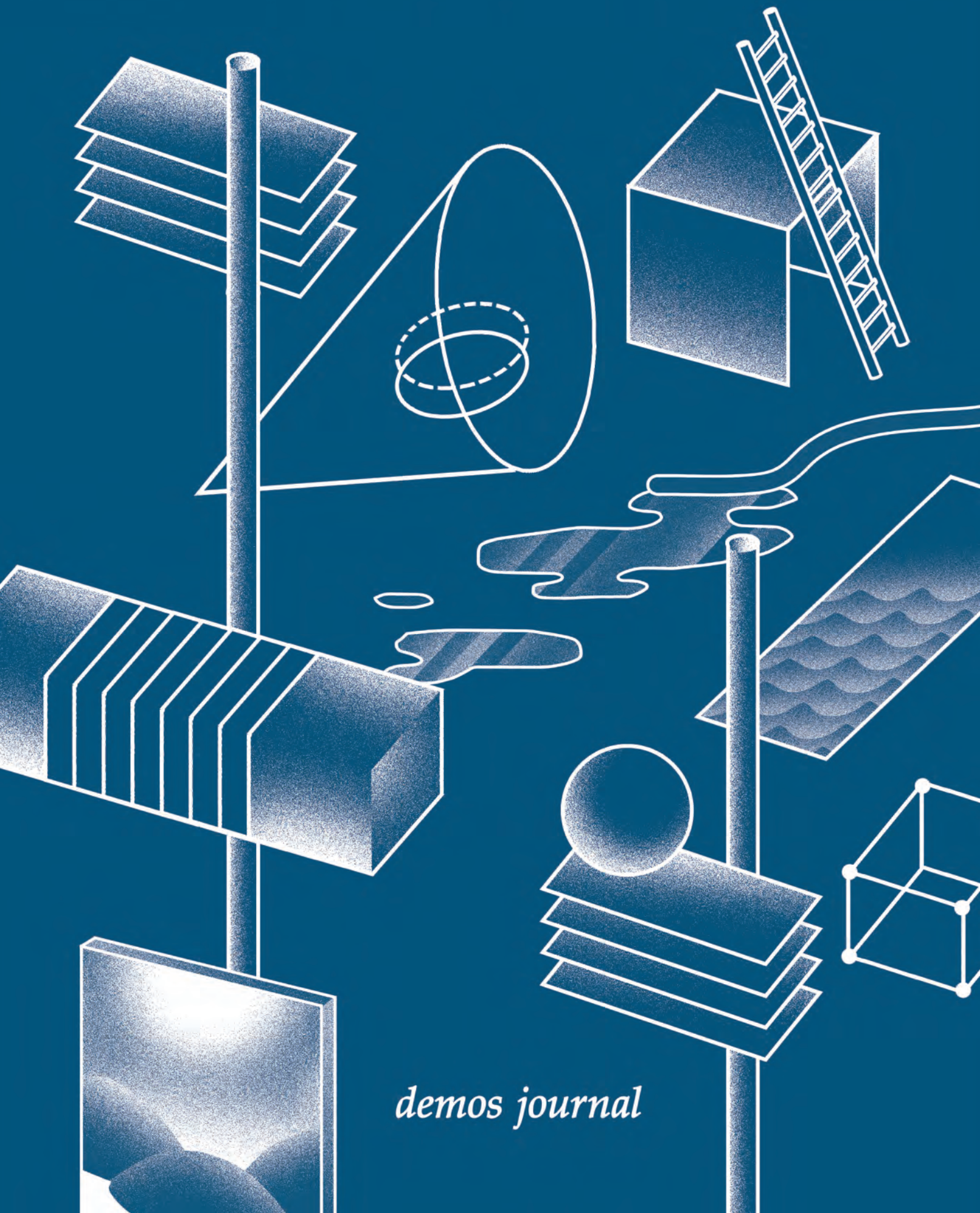
2019

The University

ISSUE 9



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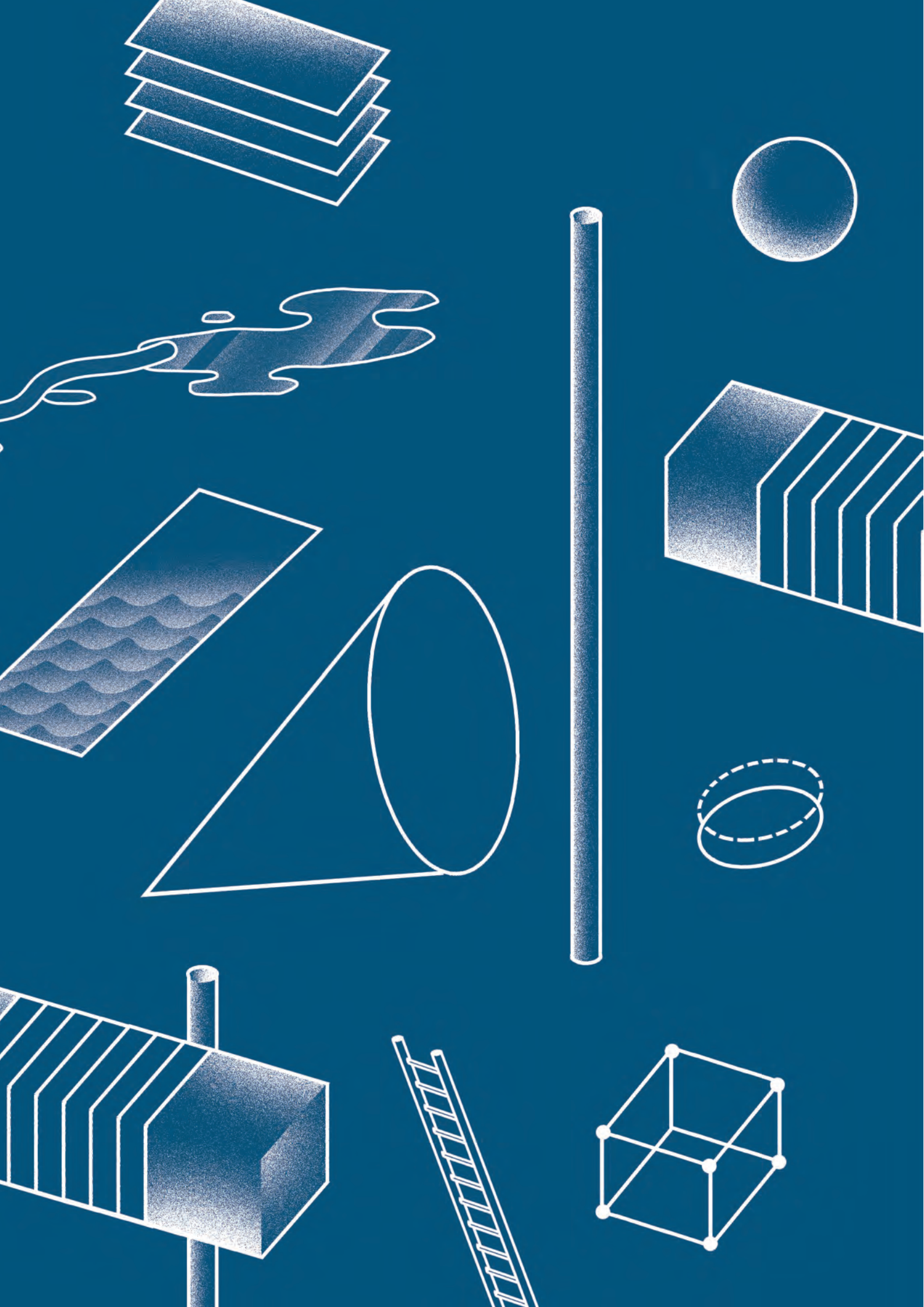


Acknowledgement of Country

We would like to begin by acknowledging that the land the Australian National University sits on—where this edition was written and published—always was and always will be Aboriginal land. We pay our respects to elders past, present, and emerging of the Ngunnawal, Ngambri, and Ngambri-Guumaal nations.

We acknowledge that Indigenous sovereignty has never been ceded to any state or corporate entity. We acknowledge that colonialism never ended in Australia and has only shifted form.

We would like to acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations have lived here sustainably for millennia and continue to practice and share their unique knowledge in their connection to country.

Editorial

'THE UNIVERSITY'

Excessive managerialism, neoliberalisation and casualisation are some of the main challenges that are threatening the viability and the values of the university today. Sara Ahmed argues in her book On *Being Included: On Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (2012) that "we need to work on the university when we work at the university." In this spirit, we called for an honest assessment of the effects of privatisation, the limitations it has imposed on important scholarship, and, the possibilities it forecloses. Our contributors sifted through the wreckage of the truly public university, wondering what went wrong and why. They breathed the dust of the university's backrooms, where hostility and attrition wear down the most dedicated scholars and students. The contributors to this issue shared their experiences of solidarity amidst exploitation.

'The University' issue brings together the voices of academic and professional staff, postgraduate and undergraduate students, both domestic and international, to explore some of the challenges facing the university as a community of scholars and learners. We are very grateful to Emerita Professor Margaret Thornton (ANU) and Professor Emerita Raewyn Connell (University of Sydney), whose contributions bookend this issue. Both are recognised leaders in their field, and have spent years researching and analysing the problems universities are facing today.

A main theme of this issue is casualisation. More than 40% of all staff hired at Australian universities today – both academic and professional staff – are currently employed casually. The first part of this issue provides both big picture and individual accounts of the detrimental effects of casualisation on the sector, on the university staff themselves, and consequently on students as well. Heterodox Academy, and decolonisation are topics discussed by Bianca Hennessy and Caitlin Setnicar. The poets in this edition give a many-plateaued image of modern higher education. Among their lines you will find knights, plosives, leaves, anime, and at least one footnote. In the context of the funding attack on Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences two pieces by Rosalind Moran and Professor Peter Tregear describe the damage done by these cuts, specifically on the arts and on the ANU School of Music. Tim Hollo and a collective of concerned academics and students (the Matters of Concern Collective) conclude the issue by putting forward suggestions about how to end the neoliberalisation of our universities, and suggest some ideas for fighting for a public university of the commons.

The kernel and impetus for this issue is a dossier on the review of the School of Culture, History and Language (CHL), at the College of Asia and the Pacific at ANU. CHL went through a violently prolonged managerial review between 2013 and 2017, where staff redundancies and disregard for students resulted in the loss of a school 'community'. CHL's review came after the infamous review of the School of Music, and was followed by a demoralising review of the Centre on China in the World, among others. These reviews are a common process for university management to bypass permanent employment contracts for (tenured) academics and fire staff, restructure departments and cut funding. These review processes irreparably damage the scholarly communities affected by them.

The posters and photos across the dossier, designed by Annie McCarthy, were used in the protests by staff and students to save CHL from the cuts. Real and fictionalised diverse accounts of what happened are shared by Professor Emerita Tessa Morris-Suzuki and two anonymous contributors. Two CHL international PhD students at the time Evi Eliyanah and Dr. Dario Di Rosa along with local undergraduate student Erin Mccullagh from Language Diversity — who was part of organising an inspiring student movement to save language teaching at CHL — all provide a rich account of student experiences during university reviews.

The CHL dossier ends with two sets of documents; first are the documents provided through the Freedom of Information request placed by the Collective of Concerned CHL HDR Students with the aim to understand how the university planned for the review (or didn't) and how much the review financially cost management. Second, are the letters of support from professional academic institutions providing a glimpse of the devastation and the worldwide concern about saving the school. The aim of this dossier, as with the issue more broadly, is to document and archive some of the stories that the university management would rather silence.

These accounts provided in this issue provide an array of complex issues, often constituting unwanted voices that the university management does not publicise in its glossy brochures that constantly solicit new students to the courses whose teaching staff it has atrophied. We wish that by documenting some of these voices, that Demos Journal have provided a space to center silenced and marginalised discussions on university campuses, providing an insiders glimpse at what is happening not only at ANU but at most Australian university campuses today.

A huge thank you to all our valued contributors and to our team of dedicated sub-editors: Dee Perez-McVie, Emma Hartley and Samantha Hartley. Thanks must also go to *Woroni*, for providing the funds for printing this issue. We are very grateful for all those who have put thoughts, research and efforts to thinking about the university, an institution essential to our societies and communities, one that we truly believe should be run by the public and for the public good.

Lina Koleilat
Amber Karanikolas
Scott Robinson

Contents

This initiative is proudly sponsored by Woroni and the SCRIPT Grant

WORONI

The Ideology of Managerialism in the Public University

MARGARET THORNTON

The education market

Two distinct understandings of the corporation have become entwined with one another in the contemporary public university, which has caused confusion and uncertainty as to its character and purpose. The not for-profit corporation was established in the Middle Ages 'for some good purpose' of a public nature, whereas the for-profit corporation became the primary structure through which profit-making activities are conducted. The public university is not listed on the stock exchange and it has no shareholders; academics and students are described as 'stakeholders', an uncertain status that is not synonymous with shareholders. In 2005, Prof Di Yerbury referred to the sector as comprising '*nominally* public universities' [my italics], which captures a sense of its ambiguous status.

The role of government has been central in the transformation of the university, encouraged by international bodies such as the OECD and the World Bank, committed to ensuring the profitability of public goods in a neoliberal context. The spur was Lyotard's insight that it is knowledge not land that is the contemporary source of struggle between nation states (1984). This constellation of factors gave rise to the Dawkins reforms of 1988, resulting in the 'massification' and commodification of higher education.

Since then, the education market has ballooned. In 2014, it added $140 billion to the economy, and education has become the third largest export, behind iron ore and coal. The Data Snapshot provided by Universities Australia in 2018 indicated that Australia engaged in educating more than 1.5 million students (domestic and international) and directly employed 120,000 full-time equivalent staff.

To manage the multidisciplinary behemoths that Australia's universities have become, a new managerial class has emerged, which Rob Watts wittily dubs the 'manageriat' (2017). So powerful and influential has this class become that it has replaced the professoriate as the university elite. Not only has the manageriat expanded exponentially, it has done so at the expense of traditional functions, such as teaching, which now must be done 'on the cheap', as illustrated by the marked rise of casualisation.

The managerial embrace

While *management* entails the enhancement of administrative systems that transform resources into productive outputs, *managerialism* is an ideology that distorts the primary function of management. It comprises a set of beliefs that promotes the view that management is the most desirable element of good administration or governance (Joseph 2015). It sloughs off debate in the belief that it is unnecessary for solving problems, which can be replaced by rational assessment. The government has played a key role in withdrawing trust from the academic community in the belief that the manageriat will manage the university more efficiently.

Managerialism has little regard for critical scholarship unless it has use value in the market. The intervention by government in the Australian Research Council (ARC) process is a notorious example with, first, Brendan Nelson in the 2005 and 2006 rounds and then Simon Birmingham in 2017 declining to ratify projects that had been subjected to rigorous peer review (*The Australian* 2018, 31). All suspect proposals emanated from HASS (Humanities and Social Science) in contradistinction to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in the belief that the latter are uncritical and apolitical, as well as being more likely to generate profits through innovation. The fallout from the brouhaha is that future grant applicants must now satisfy a National Interest Test (NIT) by establishing the potential of projects to have 'economic, commercial, environmental, social or cultural benefits to the Australian community'. This is a direct attempt by government to encourage the functional and the instrumental at the expense of the critical.

Managerial ideology presupposes that the university be run as a business, in the same way as a bank or factory. Hence, the appropriate comparator for a Vice Chancellor is deemed to be the CEO of a large for-profit corporation; it is not other academics, for he or she (still overwhelmingly 'he') is no longer regarded primarily as an academic leader. The average salary paid to Australian Vice-Chancellors is $890,000, which is considerably more than the Prime Minister receives, as well as more than the heads of Oxford and Harvard. In fact, twelve VCs belong to the 'million dollar club'.

Governance

Managerialism is central to the governance of the university, in respect of which accountability, efficiency and effectiveness are crucial elements, but competition, a central element of a for-profit corporation, has also crept into the mix. Hence, the aim is to secure the best students, the best staff, the biggest grants and the highest rankings in order to surpass one's competitors. Public good criteria, such as equity and diversity, are more contentious as they do not appear in any rankings, although lip service might be paid to them. Under a university's Act of Incorporation, the university council is legally responsible for governance

and performance, with the Academic Board charged with responsibility for academic affairs. Protocols for university councils have been established under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*, supplanted by a voluntary code of best practice agreed to by the University Chancellors Council (UCC).

The contraction of collegiality has seen a shift away from internal to external membership of university councils, particularly those with senior business and financial expertise. It is notable that this reflects the worldwide trend away from collegial governance to managerialism, which underpins the contemporary idea of higher education as a source of wealth generation.

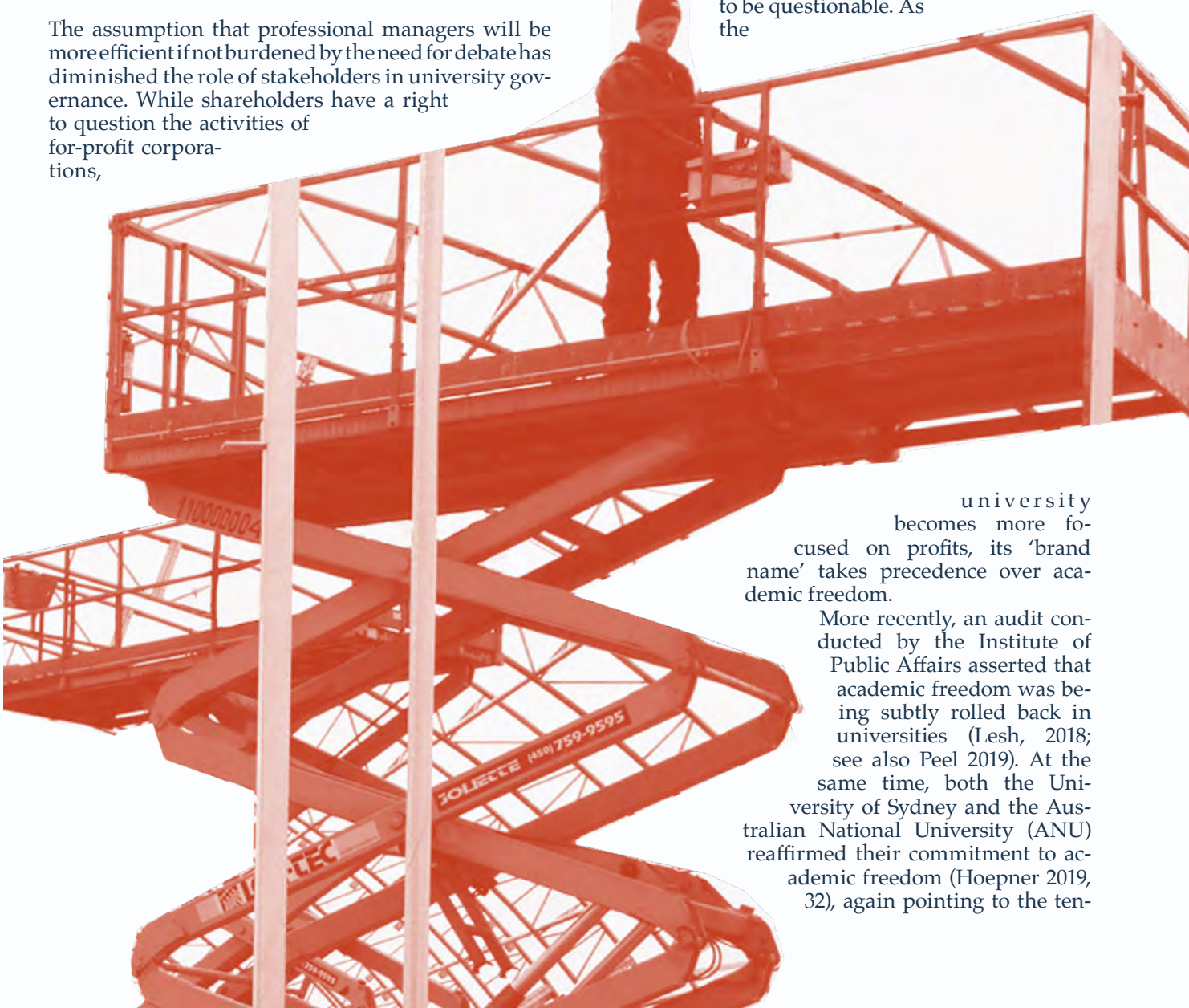
Managerialism has also seen a change in the style of governance from legal-rational authority to efficiency in the market (Roberts 2015). Thus, governance has been reshaped to accommodate what is often a perfunctory governing board supplemented by a plethora of 'shadow university structures' such as Vice Chancellor advisory committees and for-profit arms.

The demise of collegiality

The assumption that professional managers will be more efficient if not burdened by the need for debate has diminished the role of stakeholders in university governance. While shareholders have a right to question the activities of for-profit corporations, the comparable right of university stakeholders is less clear. They often have difficulty in obtaining answers to their questions, even if members of Council. It is common to claim that academic members of council suffer from a conflict of interest – unlike the representatives of business.

For example, Professor Margaret Sims was subjected to attempts to remove her from New England University Council when she was president of the local branch of the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) (Sims 2019). The university denied Sims access to council papers and meetings where, in the opinion of the chancellor, a conflict arose. Sims was not permitted to know the nature of the material from which she was excluded as even the subject headings in the agenda and minutes were redacted.

Commercial-in-confidence may be used by councils to prevent scrutiny of a university's commercial entities in the same way as for-profits invoke the concept against competitors. Managerialism has also given rise to codes of conduct in many universities that are used to inhibit dissent. The university community is not supposed to be critical of university decisions, such as the award of an honorary doctorate to a philanthropic donor when the source of that person's wealth appears to be questionable. As the university becomes more focused on profits, its 'brand name' takes precedence over academic freedom.



More recently, an audit conducted by the Institute of Public Affairs asserted that academic freedom was being subtly rolled back in universities (Lesh, 2018; see also Peel 2019). At the same time, both the University of Sydney and the Australian National University (ANU) reaffirmed their commitment to academic freedom (Hoepner 2019, 32), again pointing to the ten-

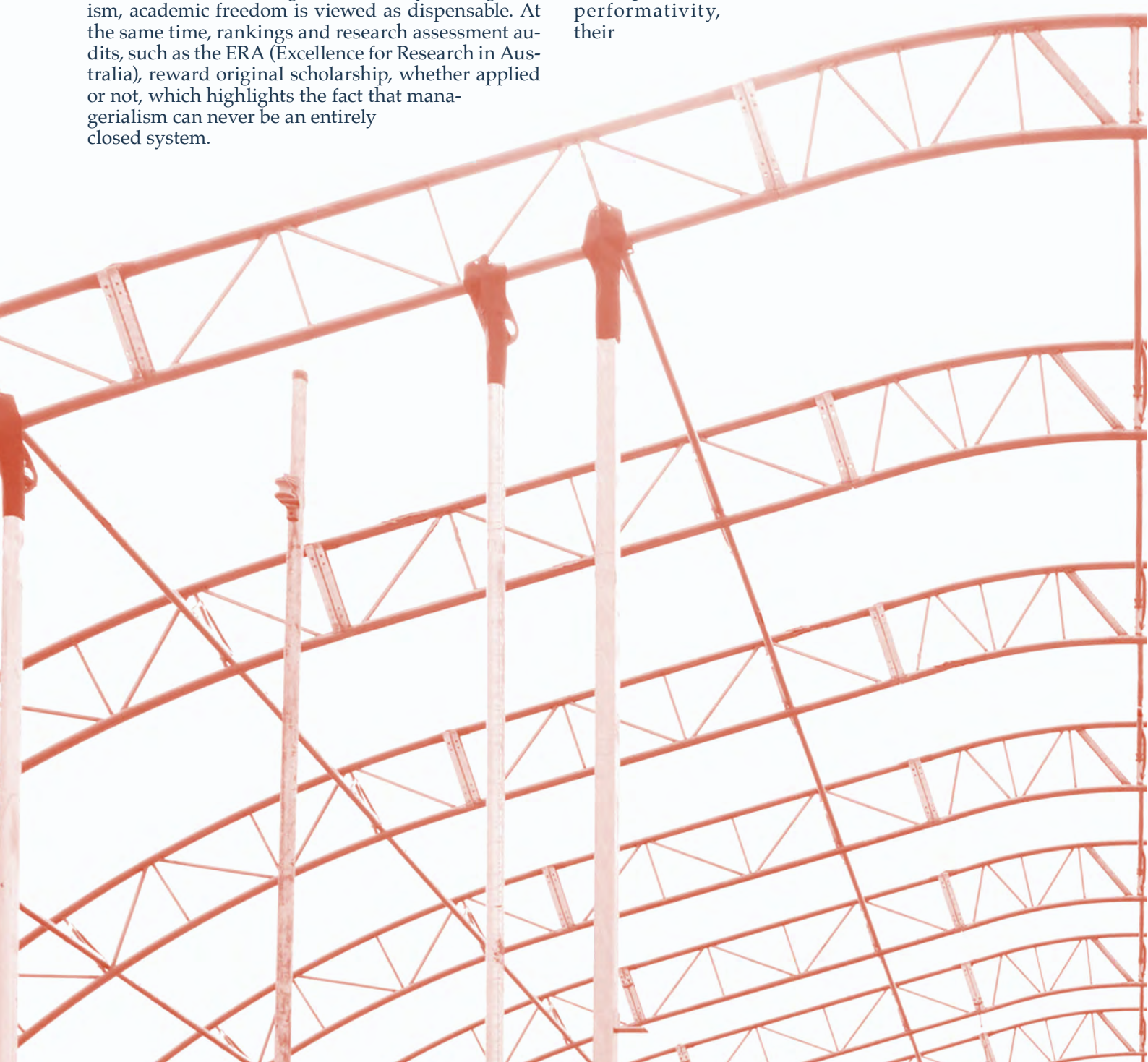
sion between competing understandings of what the contemporary university is for.

Dependency on corporate sponsorship may insidiously weaken researchers' ability to act as independent critics (eg Batt & Fugh-Berman 2018). There have been many examples, particularly in the US and Canada, where criticism of research practices involving the pharmaceutical industry and public health have had adverse repercussions for researchers. ARC Linkage Grants and contract research that are designed to encourage functional partnerships with corporate funders can be fraught. However, the competition for research dollars means that the demand for corporate partnerships will continue to grow (Basken 2018).

As Polanyi points out, without freedom only subordinated knowledge is possible (1951, 43-45). As instrumental or applied knowledge is the form of subordinated knowledge favoured by managerialism, academic freedom is viewed as dispensable. At the same time, rankings and research assessment audits, such as the ERA (Excellence for Research in Australia), reward original scholarship, whether applied or not, which highlights the fact that managerialism can never be an entirely closed system.

Governmentality

While university governance is ostensibly top-down, as in the case of for-profit corporations, managerialism produces a classic manifestation of Foucauldian governmentality that includes governance of the self, which is effected through multiple forms of audit and metricisation (Lynch 2015). Numbers and metrics comport with the superficially apolitical stance favoured by managerialism but are in fact profoundly political as they facilitate modes of control, surveillance and accountability. Academics have internalised the idea that they should work harder, publish in better journals and generally be more productive, not only to promote the self, but to enhance the brand name of the university. By holding a mirror up to the self and constantly focusing on self-improvement and performativity, their



attention is deflected from what is taking place around them, which isquickly normalised. Metricisation in conjunction with management of the self is a key technology of power. Failure to satisfy the numbers can be disastrous and HASS is particularly vulnerable within a corporatised context. In 2008, for example, the entire Faculty of Arts was closed down at the Carseldine Campus of the Queensland University of Technology in favour of a Faculty of Creative Industries because it was believed that the latter would be more lucrative (Thornton 2009).

Conclusion

It is not easy to come up with strategies for change in light of the stranglehold that the ideology of managerialism has secured in the contemporary university, especially as the academic environment is volatile and uncertain. The predilections of a particular vice-chancellor and/or chancellor can exercise a profound effect on a university's direction. This is apparent in the 2019 case of Melbourne University Publishing where a decision was made to resile from an emphasis on commercialism to concentrate on scholarly publishing despite its comparatively low returns. To reject a profitable in favour of a non-profitable venture suggests that it may be possible to turn things around more fundamentally.

In Privatising the Public University (Thornton 2012), I argued that the tuition fees lay at the heart of the corporatisation of the university. The imposition of HECS initially provoked strong opposition, which became progressively weaker with each increase until the debate over deregulation in 2014 temporarily revived the opposition. It is nevertheless notable that virtually free higher education is offered by many countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Czech Republic, Cuba, Greece, Hungary, France, Turkey and the Nordic countries. Germany is particularly striking as it abolished fees for undergraduate students in 2016. However, New Zealand offered the first year free from 2018 and British Labour has promised to abolish fees if elected, even though this would inevitably mean higher taxes.

The turnaround suggests that there is nothing inevitable about managerialism. The electorate and the university community have acceded to it, but they could change the way things are if they chose to do so. Even though academics grumble in the corridors, they are hesitant to take a critical stance. The boiled frog metaphor aptly encapsulates the extent of acquiescence despite the academic antipathy to managerialism. While of dubious scientific validity, the belief is that if a frog is placed in boiling water it will jump out but if placed in cold water, it will stay there even when the water is heated up, despite its inevitable fate. In view of the rapid ratcheting up of managerialism, I exhort university stakeholders with amphibian tendencies to react before it is too late.

Photograph: *Structure*, Jean-Louis Plamondon

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Failure

ANONYMOUS

I firmly believe that universities and academics have the potential to do good; to contribute to a more just, sustainable and peaceful future for our world by advancing public knowledge and understanding. Universities should cultivate the ability in our students to think creatively and critically for themselves. As an academic, I have seen it as my job to realise that potential, and for almost thirty years have devoted body and soul to that job. But now I've just about had it: I'm exhausted and heartbroken.

I'm a social scientist and senior academic at the Australian National University (ANU). This is my story. It is an admission of failure. Over the course of my career, Australian universities have become a central cog in the machinery of evil that is neoliberalism. I have been a victim of that evil, but also a particularly privileged beneficiary and, for all my good intentions, a collaborator. I have been a good little worker for capitalism. I haven't fought fiercely or effectively enough against the barrage of bullshit – of exploitation, inequality, destruction and injustice; of abusive power, corruption, egotism, greed, and sheer, breathtaking incompetence and stupidity – that threatens us all.

I got my first full-time lecturing job at X University shortly after John Dawkins' 'reforms' to the higher education sector were introduced at the end of the 1980s. I was young, green and penniless, the ideal, dog's-body junior scholar. I worked my butt off. At first, X University was an intellectually exciting place to be. But, as a small university it was hit particularly hard by government funding cuts and by neoliberalist managerialism, whose beginnings were first signalled when, shortly after I began my job, they changed the name of the 'Personnel Department' to 'Human Resources'. We also had a particularly corrupt, megalomaniac and incompetent Vice Chancellor, and, in my area, an equally appalling Dean. Fine examples of how scum rises to the top.

Under their reign, we were introduced to a model of 'development,' most, or all, elements of which have since been experienced by universities across Australia. It goes something like this: first, suck

as much administrative and other support away from academics as you can, centralise administration and increase the number of senior managers. Second, pay the Vice Chancellor and senior managers big bucks, suppress academic salaries and step up exploitation of short-term, casual academic labour. Third, audit and quantify every measure of academic worth you can think of. Turn every single scholar into their own worst bean-counting nightmare, and make sure they never feel like they're doing enough. Fourth, boost areas, like business studies, where there's 'market demand,' but starve the humanities and social sciences of funds and don't allow the cross-subsidisation of courses or academic units in those areas.

For my area, that fourth aspect of the model resulted in a dreadful downward spiral: small numbers of students meant a small funding base and a lack of money to retain academic staff, let alone hire anyone new. Declining staff numbers meant we could run fewer courses, which in turn meant we lost funding. To compensate, the remaining staff were forced into even heavier workloads and a complicated, finely graded work point system was introduced. This increased the pressure on everyone. It brought enmity and conflict down lower and lower, so that by the time I left X University, we weren't all blaming the system or the university or the Vice Chancellor or even the Dean: individuals were fighting individuals over who was entitled to more points, and tearing each other apart.

In the second half of the 1990s, I became a mother and shortly afterwards, a single mother. Meanwhile, I was the head of a small and declining programme under serious threat of closure. Or so I thought. But even after one colleague left, another's contract was not renewed, and I went part-time – just in order to cope with a screaming baby and an impossible paid job – we weren't closed down. I only then realised what the plan was: they were going to keep a single part-time continuing academic (me) running an entire four-year degree programme, with support coming only from underpaid, casual teaching assistants.

I took six months' stress leave, went back to work and applied for six month's Outside Studies Leave, so that I could do some fieldwork for a new research project. My application was denied. Having failed to renew the contract of my only other (non-casual) colleague, they told me I couldn't take leave because I was required for teaching. I appealed repeatedly and lost. Finally, I managed to escape X University and took up a job at ANU.

My experience at X University was a good education in how rapidly and thoroughly you can destroy an institution, as well as individual lives. One thing I learnt was that evil doesn't work alone: it needs collaborators. Equally, to combat evil, you can't fight alone: you have to have a community and that community has to stick together and fight.

But over the several years I've been at ANU, I think I forgot those lessons. Or maybe I never really learned them sufficiently, or didn't know how to actually put them into practice. Or found it all too difficult and demoralising. Or was too self-centred and complacent. Or too tired. Or all of the above.

In the early 2000s, there was quite a lot of complaining among my ANU colleagues. I thought to myself, you guys have no idea how privileged you are. I was in heaven: I had a research-only position and I was surrounded by some of the best scholars in the world. I was so proud to be at the ANU. But I also was disturbed at how undemocratic it was (and still is) and at how few of my colleagues seemed to care or want to engage in any kind of effort to change things. Why did so few people speak up at meetings, or even turn up to them, for that matter? I'm more sympathetic now. I too have given up going to most of the larger meetings, above the departmental level: they're just too much of a risk to one's mental health.

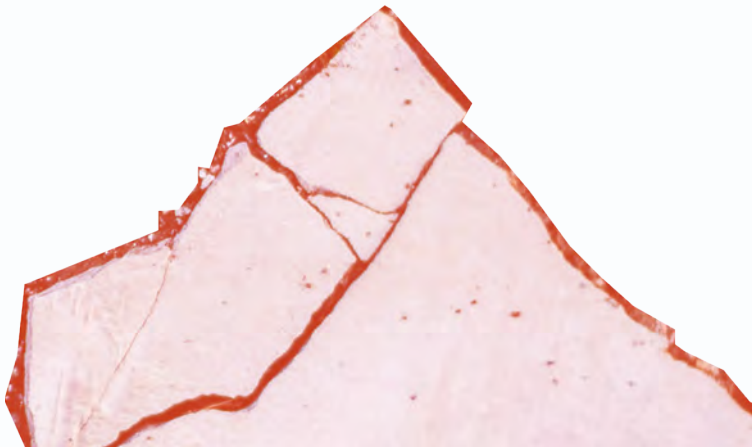
Toward the end of the 2000s and in the 2010s, the situation in the social sciences and humanities at ANU seriously deteriorated. Research-only positions became a thing of the past. Several areas were 'restructured,' causing lasting damage. The School of Music was 'reviewed' and gutted. Then, the 'review' of the School of Culture, History and Languages (CHL) began.

The CHL review set a record for malignant stupidity. Sacking some of the world's top scholars for no apparent reason was just one part of it. Dragging out the whole business over more than two years, in a process devoid of transparency or accountability, but loaded with threat, was another. That led to many of the best people fleeing well before the sackings (and taking up senior positions at other universities), and serious demoralisation and illness among those who remained. The review decimated areas of research in which CHL scholars were world-leaders.

The CHL review did not affect me directly, but it did hit several close colleagues. I didn't do enough to stand up for and support those colleagues, though I did join others in writing letters to the Vice Chancellor. I think I was just getting too overwhelmed by my ever-increasing workload and associated stress and by a sense of despair about academia.

I just wanted to crawl into a hole. For so many years, I had worked 60 – 70 hour weeks at my paid job (on top of being a single mother); I had very few friends and zero social life; I'd forgotten what it meant to take a holiday and, although I was not struck by physical or mental illness as severely as some colleagues, my health was in very poor shape.

Much of my stress came from being in a low-level 'leadership' position – at the coalface, where you have no power, but a shitload of work, and you're



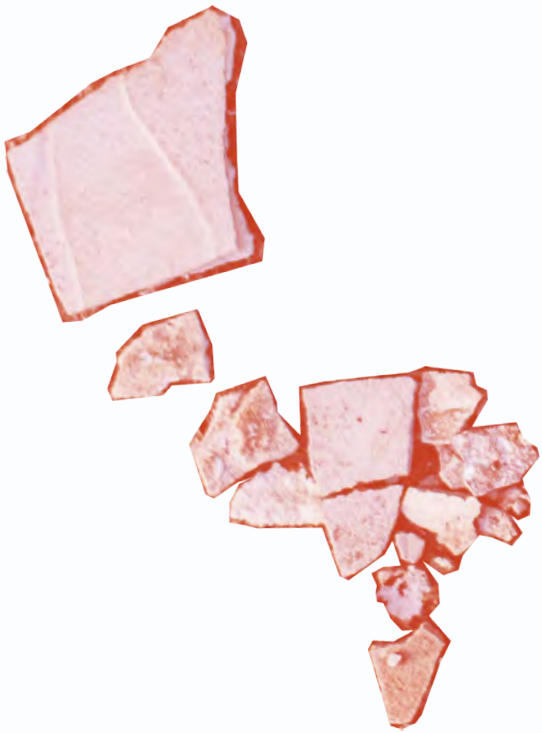
continually having to implement or go along with policies you abhor, and continually having to spend hours, weeks, months of your life trying to navigate a bureaucracy in which the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing.

I felt – and still feel – less and less happy about belonging to ANU, and more and more alienated from academia in general. I'm ashamed of the extortionate fees we charge students, especially international postgraduate students, and of our failure to address bullying and abuse of students and staff, and the exploitation of casual and junior scholars. I'm appalled at the corruption and lack of due process that characterises so much decision-making across the university and at some of the appointments and promotions that the university has made, of people who lack academic qualifications or competence. I'm dismayed at the ongoing, and in some cases worsening, gender imbalances across the university. I'm tired of the rhetoric of 'diversity' (as opposed to 'justice' or 'equality') and of being counselled about maintaining a 'work-life balance' at the same time that the screws are tightened harder and harder. I'm fed up with being asked, as a senior female academic, to give other women pep talks about how to be 'resilient' and teach them how to play the promotion game, so the university can get away with not seriously addressing systemic exploitation, discrimination and inequality.

But what really gets me is how far we are moving from anything resembling a first-class institution of higher education. We're urged to put on short professional 'training' courses. We're told to devote hours and hours of our time to learn how to develop online courses, Mickey Mouse stuff with a bit of everything thrown in, lots of pictures and very short talks. We're urged to cut down on the reading requirements. Draw the students in with pap; don't engage their intelligence or push them to actually think and don't fail them when they produce rubbish.

For years, we've suffered under the 'publish or perish' imperative, but now, the publication of peer-reviewed scholarly papers counts for nothing because apparently, they don't have 'impact.' So, instead of publishing scholarship, we must turn ourselves into policy advisers for business and government, and second-rate journalists, churning out soundbites, glossy brochures and blogs. Never mind if you're not interested in advising government or business and they're not interested in you: just change the direction of your research. Don't worry if you weren't trained as a journalist: you can do a two-hour workshop. Don't be phased if you're asked to speak to a topic on which you have no research expertise: all you have to do is put on a smart suit and spout clichés, perpetuate stereotypes and misleading simplifications. Who cares?

We must, in short, do anything and everything other than be real scholars, doing the best we can to make genuine contributions to public understanding and critical thinking. Anything to keep the money coming in, so we can employ more managers, build gorgeous buildings, bail out 'research' centres that squander millions of dollars of taxpayers' money, while producing next-to-no real scholarship.



It's like we've all gone down the rabbit hole. I see that damn cat-grin wherever I turn.

In the last year or so, things have become more and more surreal. Departmental meetings have taken on a hysterical edge. I think our brains can't process the truly awful stuff, so we get stuck on the little things; the ones we can turn into a joke. There's the joke, for example, about how, after spending millions of dollars on first demolishing and then rebuilding the whole student union court area in the centre of the university, the first thing they do is open up the swanky restaurants that students can't afford. Well into first semester, the barriers which block direct access from that great, grand University Avenue to the Chifley library have not been removed. This is supposed to be the nation's leading research-led institution for higher education and learning.

How are we to fight back or even stand up straight in the face of such a barrage of bullshit?

Academics in Australia have failed. I have failed. I know about neoliberalism and how it works. I know you have to organise to fight it. But I don't. I don't know how to and I don't have time. I've been a union member my whole career, but only occasionally been to any meetings or joined campaigns. I haven't fought hard enough for what I believe in and care about. I haven't stuck by my colleagues sufficiently. I've too often just kept my head down and stayed safe. I haven't even fought against my own exploitation. I'm too well trained. I try too hard to be liked. I don't cope well with conflict. I feel bad if I don't work non-stop. I feel guilty for not working hard enough, for being so privileged. I get worn out and I lose hope.

Failure is the mother of success, or so they say. So, tell me: What should I do now?

What should *we* do?

antistudy

DAVID FENDERSON

these days suggest economy
10 to six five & a half days;
read widely but with sycophant
calculation in order 'not to fail'
this, don't sit too long on this bench
construing politics from sunshine—

now that language is the subject of your
ambits it's difficult to imagine basic
ideas of sitting outside and
absorbing (let alone projecting) an
unmediated air, say leaves scattering
orange-yellow patches of consciousness at your feet—

back to the books!? trailing an elusive
configuration of fingertips and pupils,
answering each condition
with a different arrangement of
black and white

***

no this landscape looks broken:
i see it in text
fragments of bare hills, shadowy poplars or
stray eucalypts, sun withdrawing its final
slants from the already freezing air

sullen i leave late,
watching the day self-erase
against the vanishing campus

i see it described,
this landscape. it looks broken but
i see it, only because i've seen it before.

The Precariat

IVO LOVRIC

The poster highlights the plight of casual and other university staff, who face precarious employment.

Resisting the Casualised University

LACHLAN CLOHESY

Australian universities are now more reliant on casualised labour than at any other point in their history. While university management may see this as a positive trend, this essay argues that both the nature and scale of casualised labour have had almost wholly negative impacts on the sector, felt by both university students, and casualised staff themselves. While many believe that we must accept this new norm, this essay argues that we need to reject the casualised university for the good of staff, students and the broader society the university seeks to serve.

Casualisation at Australian universities is nothing new. It has, however, been getting worse over time. Casually employed staff are paid by the hour and receive a loading in lieu of entitlements such as various forms of leave, or the expectation of job security. While casualisation affects both academic and professional staff, overwhelmingly it has affected teaching-only academic staff (Kniest 2018a). The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) published research in 2016 that clearly articulated the rise in insecure work, and contended that at least 40 percent of all employees were employed on a casual basis (Kniest 2016, p. 8). The 2018 follow-up to this research was 'The flood of insecure work', highlighting that the problem only worsened in the intervening two years. Those who worked in casualised employment now numbered 93,001, or 43.8 percent of the university workforce. With a further 20.8 percent on fixed-term contracts, only 35.6 percent of workers enjoyed secure, continuing positions (Kniest 2018b).

This increase in casualisation has undoubtedly changed the composition of the workforce. But the increased use of casual work itself has changed the very nature of the university. Lama and Joullié, in their study of the impacts of casualisation on teaching quality, argue that prior to 1980 casual academics were engaged for 'noble purposes' (2015, p. 2). The casual academic – usually a postgraduate student – would gain valuable teaching experience, while at the same time sharing the benefits of their research to undergraduate students. Other casual academics might be drawn from industry, bringing the benefit of their specialist knowledge and industry experience to bear. Since the late 1970s, however, Lama and Joullié contend that universities have instead used casualised labour to cut costs as a response to diminished or uncertain funding. It is difficult to disagree with the contention that the 'substitution of [the] fulltime academic for casual teaching staff is now universities' major cost saving strategy' (Lama and Joullié 2015, p. 2). A national survey of casual academic staff in 2012 by the NTEU demonstrated that more than half of undergraduate teaching is now performed by casually employed staff (NTEU 2012a).

The effect of this change has had an impact on the student experience. Research on the 'first year experience' has become increasingly important to the higher education sector, as there is an increasing recognition that if universities fail to recognise the challenges and demands of first year students that there will be consequences in the form of student attrition rates. Retention of first-year students is big business. The consultancy, QS Enrolment Solutions, estimates that Australian universities lose more than 1 billion dollars per year due to students dropping out of university in the first twelve months (Renowden 2019). Education academics Baik, Naylor and Arkoudis (2015) clearly articulate the support students need in order to be successful in their first year, and it will seem unsurprising to those who teach in the sector. Students need staff to be available and accessible. They also rely on advice from staff more than in previous years. This advice might be on course or subject selection, assistance with study, feedback on assessments or awareness of university services for the provision of student support (Baik, Naydor and Arkoudis 2015, p. 33). The same study also cites increasing emotional or mental health concerns for students (Baik, Naydor and Arkoudis 2015, p. 30).

The contradiction between the priorities for students and the effect of casualisation is clear. While it may be preferable for students to knock on the door of their tutor's office, many tutors do not have an office. Even if they did, they are only paid for the face-to-face teaching hours so are unlikely to be on campus at other times. Casually employed staff, who are often not invited to university meetings, are excluded in other ways from being considered part of the faculty. They have less access to professional development and are often less aware of university services. While a casually employed academic may go above and beyond in terms of meeting students outside of class time, devoting hours to giving feedback, or acting as emotional support for students, this is almost always unpaid work (in addition to often taking an emotional toll on the staff member as well). Wardale, Richardson and Suseno (2019) recently contended in *The Conversation* that casual academics 'regularly go beyond their contractual obligations', highlighting this as one of the benefits of casualisation. What university managements may see as a benefit, however, can also be seen as the exploitation of a vulnerable class of workers who continually need to go beyond what they are paid for in order to secure their next precarious contract. As Cantrell and Palmer (2019) argue in their blistering response to the *Conversation* piece:

> "...casualisation is not a valid hiring practice with 'pros' and 'cons' but a system of exploitation that brutalises academics and imperils not only teaching and research, but the spirit of inquiry itself."

It is also important to return to Lama and Joullié's critique when discussing the impact on students. The mass casualisation of academia has led to a class in our universities we can call the precariat, to use the term given prominence by the work of Guy Standing (2016). This class of casual academics are not necessarily postgraduate students picking up one or two classes to supplement a stipend and gain teaching experience. Nor are they industry professionals imparting their wisdom. Often they are long-term, casually employed staff who have completed their own study, and complete any research they do unpaid and in their own time. They rely on their income from universities as their primary source of income, and on average earn less than the full-time Australian minimum wage. Despite being talented and committed to their students, these are not the conditions in which the student experience thrives. While research by industry lobby groups contends that student satisfaction scores are not markedly different in courses taught by casual academics, this relies on student evaluations (Andrews et al. 2016).

Student evaluations are problematic for several reasons. Not only do they reduce pedagogy to a 'consumer satisfaction' score, but research has also shown that they are discriminatory against women and minority groups (Reid 2010; Mitchel and Martin 2018; Boring, Ottoboni and Stark 2016). Even without considering these issues, however, there have been serious questions raised about whether they are useful for evaluating teaching at all (Stark and Freishtat 2014). The NTEU has adopted a policy which makes clear that these evaluations should not be used in managing staff performance, and outlines alternative methods of evaluating the student experience. Student satisfaction as a metric is limited in that it measures a student's satisfaction with their learning experience, but not necessarily teacher performance or student learning outcomes. Evaluations should be used as a useful tool for reflection on teaching practice, but a high degree of caution should be practised in using them beyond this (NTEU 2018, pp. 67-9).

While the student experience is a significant part of the overall problem, the impact on staff themselves is also important. As secure work advocate Karina Luzia told an NTEU forum at the Australian National University in 2018:

> "The real issue is the way we are employed. The lack of income security, the second-class status of the academics and professionals who are employed this way, and all that comes with casual employment in the academy... It's about having no sick leave, no annual leave, no carer's leave, no bereavement leave, but also no offices, no desks, no computers, no access to kitchens, staff rooms, stationery, no secure storage, no career progression, no pathways, no promotion, no payment for consulting hours with students, no research allocation, nor funding, nor eligibility, no real flexibility or choice in teaching hours. And so on, that's the issue." (Luzia 2018)

Luzia sums up most of the industrial dimensions of casually employed staff, but the personal impact goes beyond this. Countless anecdotes exist of harrowing personal stories of casualisation. Consider the casually employed woman who was forced to return to work eight days after giving birth, contending with the choice between a lack of income and feelings of abandoning a newborn child (Clohesy 2018). Or the cancer survivor – forced to make the difficult choice between resting and looking after their health, or returning to work one week after a mastectomy to avoid further financial hardship (Barnes 2019). Consider the impact on people like 'John', who had been a casual academic for 15 years since finishing his PhD. When no offer of work came through the next semester, John saw no option but to take his own life (Morgan 2016).

Yet the bureaucracy of Australia's universities would prefer a different story to be told. Wardale, Richardson and Suseno's (2019) recent piece highlighted that many academics 'enjoy the flexibility of working across other institutions'. They also 'enjoy the flexibility of not having to fulfil service requirements such as attending meetings and annual performance reviews'. These arguments need to be seen for what they are – attempts to whitewash the experience of casual academics and the effect of casualisation on the academy. The University of Sydney Casuals Network responded directly to this common characterisation of casualisation with a memorable yoga-themed 2013 campaign – 'Flexibility – more than bending over backwards' (Thomson 2016).

University management is also aided in its task by industry lobby groups, such as Universities Australia (UA) and the Australian Higher Education Industrial Association (AHEIA). In 2014 then UA Chief Executive Belinda Robinson, now Vice-President University Relations and Strategy at the University of Canberra, claimed that: 'casualisation suits a lot of people who take a portfolio approach to their career; they mix and match academic work with work in industry, consulting and so on' (Lane and Hare 2014).

AHEIA is not widely known outside of university management and trade union circles, but where it has exercised influence, this has been to the detriment of casually employed university staff. AHEIA's 2017 Annual Report, for example, lauded the termination of the Murdoch University Enterprise Agreement (EA) as 'a ground-breaking achievement'. It also trumpeted its own success in representing its members (which are universities) at the Fair Work Commission, in reviewing the higher education award, which sets minimum wages and conditions for the sector. AHEIA claims their intervention led the Fair Work Commission to:

> "... reject union claims to vary the Higher Education General Staff Award to "deem"

> casual staff to be ongoing after 6 months' continuous service, and to increase the minimum engagement period for casual staff." (AHEIA 2017, pp. 5-7)

The argument that it is university staff that prefer casualisation is a fig leaf. Research by May, Peetz and Strachan (2013, p. 264) demonstrates that only 12 percent of casual academic staff are 'casual by 'choice' – would like to be in casual/sessional position in 5 years' time (but not retiring)'. A further 7 percent are retired (or would like to be within 5 years), meaning that payment for work performed on a casual basis supplements a pension or superannuation. The clear majority aspire to an academic career (May, Peetz, and Strachan 2013).

While universities may think that the mass casualisation of our sector is here to stay, there is resistance within the academy. The NTEU recently established a National Tertiary Casuals Committee (NTCC) which seeks to elevate the voices of casually employed members within the union, and give them a central voice in determining policy (Townsend et al. 2018). Nic Kimberley, a casually employed member, recently became President of the NTEU Victorian Division which marks the first time casually employed staff have been represented at such a level (Kimberley 2018).

Initiatives such as the launch of a 'Best Practice' guide for employing casual academics, and a protest outside the 2019 Universities Australia conference, demonstrate that more securely employed staff are recognising the problems of mass casualisation and are willing to stand in solidarity with casually employed staff to challenge it (Townsend et. al. 2018; Clohesy 2019). There is an increasing realisation that casualisation represents a threat, not just to traditional forms of employment, but to concepts such as academic freedom and academic integrity (see for example, Clifton 2018). The message is also beginning to cut through politically. The Australian Greens, for example, highlight the need to provide 'pathways to permanent work' while committing to 'winding back the casualisation of the sector' (Australian Greens 2019). Even more recently, the Australian Labor Party has announced policies which would have created pathways to secure work for casually employed workers if implemented (Shorten 2019). While the Coalition's recent electoral victory means we can only speculate on how these changes might have applied to casually employed academics, Labor's engagement with the issue represents welcome progress in recognising the impact of casualisation.

The academic community does not have to accept the casualised university. Universities and the broader public should actively strive to change the situation the academy now finds itself in. The challenges are clear. Uncertainty about government funding and the resultant imperative to cut costs has brought about this phenomenon. Change will take continued advocacy from unions and interested political groups, a willingness to change from university managements, and increased funding from governments. While this change will not necessarily be immediate, we must progress toward it nonetheless. Universities must reject the mass casualisation of our sector for the sake of students, staff and the broader society the university serves.

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"At what point is the university *not* worth defending?"

An interview with ROSIE JOY BARRON about precarity and worker organising with AMBER KARANIKOLAS.

Hi Rosie, please tell us about yourself and what your current research is about?

I'm Rosie, I'm 27 and my pronouns are she/her. I'm a settler living on Wurundjeri Country, land of the Kulin Nations, and I grew up on the Central Coast, Darkinjung Country. I'm currently doing a PhD in Education at the University of Melbourne.

My research is about worker activism in relation to the idea of 'precarity'. The term 'precarious work' has become widely used in recent years, and it has taken on a few different meanings. In popular discourse, it usually refers to non-standard work – that is, casualised, contract-based, criminalised, or legally ambiguous work, for example. Attention to precarious work on part of scholars, unions, and policymakers has grown as it has become more common due to changes to labor laws, increasing casualisation, and cuts to welfare, among other factors.

There are big debates in labor studies in terms of what 'precarity' means in labor organising and for activism more generally, with which my research engages. My work explores worker activism and education in Australia in recent decades, with a focus on two groups of workers who are deemed 'precarious' for very different reasons: untenured academics and sex workers. This will involve examining the different organisational forms these workers use to build movements, and how they engage in education within and beyond the workplace, both between peers and that which is directed to broader publics.

How is 'precarity' currently talked about in popular discourse?

In popular usage, for example, what you might find in newspapers or union documents, it is often used to denote casualised or contract-based work, as opposed to full-time, ongoing work. It also seems to be used as a synonym for informal work, which makes sense given that the popularity of this term has grown alongside the increasing visibility of phenomena such as the 'gig economy' or piece-work.

I see value in this usage, particularly in terms of the potential for building solidarity by connecting workers' movements with other social struggles. I think Guy Standing's (2011) notion of 'the precariat', which has significantly influenced how the term has been taken up both within and beyond academia, tries to pursue this potential. However, as others have suggested (see Paret, 2016), using the term in such a broad way as Standing does can fail to grapple with profound differences between precarious workers, especially where precarity is also the product of intersecting forms of structural violence such as criminalisation and border policing. This is a constant tension in my own work, and I think a worthy one to struggle with.

The term 'precarity' has a really interesting genealogy, which I am still learning about. Casas-Cortés (2014) traces this since its growing usage in Europe in the 1980s, since which time it has been mobilised in social movements that grapple with questions of production, reproduction, and citizenship in different ways. A more recent example of this tradition can be seen in the work of the feminist collective Precarias a la Deriva (in English, Precarious Women Adrift), which was established after the general strike in Spain in 2002 (see Precarias a la Deriva, 2006).

I feel like as a word it kind of 'nods' to particular literature or understandings, but in terms of what people mean, it's actually bit amorphous …

Totally. As I said, I do think there can be political potential in that kind of generalised conception, and I like how it leaves space for interpretation and experimentation. But I find it problematic in that it can dehistoricise the term and depoliticise the way it has been built up within particular anti-capitalist struggles in particular times and places.

What made you interested in this particular area or topic – worker organising for these two groups?

I've long been interested in worker organising, especially in terms of the relationships between workers' movements and other social movements. I have been personally involved in worker activism within the union movement and outside of it, and this has definitely informed my interest in debates around 'precarious work' – in particular, the role and remit of unions in changing conditions, and changing ideas of what 'work' and 'activism' mean. It's my hope that considering activism and education in university worker organising and the sex worker rights movement, both independently and relationally, can enable speaking to these and other

questions in a useful way. As a worker, I also feel strongly about preserving the memory of our activism, and there is a historical aspect to this research for that reason.

How did you first get into studying education and how did you get into educational research?

I didn't really plan on doing educational research and during my undergrad I was more interested in doing further research in literature, if I did it at all. But toward the end of my degree I met some people who were doing further studies in education, or planning to. I had also started engaging more closely with areas of education research I hadn't had much exposure to, but which I ended up loving, such as sociology of education and philosophy of education. After I graduated I started doing research assistant work in a school of education, and eventually enrolled in a research masters at Melbourne.

How did being first generation in your family affect your experiences at university?

When I did research assistant work, a lot of projects were related to reforms intended to 'widen participation' to higher education for 'non-traditional' and 'first in family' students. The policy discourse at the time was very much focused on low-SES [socio-economic status] students. Funded programs and initiatives were targeted to low-SES students, as well as other 'equity groups', but in terms of the policy discourse and the stuff I encountered in my work, there was strong emphasis on low SES students.

I feel like when we were in high school [Amber and Rosie attended a government high school in a 'low-SES' area], going to university was mythologised as out of reach, or only accessible in particular ways, for particular students. But, at the same time, this 'widening participation' discourse was gaining momentum when we graduated, and we were the direct beneficiaries of related policy measures such as the uncapping of Commonwealth Supported Places (CPSs) and bonus point schemes. For me, this did make university seem like more of a real possibility than it might have if we'd graduated a few years earlier. It was strange to later find myself working in a university, focusing on a reform agenda without which I might not have gone to university in the first place.

To be clear though, unlike many beneficiaries of this policy agenda, I was not the first in my family to go to university. I was first generation, but my older brother and sister had completed teaching degrees by the time I started one. I am the first in my family to do higher research and I'm lucky that my family is really supportive, if perhaps confused as to why I did not teach, especially when I did not have a scholarship and had very inconsistent work. It can be hard to have conversations with them about my research, although they do try and I try with them.

How does your research approach the role of the university today, or higher education? One thing that comes up for me – while listening to you – is about who is and isn't seen to be in the physical space of the university – in the popular, or common, imagination.

So, at the moment I am thinking about this in two ways – firstly, in relation to how workers are organising industrially and what they are organising around, and secondly, in relation to a more political, normative question, which is about what the university is for, and what activism in higher education can be for.

Industrial organising of course shifts in line with changes in the material conditions of work, social attitudes about work and particular forms of work, and the composition of the workforce. There is a strong and continuing tradition of trade unionism in higher education in (so-called) Australia, yet the membership and priorities of labour organising in our sector has changed markedly in a relatively short time period. As O'Brien (2015) documents, the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) is a relatively young union, resulting from an amalgamation of unions covering different university workers with distinct needs and class interests. Further complicating this is the increasing dominance of precarious labour.

This relates to our earlier discussion about 'widening participation', in that precarious workers are more likely to be women, people of colour, LGBTQIA+ people, etc. I think because academia is commonly associated with privilege – and of course universities are privileged spaces, particularly Group of Eight universities – there's been some necessary unlearning in terms of who higher education workers are, what their needs are, and how union structures need to change in response to that. I see centering untenured academics as one approach to exploring the ways in which the organising logics and practices that have been developed can meet some needs more than others. However, it can also show how workers have organised to shift union priorities, both in relation to their own industrial conditions and broader struggles. Examples of this can be seen in the activities of casuals' networks within and across NTEU branches over the past few years.

Of course, for many academics, political work goes beyond their own industrial conditions – this is not new. Many people get into academia in the first place because they see the academy as an avenue for intervening in particular social issues or advancing the interests of marginalised communities of which they may themselves be a member. There is an ongoing tradition of academics using the platform and resources accessible through the university, both material and immaterial, to contribute to political struggle, as exemplified by decolonising perspectives on education (see Smith, Tuck, & Yang, 2019). Although the capacity to enact such a politics is clearly strained by the present conditions of academic labour (see Pereira, 2016), there remains continued investment in the radical potential of research – it's certainly something I hold on to, sometimes uncomfortably.

I spend a lot of time thinking about the naïve and romantic, but not at all uncommon ideas about university that I once had and for many outside the university, this is still the image we have of it. It's quite different to the world you are researching.

I think that realisation is really painful for a lot of people too. I've had this recurrent thought since my undergraduate studies: in light of casualisation and its effects, commercialisation and privatisation, the complicity of the university in awful things, etc. – at what point is the university not worth defending?

Clearly, I wouldn't be enrolled if I didn't think that there were things that are worth defending or reviving, or changes that are worth fighting for. I have great admiration for the activist-oriented research I described, as well as the transformative potential of education, whether it takes place in the classroom, lecture theatre, or picket line. But it is hard to hold onto this, harder still to consider what I might be willing to comprise on in order to remain in these spaces and continue these kinds of work.

I'm in a very early stage in my career, and I do talk about this with friends and colleagues at different stages of their careers, including those who are at a much later stage. I can't imagine how difficult it is to watch these changes unfold in the long term – to see what it has meant for their legacy and what it might mean for our future. I'm very grateful to those who keep up the fight for those who are starting out, just as I'm sure they are grateful to those who strive to sustain it.

Is there anything else you want to add?

I'd probably just like to add a caveat to an earlier point I made. I think the strongest mobilisations of precarity are those that make these connections across workers' struggles, because I think that can help us to recognise our shared interests and, in turn, harness the different forms of power available to us.

While this potential certainly influences my own interest in focusing on two very different groups of workers – untenured academics and sex workers – there's a need for caution with respect to the generalising tendency I highlighted earlier. I think there is a risk of falling into a comparative mode, which can give rise to false equivalences, or points of connection that may be forced or inappropriate. I'm most inspired by analyses that grapple with the tensions of solidarity without assuming or forcing commensurability, and which privilege the view from the margins. That's the hope and goal for my own research.

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How Heterodox Academy creates a safe space for bad ideas

CAITLIN SETNICAR

In March of 2019, during a rally, Donald Trump threatened to execute an executive order requiring "colleges and universities to support free speech if they want federal research funds" (Shepardson & Johnson 2018). The details are foggy on exactly what this order would require of universities, as with many other policies that Trump has come up with on the fly. Regardless, it echoes a large contingency of voices that raise concerns about whether academic freedom is threatened by disciplinary orthodoxy, social justice movements, and identity politics at universities. These critics, who range from conservative to liberal, suggest that a left-wing political homogenisation amongst university faculty is a threat to the freedom of inquiry which should form the basis of the university.

One such organisation that concerns itself with political bias in academia is Heterodox Academy. Heterodox Academy (or HXA) is an organisation formed by social psychologist Dr Jonathan Haidt in 2015. It advocates for a greater diversity of viewpoints within universities. The website publishes a blog and podcast on the topic of free speech on university campuses and the political bias that Haidt accuses 'moral tribes' of bringing about. On its website, HXA summarises the problem that it seeks to respond to:

> "The surest sign of an unhealthy scholarly culture is the presence of orthodoxy. Orthodoxies are most readily apparent when people fear shame, ostracism, or any other form of social or professional retaliation for questioning or challenging a commonly held idea" (Heterodox Academy 2019b).

Those who are familiar with the debate around political diversity in academia will be able to immediately infer that HXA is suggesting that it is right-wing viewpoints which face undue discrimination and rejection. HXA positions itself as an apolitical organisation with members from across the political spectrum, although the polling statistics that they proudly provide show a large bias toward conservative, centrist and libertarian positions (Heterodox Academy 2019a). Despite HXA's claim of non-partisanship, their agenda aligns much more closely with conservative interests.

It is not necessarily evident that the left-wing bias that HXA claims to be ubiquitous is real, or that it is a problem for academic freedom, or that it is caused by the moral tribalism that Haidt suggests. Some commentators have pointed out flaws in the statistical analysis used by HXA to support their claims, arguing that a small number of outlying cases of right-leaning academics facing hostility are being used to create a moral panic (Beauchamp 2018; Sachs 2018) and that counter-examples of left-leaning academics being disciplined also exist (Richardson 2018). Of course, such arguments assume that quantitative methodology is appropriate for establishing such a problem in the first place. With each case of alleged discrimination against right-leaning academics and their ideas taking place in different institutional contexts, lumping all cases together as a single number does not capture the nuances and causes of each case.

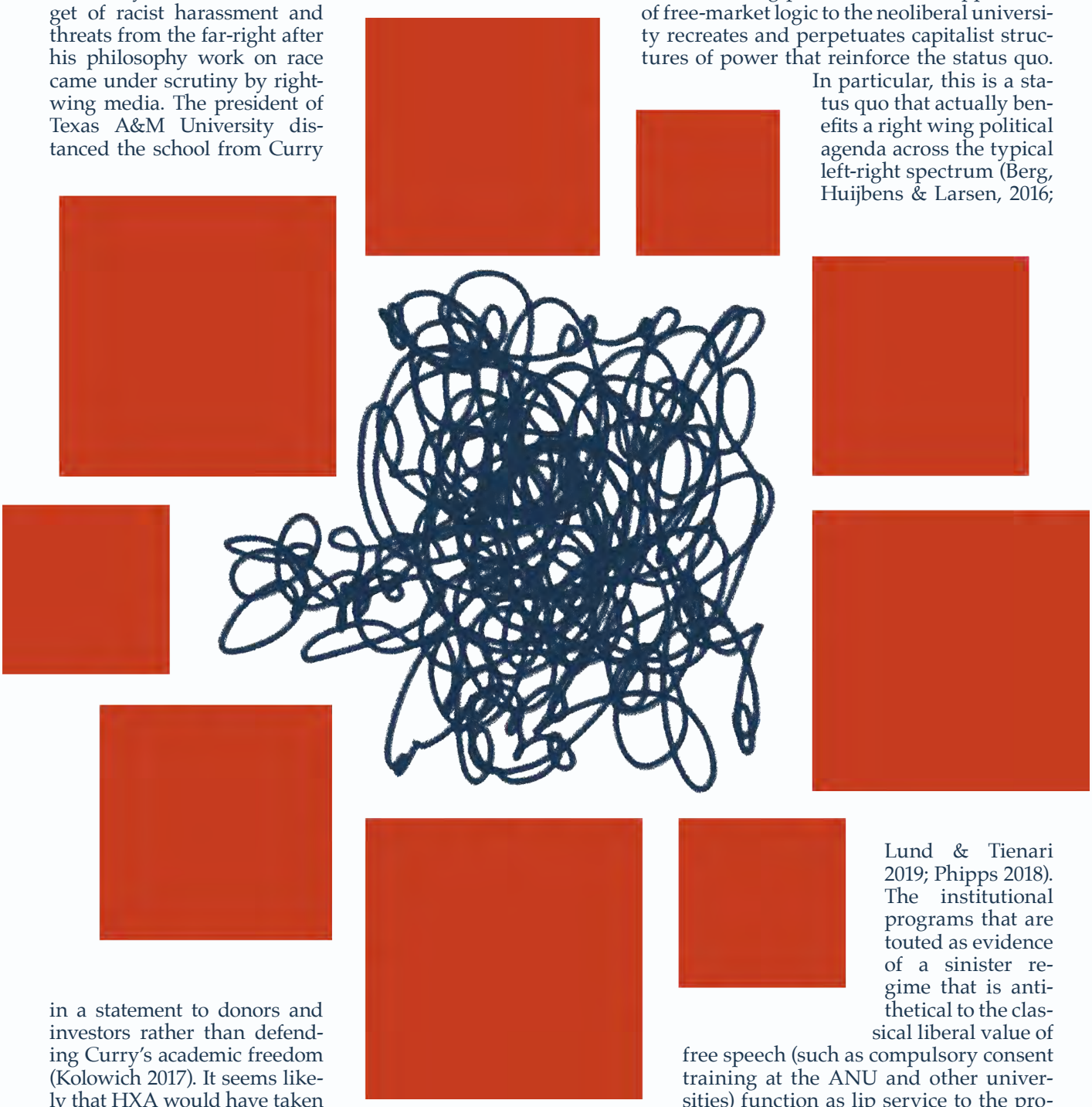
Even if HXA's claims of left-wing bias are to be taken at face-value, the viewpoint diversity that HXA advocates for is a deeply flawed idea with potentially bad consequences. HXA is making the same error that media organisations make when they invite equal numbers of both climate scientists and climate change deniers onto a panel in order to create an ostensibly good-faith balance in the discussion; one side is backed by rigorous research which represents the vast majority of people in their field, the other is a fringe idea backed by moneyed interests. When the two ideas are presented as being two equal sides with roughly equal merit, it does a disservice to observers by creating the illusion of political balance. In reality, the debate would be skewed towards the climate change deniers by their relative over-representation and by granting them legitimacy.

Likewise, HXA's advocacy for greater viewpoint diversity works under the faulty belief that widely accepted conclusions in academic fields are generally left-wing constructs and conservative criticisms are barred from debate because of left-wing ideological tyranny. According to HXA logic, it is a duty of those who believe in freedom of inquiry to foster an environment in which ideas that are usually taboo in leftist academic spaces can be raised freely. But 'teaching both sides', to borrow from creationist/intelligent design lingo, gives the false impression that both sides of a debate are of equal merit, when the reality may be that one side is maligned for good reason.

It is telling that many articles featured on the website bring up Charles Murray, the author of the infamous Bell Curve, often without reference to the

[1] Three examples include: 'HXA Open Mind Award Winners: Robert P. George and Cornel West', June 1 2018, 'Wellesley Commission for Ethnicity, Race and Equity', 27 March, 2017 and 'Free Speech Won, But ...', March 18, 2016.

actual controversy and implications surrounding his work.[1] HXA enthusiastically defends those who peddle ideas that pose a genuine danger to the politically vulnerable, and in turn, to condemn those that seek to have those views silenced. This is at the same time that they remain silent on counter-examples like that of Tommy J Curry, a black professor from Texas A&M University who was the target of racist harassment and threats from the far-right after his philosophy work on race came under scrutiny by right-wing media. The president of Texas A&M University distanced the school from Curry in a statement to donors and investors rather than defending Curry's academic freedom (Kolowich 2017). It seems likely that HXA would have taken up Curry's case had he been a conservative, but perhaps it veers too far away from the narrative they purport.



Apart from the bad implications of the HXA mindset, university academics by no means find themselves in the left-wing paradises that this discourse would have you believe. There are a number of ways in which university institutions actually function to uphold a social order which is to the benefit of conservative interests. Heterodox Academy does not voice any concern for these well-documented issues, though they are a pre-veminent concern for academics, especially ones early in their careers, and they have implications for the kind of research that is able to be funded.

The increasing privatisation and application of free-market logic to the neoliberal university recreates and perpetuates capitalist structures of power that reinforce the status quo. In particular, this is a status quo that actually benefits a right wing political agenda across the typical left-right spectrum (Berg, Huijbens & Larsen, 2016; Lund & Tienari 2019; Phipps 2018). The institutional programs that are touted as evidence of a sinister regime that is antithetical to the classical liberal value of free speech (such as compulsory consent training at the ANU and other universities) function as lip service to the progressive demands of students and staff without having to challenge the neoliberal structure (Wilson, Marks, Noone et. al. 2010). Despite institutionally enforced changes and progress, universities remain a place in which hierarchical divides are maintained and widened.

Universities are one of the keys sites in which intergenerational wealth and privilege is passed

down, to the exclusion of those who are not blessed from birth with the social and material resources necessary to make it into, and succeed in, university. It is where kids are sent by rich parents to learn to embody a middle class or upper class disposition (or habitus), and where they learn how to continue to gain material wealth (Bourdieu 1984; Bufton 2003). There may be some cases of conservative academics who do not feel free to express their opinions, but there are many, many more academics who are limited in their ability to freely research what they choose by the precarity of their casual positions, devoid of stability or benefits, which have been brought about by the ongoing privatisation and neoliberalisation of the university (Brown, Goodman & Yasukawa 2010; Kehinde 2017).

The HXA website touches briefly on issues of ensuring that research appeals to and shows responsibility towards donors and other sources of funding, but it fails to acknowledge that this funding model typically benefits a neoliberal corporate agenda rather than a left-wing one. These neoliberal market models, when applied to academia, pose a severe limit to what an academic can actually choose to research (Lynch & Ivancheva 2015). This is a much greater threat to free inquiry and viewpoint diversity than moral tribes that form orthodoxies. What is the point in fostering viewpoint diversity if that diversity still exists within the suffocating limits of marketised academia?

Besides, it's not as if there are no existing efforts within academia to challenge academic orthodoxies. Efforts to decolonise disciplines and methodologies work to re-centre the production of knowledge away from tacitly accepted approaches which arose from Western epistemologies. Being limited to Western-viewpoint-centric research approaches is a kind of orthodoxy that is limiting to the kinds of questions and answers that can come about in academic research, and such limitations have played a complicit role throughout the ongoing history of colonialism. Instead, decolonised research methods centre Indigenous epistemologies (Smith 2005; Smith 2012).

One example of an effort to decolonise a discipline is a de-canonised syllabus for first year anthropology courses published on Footnotesblog.com, in which typically 'canonised' texts are substituted for works in which Indigenous voices and perspectives are treated as integral (Buell, Burns, Chen, et. al. 2019). This project is a rebellion against academic orthodoxy in its most basic form. Although decolonisation efforts in academia have the power to transform the knowledge that is generated by challenging academic orthodoxies, HXA would be unlikely to find these efforts constructive to their cause because the orthodoxy that is being challenged by Indigenous epistemologies is not crossing between the traditionally defined political lines of left/right. Instead, they serve what HXA would see as leftist identity politics. (As an aside, perhaps an organisation that uncritically espouses the term 'tribalism' to refer to a primitive and irrational form of social organisation could do with a dose of postcolonial thought.)

The kind of moral panic that HXA promotes has real consequences. Our institution came frighteningly close to becoming a safe space for the HXA paradigm when the Ramsay Centre's Western civilisation degree almost found a foothold at the ANU. The degree was directly positioned as an attempt to counter the alleged prevailing ambivalence towards so-called Western history, canon, and culture in university education. This is exactly the kind of orthodoxy-challenging effort that HXA espouses as being necessary for the future of free inquiry in universities. The Ramsay Centre website actually states that they support HXA, making the link between the two explicit (The Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation 2018). Critics of the Ramsay Centre and the Western Civilisation degree know all too well that it is not a project oriented towards open debate between multiple perspectives, but rather a propaganda mission with all the dog-whistling vernacular of the anti-multicultural, colonial-apologist right. Tony Abbott, who serves as a Ramsay Centre board member, stated in an op-ed in Quadrant that "the key to understanding the Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation is that it's not merely about Western civilisation but in favour of it" (Abbott 2018). Apparently, viewpoint diversity is compatible with brazenly teaching a particular ideology, so long as that ideology is controversial by a majority of scholars. The Ramsay Centre is a tangible example of how something presented as an attempt to fix a political bias can actually privilege the right.

The Western Civilisation degree was ironically (for HXA) rejected at ANU when the university administration was unhappy with the amount of oversight that the Ramsay Centre would have over staffing and coursework decisions. The Ramsay Centre would have reportedly had the discretion to 'sit-in' on classes, implying that they could check on whether lecturers and tutors were being suitably celebratory of the West (Manne 2018). How heterodoxical.

Though the spectre of viewpoint diversity, regardless of a viewpoint's merit, has been kept at bay at ANU for now, the first cohort of Western Civilisation degree students are due to commence study at the University of Wollongong in 2020. HXA, as well as the entire discourse surrounding left-wing bias in academia, continues to be a real encroaching threat to free inquiry. Trump's executive order is only one recent manifestation.

The reality of what HXA wants, taken to its logical conclusion, is a university faculty in which feminist theorists are given equal weight to those who would claim that women are biologically inferior; an academic journal where postcolonial scholarship is presented alongside defences of colonialism; a degree where a student can learn about cultural relativism in one semester and a course that presupposes the superiority of the West the next. HXA would fail to see the problem here. After all, if an idea is bad, would it not simply lose its value in the free marketplace of ideas? Some HXA proponents might see this characterisation as uncharitable, but I suspect that many more will genuinely see this vision of the future as a positive heterodoxical conclusion. This is precisely the problem.

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Inconvenient Questions from a Casual Academic

ANONYMOUS

How can I ever tell you what this is really like?

How do I explain the will necessary to get up each day, to go and work somewhere that I know doesn't value me?

How do I explain the impact that those bemused looks have when I encounter yet another obligatory bureaucratic process that doesn't account for my existence?

How do I explain the pit in my stomach as I go to a meeting with someone who just last week sent me a very polite email explaining why I didn't count and why I didn't deserve to be supported? How I, nonetheless, go and fight and demand my right to exist, and how much that takes from me?

How do I explain that when a colleague is actually kind to me, I go back to my office to cry, because I'm so unused to it at this point? Because having someone validate the painful feelings I try to suppress brings them bubbling back up to the surface.

How do I explain how distressing it is to 'out' myself to students each semester, so that they know that their evaluations of my teaching will affect my ability to pay rent next semester?

How do I explain the depression I sink into at the end of every semester as my working world, what sometimes feels like my whole world, collapses?

How do I explain how painful it is when well-meaning friends and colleagues tell me I'm doing all the right things and they're sure something will come through soon? If I'm doing all the right things, how is it still not enough? And they can't possibly know things will turn out well for me. But I should thank them for meaningless platitudes, because I know they're trying to help?

How do I explain the frustration when every member of my college and university executive expresses sympathy, but nothing more? As though they can't effect change. As though I'm an inconvenient symptom of a problem they would rather ignore.

How do I explain that another six months' worth of work might sound like a good thing, but that it traps me in a perpetual cycle? But then how do I explain that I'm too scared to make another choice and abandon my academic dreams?

I don't know how to deal with this. I am not someone who fights the system. I have great colleagues and dear friends who shake things up in necessary and important ways, who seek to undermine and fundamentally restructure the system. That's not my model. I work within systems to try and effect change. But this system doesn't even want to acknowledge my existence. I'm not sure my model will work.

But in some ways I'm one of the lucky ones. I have an office to use (and sometimes cry in). I've had enough work to pay my bills and no one else I financially support. I have (some) colleagues who help to amplify my work and my voice when I don't feel able to, who have slowly grown to understand how small this system makes me feel.

But being treated like a peer, like a colleague, being treated as a whole human being, should not be the notable exception. I don't know if the system will ever improve, but I hope that as people we can do better by one another.

Location Location Location

ANNE ELVEY

A shifting margin
pivots on desire
to assimilate under
the purview of theorists
who say *the goodies are for the earning*. Publishing
is your real estate.

Texts incise –
a colleague says
efface – bodies
matter too I say
though a text is
a gulp drawn
to signal this

shift of white
curve like anime
in the fold of a creek
still and alert
brighter than blooms
of tea tree near
the bridge from whence

determined pace
marks out what
comes – becomes
gust gale
squall hands
pocketed tongue
tied on cliché –

plastic flurries
each day assume
their currents – paths
of shimmer and smog
(this load of lift)
marled parchment
in colonial clench.

Destroying the Walls and the Doors

BIANCA HENNESSY

"When some day we enter the university - that is to say, when we occupy and decolonize it - we will not merely open the doors and redecorate the walls. We will destroy both so that we may all fit in."

– Boaventura de Sousa Santos

Many academics – especially those who remember the state of things before the neoliberal reforms of the late 1980s – lament the state of today's Australian public university and with good reason. Job security is a distant dream for anyone entering the labour market right now, researchers are valued for the quantity of their output before their teaching, service or community-building efforts, and decision-making processes range from opaque to maddening, even for those with relative power.

Contrary to some, however, I don't think that restoring the governance structures and financial conditions of pre-neoliberal (and perhaps, more truly public) universities represents the answer to our woes. This is not to say that the current status quo is not rife with problems. However, critique that offers the past as a foil to illuminate the ills of the present does not do enough: we need to be honest about what that past entailed to be able to imagine something much better than it.

My own area of research and teaching, Pacific Studies, found an institutional home at my university, the Australian National University, because bureaucrats in Canberra needed to better manage the Australian colony in Papua New Guinea. Area studies academics working in post-war ANU had (in some respects) more professional and intellectual freedom, but they were inevitably tied to the service of a colonial administration (for funding) or the legacies of their own disciplines (for academic credence), or often both. In 2019, those basic needs – funding and credence (or, the capacity to research and the authorisation that you deserve to hold the sacrosanct position of expert) remain, but they are satisfied on rather different terms.

The neoliberal critique of the university goes something like this: today, academics are highly atomised workers, whose labour is less valuable than it used to be. This results in a normalising of casualisation (Kniest 2018), research funding that tends to favour outcome-oriented work, a researcher's value measured in quantity of output (and their teaching skills not really valued much at all), and education valued as a commodity, rather than a public good. As evidence of the corporatisation of universities, proponents of this critique point to the explosion of professional staff employment at universities since the late 1980s, particularly at levels alongside or above most academics: so, professional staff in decision-making positions, rather than support positions. If universities need to run as businesses, they argue, then the 'professoriat' is inevitably replaced by a 'manageriat' – and in so doing, power is taken from those academic knowledge producers.

Let me be clear: I agree with most aspects of this critique. For as long as universities are institutions that primarily serve the whims of research and education markets, they will be imbued with all of the inequalities that capitalism furthers. But I want us to question whether the power structure at the heart of the professoriat was ever fair to begin with.

Imagining a restoration of pre-neoliberal structures and culture serves only to re-affirm who was at the top of the food chain in those hierarchies: almost all white people, almost all of them men. Sure, there was a time when universities more purely realised the ideals of knowledge for public good, critique for conscience's sake and reverence for public intellectuals. But that knowledge was colonial, that conscience was white, and those public intellectuals? Mostly white men. White women rarely succeeded and people of colour drastically less so.

These were times when academic careers were founded on research made possible through unfettered access to Indigenous lands and knowledges via structures of imperial domination. It is no coincidence that entire disciplines and area studies fields are built on the assumption that some people (in the west, the global north or the metropole, however you like to phrase it) should be experts on others. That kind of expertise can only arise and be legitimated through a kind of social contract where we believe that some people are different enough to be 'others', and that conventions of academic knowledge production affords some people the authority to know something about these others that they don't already know themselves.

The university-based research industry survives on the premise that with enough arduous training, some people should be able to create knowledge that is verified, legitimised and trusted. Certainly, this has some merit, and as a PhD student I'm personally investing in that training and legitimisation, so I must believe in it. But I also think that if we are to truly reconcile with the power inequalities that have infected Australian universities, we need to confront the question of why we claim the right to know on behalf of others. This is especially true if you study other humans - what gives you the right to know something about another person's life and experience more than they know it? If the answer has something to do with deep training in a discipline that is designed to further esoteric theoretical debates between groups of people already historically associated with power, we have a problem.

There has been a lot of conversation in Australia recently about how we can best tackle the scourge of white supremacy. We have an enormous task ahead of us in this regard, so it's reasonable to begin with the most visible iceberg tip, that being overt expressions of racism and Islamophobic dog whistling on behalf of our elected officials. But if we don't name and dismantle unequal power relations on racial terms everywhere that they occur, we'll never fix these issues. Universities, largely autonomous in how they run and filled to the brim with people who are trained in thinking through complex problems, should be leaders in this regard.

It might seem like a stretch to link the inequalities of knowledge production with the structural and cultural problems of the university - after all, knowledge production fuels us, while neoliberal structures are almost always obstacles to more fully enacting those productive capacities. In this regard, I've learned a lot from observing the scandal that has engulfed many in Anthropology surrounding the journal HAU, in which a culture of exploiting precarious scholars' labour and Indigenous peoples' knowledges enabled an editor to conduct a reign of terror in the workplace (West 2018). Indigenous anthropologists have consummately argued (Todd 2018) that these cultures of workplace exploitation are deeply and indelibly linked to the very foundations of their discipline, in which Indigenous knowledges, lands and lives are a currency with which celebrated careers are purchased. This is a direct, causal relationship, not a metaphor. So, it follows that if we begin to reckon with unequal power that creates knowledge hierarchies, systems of knowers and known, then we need to more boldly address how these are codified and eventually calcified in our institutions. A critique of the neoliberal proclivities of the contemporary university that does not centre racial, gendered and class-based analyses is therefore fatally impoverished.

This is also a call to rethink the internal hierarchies that enable an idea like 'the professoriat'. Recently I spent some time teaching an undergraduate class and found, to twinned surprise and delight, that students were initiating the kinds of conversations that I crave in more rarefied academic spaces. The political awareness of Generation Z is something that genuinely awes me and their readiness to have difficult conversations compels me to do the same. In seminars and papers about what's wrong with universities, they're dismissed as utilitarian consumers, choosing coursework offerings based on employment opportunities alone. The fact that there is a divergence between how young people are characterised in criticisms of them as actors in a market and how they so often act when actually interacted with makes me think that there is a problem with how we conduct those critiques. If undergraduates are always spoken about, but never spoken with, we're simply replicating the same prosaic, brittle and stratified structures that disempower progressive forces in universities in the first place.

If we remove the class-based, gendered and racial privileges that enshroud our illusions of academic meritocracy, we're left with something quite starkly different to what we have today, but also different to what we had in the past. Singularly critiquing governance and economic functions of neoliberal universities is to acquiesce to the hegemony of these functions. We need a critique that also takes whiteness, colonialism and patriarchy into account.

We're a community of people who have skills and resources at hand for the complex task of illuminating the tangled and opaque structures that shape our lives. I'm simply asking that we apply those analytical and critical skills to ourselves in a braver way and imagine that the result of such a deep analysis might be aiming towards a much more radical redistribution of power. We can do so much better than to yearn for a return to the past. What I'm asking is for some of us who hold knowledge production power to relinquish it a little, to begin to chip away at some of the hierarchies we sanctify so much. What if we recognised that knowledge production is not the duty only of those presiding over the very top floor of the ivory tower, but the work of everyone? In those brave imaginings, perhaps, we might find a much more inclusive and fundamentally fair future.

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Death by a thousand cuts: Australia, the arts, and the modern university

ROSALIND MORAN

I find it fascinating how in the short time since I graduated from my university's Diploma of Languages in 2016 and its PhB Bachelor of Philosophy (Arts) in 2017, both programs have been scrapped.

Yet while I was somewhat shocked to hear the news, I can't say I was surprised. Australia is perhaps dubiously unique in the pride it takes in undercutting arts and the humanities within its own culture and society.

The university I attended – the Australian National University – is recognised for its academic excellence both nationally and internationally, and I am grateful for the time I spent there. It's Australia's top-ranked university; and, while this achievement is due in no small part to postgraduate research, the ANU offers good opportunities for undergraduates. These include ready access to leading academics, generally smaller class sizes than those at other major universities, and a wide range of courses, particularly within the College of Asia and the Pacific.

I was delighted to be accepted into the ANU. The PhB Bachelor of Philosophy (Arts) program, with its high entry score and underpinnings of prestige, enabled me to essentially study an arts degree without being socially shamed for it or pestered about why I didn't study law. Moreover, the fact the degree existed – along with its aim of developing high-achieving arts students into future researchers – led me to believe arts and the humanities might be held in higher regard at university than in wider Australian society. At the very least, they would surely be less denigrated.

I was wrong.

Over the course of my degree, despite enjoying my classes, learning from engaged academics, and growing both intellectually and emotionally, I never felt the fields I studied were especially valued by the broader university. Around 2013, for example – my first year – nearly half the teaching positions at the School of Music were axed at approximately the same time a state-of-the-art chemistry building was constructed near the heart of campus. As I quipped at the time: "But if you're really strapped for cash / Then why's that Chemistry place so flash?"

Flippant? Yes. Valid? Also yes. At some point, the reputation of the ANU Music program was weighed against that of its chemistry facilities, and there's no prize for guessing who drew the short sitar.

Granted, I'm not privy to the decision-making process regarding funding which goes on behind the scenes at universities. That said, however, I know a trend when I see one. The ANU Arts Centre, in which I performed in a play in my second year, was demolished by my fifth. My first semester of Portuguese involved Skyping our teacher each class, because she lived in Bloomington, Indiana. The A.D. Hope Building where I studied English Honours was full of cramped, windowless tutorial rooms which sometimes lacked furniture. I later learnt this was a situation far removed from that of other Honours cohorts: in the Fenner School of Environment & Society, for example, each Honours student has their own desk and a key to the cohort study room and communal space, set aside just for them.

Yet despite this catalogue of old gripes, I'm not here to sink my fangs into the breast of my alma mater (translatable from Latin as 'nursing mother', in case you were wondering). I loved my time at the ANU, and no amount of missing furniture could have changed that.

But if there is one thing I cannot stand, it is the hypocritic denigration of arts and the humanities in wider Australian society – denigration both reflected in and propagated by the modern university.

In Australia, cuts to arts and the humanities – whether they be funding cuts or cutting remarks – have long been common and normalised. Funding-wise, this is evidenced by cases like the ANU's Diploma of Languages being first to go when the university needed to tighten its belt. Never mind that the university had long prided itself (and still does) on its language programs. There was also the time in 2018 when former education minister Simon Birmingham blocked $1.4 million in arts research which had already been approved by the Australian Research Council, because his gut told him the project proposals lacked national benefit. This subjective judgement then led to discussions about introducing a 'national interest' test to determine what research should be funded.

Somehow, a test allowing politicians veto power over funding for progressive academic research doesn't sound great to me.

What's even more concerning is that these examples are not isolated incidents, but rather part of an ongoing cultural ambivalence towards the arts and artistic endeavour in Australia. As explored, Australia has a propensity to cut funding to arts and humanities programs at political, governmental, and institutional levels – but we also rip into the arts on a more insidious, daily basis. Never mind that a Bachelor of Laws doesn't qualify one

to be a lawyer, or a Bachelor of Science, a scientist. People question and make fun of arts students, and we question and make fun of ourselves. But laughing along does wear one down after a while, especially when one sees how even some arts academics talk down the value of what they do. Self-deprecate enough, and anyone can begin to question their own worth.

And the arts' worth matters. Arts study pushes students to question norms and imagine better ways of living, both individually and collectively. It inspires engagement with ethical and moral issues facing human society. It demands that those who study the field develop critical thinking skills, coupled with a rounded ability to consider, evaluate, and communicate multiple facets of an argument.

These skills may sometimes be termed 'soft' – but in the current era of increasing conservatism worldwide, it's time we recognised that the ability to be questioning, measured, and empathetic might be well worth fostering. After all: doesn't the very fact that we devalue and deride such skills indicate they are in short supply?

What's more, understanding others and employing this knowledge – for better or for worse – shapes societies. Intuition for what makes a convincing argument can strengthen or weaken social narratives, persuading people one way or another. The skills and ideas explored in arts study can drive social movements, tear up obsolete laws, and make or break leaders. They can decide our elections. And still we belittle them.

Yet it doesn't have to be this way.

Late last year, I travelled to Ireland for an academic conference and became rapidly aware of the sheer presence of arts-related businesses, events, and general volume of artistic output there. Bookstores – including independent ones – were far more numerous and visible than in Australian cities. Musicians were out busking in droves despite the cold in every town I visited. I came across huge, spray-can graffiti portraits of famous Irish authors on a brick wall in Cork. Indeed, Ireland is world-famous for its tradition of writers, both past and present, despite only having 4.8 million inhabitants. People there evidently take pride in their literary and artistic heritage, and repeatedly told me that Ireland was a nation of storytellers.

Storytellers! Imagine saying that in Australia, where we define ourselves as a nation obsessed with sport. Frankly, this self-definition has been embraced not least because we're too fragile in our macho cultural identity to explore alternative identity options – a pity, considering our Indigenous cultures are the oldest living cultures in the world and possess extraordinarily rich oral storytelling traditions. If any nation could boast of being a nation of storytellers, you'd think it would be us. But hey – such 'un-Australian' conversation is just not cricket.

We can do better. More: we have to do better.

We pride ourselves on possessing a national identity of being fair, honest, and hard-working – certainly not two-faced or hypocritical (or at least, so the cultural narrative goes). Yet in what concerns the arts, we are hypocrites to the extreme. Our celebration of the underdog means we celebrate people who have endured hardship and gone from zero to success; however, our tall poppy syndrome insists we cut down those with the ambition and the self-belief it actually takes to become successful. We love our world-famous, established cultural and artistic figures – Hugh Jackman, Cate Blanchett, Sia, Tim Minchin, Tim Winton – but with our increasingly for-profit universities and institutions, we are not willing to invest in the development of younger, more emerging creatives. Our nation is enriched by the contribution of the arts sector, but we're continually keeping that sector poor and under heel because – so the logic goes – one can't guarantee returns on investment in such hopelessly fanciful, mercurial individuals and their endeavours. Yet our lives benefit from the efforts of these people every day.

No-one ever became a national treasure or even a solidly contributing member of society in any field without support. That support could be emotional or financial; it could involve parents, mentors, teachers, society's enthusiasm, or government funding. But it must be there, at some level. Success requires trying, often failing, and then trying again regardless. And currently, studying and working in arts and the humanities is so derided that the responsibility for one's success falls almost entirely on the individual, and their capacity to achieve despite lacking support.

The irony is that if this individual works hard enough, gives enough of themselves, and endures years of derision, maybe – just maybe – Australian society will begin to see value in them, and eventually claim them as a figure of national pride. But until that point, the cultural environment around arts and the humanities sends students and workers a constant, erosive message. Why bother? it asks. None of what you're doing matters. Stop embarrassing yourself. Just give up.

At this point, it's worth questioning what it is about these fields that inherently makes our society so averse to valuing them. What are we so uncomfortable about?

Well, the arts have feminine connotations, and with femininity comes associations of frivolity; impracticality; lack of worth. Women dominate certain arts and humanities fields such as publishing, and are often both highly skilled and desperately underpaid. This isn't a coincidence: if the arts sector is underpaid, it's not least because it's perceived as feminine and has large numbers of women working in it, which practically ensures poorer working conditions, exploitation of labour, and being valued less. It's a fact that as women move into a field, the earnings in that field go down. Besides, our national image is built on hyper-masculine, ma-

cho histories and values: we don't have time for faffing around with women's work.

Valuing arts means valuing their culturally associated femininity; and, by proxy, women. That is why we haven't achieved this egalitarian milestone yet. To appreciate and invest in the arts is to challenge our own fragile self-image as a country, and frankly, we're not tough enough to handle it.

And so the depreciation of arts and the humanities – and of those who invest in them and are associated with them – continues. We feed into this spiral of depreciation by undervaluing these fields, then underpaying those who work in them, and then undervaluing the fields further because they're underpaid. They're also dominated by women – both a cause and an effect of lower salaries and prestige – making them touchy-feely feminine endeavours and therefore valued even less. This means parents steer their children away from arts subjects and interests, sometimes without even thinking about it. Teachers emphasise STEM, which isn't bad in itself but becomes problematic if STEM can't be lauded without the arts being put down. Young adults gravitate towards courses more likely to lead to high-paying jobs. Funding goes elsewhere, and the cycle continues.

And then we wonder why we say things like "I don't really like Australian films"; or "Do I even know any Australian films?"

Or instead, consider how many books you have read that are set in Australian cities – and have you ever read a book written by an Indigenous author?

How much Australian music do you listen to?

How much do you listen to for free?

There are exciting Australian creatives out there, as well as intriguing, valuable research being done in arts and the humanities at universities. But we don't value, support, or learn from these achievements and explorations enough – if we did, maybe we'd stop having to steal New Zealand's cultural icons and envying their empathetic, articulate leaders.

I'm going to end this essay with universities, however, because that is where it started, and that is also arguably where the issue of devaluing the arts began. After all, haven't universities always prided themselves on being at the forefront of critical thinking and research, moulding the societies around them to truth and tolerance? Modern universities purport to be thought-leaders, game-changers; gatekeepers of cutting-edge, socially challenging and progressive thought. If that's the case, therefore, perhaps these universities have a responsibility to take arts and the humanities more seriously. If universities really are leaders, lead.

Because currently, when it comes to how arts and the humanities are valued within Australian society, we are all part of a larger, systemic problem. We could use some leadership; a good example set on an institutional level. Those of you in positions of power and authority, for instance, could start treating the arts sector with the respect you accord to other areas within our society.

Scrapping your arts programs, on the other hand? That just doesn't cut it.

[fʌk]

ANTHONY MOORE

“ffffffffffff.”
Fricative
relationship between us.

“ffffffffffff.”
Like my grades then;
fourteen’s a difficult age.

“ffffffffffff.”
Filial defiance,
common among boys.

“ffffffffffff.”
My utterance
became your fists,
falling
plosives,

blow
after

blow,

punch

after

punch.

“ffffffffffff.”
Air escaping through my lips;
winded, labial consonant.

“ffffffffffff.”
Quietly forgetting the event.
Hush, voiceless consonant.

“uh.”
Sharp glottal stop,
anticipating another plosive.

“uck.”
Involuntary utterance,
guttural cry.

Just sounds,
phonemes,
whose casual utterance
in quick succession
saw you unleash
a torrent more.

And now,
decades later,
when you utter that word,
throw it around,
willy-nilly,
you punch me in the gut.

Hostility or hospitality?

EMMA HARTLEY

Kambri is an island, a detachment that floats separate to the rest of campus. This "cultural precinct" and "community space" features a flashy bookstore, cafés, student services, and open-plan study spaces. Students at the Australian National University are meant to gain, "a new educational, physical, creative and social experience in a village setting." However, the university's rosy-hued promise is unlikely to surface into reality.

This gleaming boulevard has already been duly noted as a contribution to ANU's "process of gentrification." Yet Kambri is also symptomatic of the broader, and more dangerous, trend of corporatisation, as the university succumbs to the pursuit of profits.

As a core component of the university community, clubs and societies rely on the use of the university "commons." And while there is a "Student Commons" at the centre of Kambri, the system of facility hire reserves the best facilities for the use of those who can afford to foot the bill, leaving only small patches on the map for students. There is really no excuse at this point for pricing students out of their own spaces.

Universities are so much more than places of study and club events. If I drew my own map of ANU, it would feature more coffeeshops than classrooms. I know the best place to take a nap between class and where to spot kangaroos after dark. I would draw a line for where to go running to sweat out stress. As for many other students, my university has served as a place of learning but also as a home. The health of the university community depends on the space it provides for education, residence and recreation. These are interdependent features of the physical university. ANU seems to have conveniently forgotten about this fundamental relationship.

Macquarie University suffers from a similar amnesia. Its MAZE space met with criticism from clubs soon after it was opened at the beginning of 2018. The dispute also seems to be wrapped up with funding problems for student groups. While the university goes out of its way to attract external traffic, students no longer feel at home on their own campus. The effect is one of disorientation where the boundaries between the university and the nearby shopping centre become blurred.

Up the road from ANU, the University of Canberra is undergoing a different style of corporatisation. Christoph Zierholz is suing the University of Canberra and University of Canberra Union for $1.6 million in losses as a result of the university establishing The Well as a direct on-campus competitor. During a conversation I had with a UC student he observed that, "The university starts by leasing out all the hospitality businesses on campus but then after a few years they prefer to internalise and control everything. And this becomes a business cycle for the university." But it is not as if anyone has asked the student body for their opinion who are treated as consumers to be bartered over while the cartographic branding of the campus changes on a whim.

ANU is also no stranger to sidelining small businesses in the pursuit of profits. The sheer rent costs for Kambri have priced out vendors who have been long-term operators at the university. Walking through the new precinct feels like window shopping. There is nothing homely about the expensive cafés or the plant-deprived pathways. Kambri is just a white empty space on my map.

Unfortunately, none of this is surprising. The privileging of profits over student experience is not restricted to the physical campus. The corporatisation of universities across Australia is a trend seen in the content of degrees and the casualisation of its workforce. University spaces are merely another casualty. And whatever personal relationship I had with my university campus is now severed. I propose that it is time that we re-draw the map.

Time to Face the Music

PETER TREGEAR

Academic labour is grounded in long-established, and sometimes hard-won, scholarly traditions that help to shape and direct academic disciplines and secure the trust of the wider public in the results of that labour. It should be no surprise, then, to find that academics tend to be outspoken about and resistant to changes to the ways