and encourage scholarly excellence in Asian Studies. It is named in honour of Professor Wang Gungwu, the distinguished historian who has contributed enormously to scholarship on Asia not only in Australia but also in Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore. He was also a key person behind the formation of the ASAA in 1976 and has served as the Association’s president. The Prize is valued at \$1,500.

The ASAA executive warmly congratulates Dr. Toomistu for the prize and thanks members of the judging committee: Associate Professor McGregor, Professor Kanishka Jayasuriya (Murdoch University) and Associate Professor Ruth Barraclough (Australian National University).