

Program at a glance

The Ideas and Ideals of Australia: *The Lucky Country* turns sixty 13-15 November 2024 in Canberra

SYMPOSIUM SESSION INFORMATION

DATE	Thursday 14 November, 9.00am–5.00pm and Friday 15 November, 9.00am–5.00pm
VENUE	Superfloor (Level 6), Marie Reay Teaching Centre 154 University Avenue, Australian National University, Acton ACT 2601 The event is also being streamed online .
SESSION Symposium introduction and opening	Speakers Welcome Professor Stephen Garton AM FAHA FRAHS FASSA FRSN Welcome from the Convenors Professor Frank Bongiorno AM FAHA FASSA FRHistS Professor Mark McKenna FAHA
Thursday 14 November, 9.00– 9.45am	
SESSION ONE Dream and Discontent	Donald Horne published <i>The Lucky Country</i> at a time when that era's version of the culture wars – the cold war confrontation between the West and the Communist world – was beginning to give way to concepts such as the 'quality of life' and causes and issues such as decolonisation, environmental protection and civil rights. Horne's polemic helped set the terms of debate about national identity, but changes in the economy, politics, media, society, and geopolitical orientation since have drastically altered the terrain for such discussion. Are there possibilities for the reconstruction of community beyond our own century's rising inequality and perpetual culture wars? And what role might the humanities play as a source of inspiration and expertise for a more civil discourse and an expanded sense of political possibility? Chair: Emeritus Professor Shirley Leitch Speakers: Professor Emeritus Julianne Schultz AM FAHA FRSN Emeritus Professor Graeme Turner AO FAHA FQA Dr Ryan Cropp
Thursday 14 November, 9.45– 11.15am	
SESSION TWO Home Truths and Brilliant Lies	The defeat of the Voice referendum on 14 October 2024 has been the cause of grief among many First Nations peoples and millions of others who voted Yes. The referendum result is already widely recognised as a landmark in the history of Australia. At the same time, the Voice emerged out of a wider call in the 'Uluru Statement from the Heart' for Voice, Treaty and Truth, an interlinked process with both a long history and a necessary future. This session will examine the meaning of the Uluru Statement and the 2023 referendum as part of this longer history, explore the role of the humanities in truth-telling, and discuss where the nation might go in the post-Voice referendum era. Chair: Professor Mark Kenny Speakers Professor Megan Davis FAAL FASSA FAHA [online] Associate Professor Shino Konishi FAHA
Thursday 14 November, 11.45am–1.15pm	

Professor Kate Fullagar FAHA
Professor Mark McKenna FAHA

SESSION THREE
Talk and Taboo

Thursday 14
November, 2.00–
3.30pm

Debate about the nation occurs through language, but the impacts of Australia's changing demographic profile, multicultural ideology and policy, and the reinvigoration of Indigenous languages, have shifted the meaning of Australia as one of 'the English-speaking peoples', a still common formulation when Horne was writing *The Lucky Country*. This session will explore how these changes provided openings for Indigenous languages and cultural resurgence, enabled multicultural understandings of what it means to speak with an Australian voice, and drew conservative resistance that echoes older assimilationist assumptions about the nation.

Chair: Dr Amanda Laugesen

Speakers

Professor Emeritus Joseph Lo Bianco AM FAHA
Professor James Walker FAHA
Professor Jakelin Troy FASSA MAIATSIS
Professor Anna Haebich AM FASSA FAHA

SESSION FOUR
Open and Closed

Friday 15 November,
9.00–10.10am

Australia of *The Lucky Country* era has often been recalled as a closed society, in view of the tariff wall intended to protect Australian industry and the still prevailing notion of Australia as a 'white nation'. It was also popularly imagined as a 'man's country', its social policy underpinned by the male breadwinner and family wage, and its borders protected by a restrictive immigration policy. How 'open' is Australia today? Should we be more 'open'? What are the pressures, opportunities and vulnerabilities – economic and security – tied up in such considerations? And what of Australia's relationship with Asia? In 1995, Prime Minister Paul Keating declared that Australia should seek its security *in*, not *from*, Asia. In the three decades since, how has Australia's engagement with Asia matched or departed from Keating's ambition? Topics to be examined include the economy, immigration, the gender domains, relations with Asia and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chair: Professor Frederick D'Agostino FAHA

Speakers

Dr Jennifer Gordon
Professor Marilyn Lake AO DLitt FASSA FAHA
Professor David Vines [online]

Legacies and Influences

Friday 15 November,
10.10–10.30am

What is Donald Horne's legacy? Surely a writer's legacy is his work and this paper will take a concise look at his writings with particular emphasis on his liberal humanism, pluralism and thoughts about social change. In the belief that thoughts don't spontaneously generate, this paper will also examine the forces that shaped Horne. To what extent are the ideas and ideals of a person, of a country, up for grabs?

Speaker: Nick Horne.

SESSION FIVE
**Environment,
Space and Place**

Friday 15 November,
11.00am–12.30pm

Australians of *The Lucky Country* era were beginning to reimagine their place in the world, and even in the cosmos, in the era of space travel. This session will explore the ways available for Australians to think about environment, space and place today and their historical background; examining space, the planet, the Asia-Pacific region, and the nation as four interconnected levels of engagement. As Australia confronts the challenges of climate change, bushfires, floods and pandemics, how can the humanities inform solutions to our most pressing problems?

Chair: Professor Julia Horne

Speakers

Associate Professor Alice Gorman FAHA
Emeritus Professor Tom Griffiths AO FAHA
Dr Lorina Barker
Dr Sarah Pinto

SESSION SIX
Culture as Public Good?

Friday 15 November,
1.30–3.00pm

Culture has long been integral to national community, and this relationship was being reshaped and reinvigorated at the time Donald Horne wrote *The Lucky Country*. Horne celebrated the culture and lifestyle of ordinary Australians while bemoaning the quality of Australia's elite. The 1970s and 1980s witnessed greater investment in the cultural domains, seeing the rise of commercial sport as spectacle and the lavish, colourful and contested Bicentenary of 1988. The present century, however, has arguably seen a faltering of the idea of culture as a basis of national identity, as well as less willingness on the part of government to fund it. How did culture lose some of this purchase as a public good, and how has the idea that it is an elite project been so easily politicised to fight culture wars? The session will explore whether the project of a national culture is still either possible or desirable, and what role a renovated and inclusive concept of culture might play in Australia's future.

Chair: Honorary Associate Professor Esther Anatolitis

Speakers

Professor Justin O'Connor
Dr Mathew Trinca FAHA
Mr Kim Williams AM
Professor Jacqueline Lo

SESSION SEVEN
FORUM:
AUSTRALIAN FUTURES

Friday 15 November,
3.30–5.00pm

In this session, we invite each speaker to imagine what the country looks like in 60 years – 2084. What shape and direction will Australia take – demographically, politically, economically, culturally and digitally? What position will it occupy in the region? What would ideal and dystopian futures look like? What should we be trying to achieve and what do we need to do to get there?

Chair: Professor Stephen Garton AM FAHA FRAHS FASSA FRSN

Speakers

Dr Liz Allen
Distinguished Professor Brian Schmidt AC FAA FRS FTSE
More to be announced

EVENTS

A BIG DIALOGUE ON ARTS POLICY
THE STATE OF THE ARTS IN AUSTRALIA: THE LUCKY COUNTRY?

DATE 13 November, 5.30–7.30pm

VENUE [Louie Louie \(upstairs\), Verity Lane Market](#), Sydney Building, 50 Northbourne Avenue

The Academy, in association with Australian Dialogues, will present a Big Dialogue on arts policy on the eve of our 2024 Symposium.

The Big Dialogue format has developed over the past four years as a successful, trusted platform for better public discussion of contentious policy issues by people with different viewpoints.

A panel, including former Queensland Minister for the Arts, Ian Walker and moderated by Kelly Burke, arts reporter for *The Guardian Australia*, will engage in an in-depth, long-form, enlightening discussion. It will probe issues about funding, governance, and sustainability for the Arts sector in Australia. Australian Dialogues work by putting different points of view in conversation with one another.

Convenor: Professor Fred D'Agostino FAHA

DETAILS Held in the hub of Verity Lane Market – ticket holders can stay on for dinner and drinks, with a range of cuisine on offer.

Snacks are included and there will be a cash bar onsite.

SPONSOR

Student ticket prices are available, thanks to the generous contribution of a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

ACADEMY LECTURE

DATE 14 November, 4.00–5.00pm

VENUE [Superfloor](#) (Level 6), Marie Reay Teaching Centre
154 University Avenue, Australian National University, Acton ACT 2601
The event is also being streamed online

This year's Academy Lecture is delivered by [Emeritus Professor Louise Edwards FAHA FASSA FHKAH](#).

FELLOWS SIGNING CEREMONY

DATE 14 November, 6.00–6.30pm

VENUE Visions Theatre, [National Museum of Australia](#)

The official ceremony where elected Fellows have the opportunity to add their signatures to the Academy's historic Charter Book, alongside those Fellows elected to the Academy since 1969. Fellows will also receive their Certificates of Fellowship.

ANNUAL ACADEMY DINNER

DATE 14 November, 6.30–10.00pm

VENUE The Gandel Atrium, [National Museum of Australia](#)

The 55th Annual Academy Dinner is hosted by the Academy Council.
With dinner address by Professor Glyn Davis AC, Secretary, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and formal presentations of the 2024 Max Crawford Medal, Medal for Excellence in Translation, and the John Mulvaney Fellowship.

Principal Sponsor:



**Australian
National
University**

AUSTRALIAN STUDIES INSTITUTE

Associate Sponsors:

The University of New South Wales



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY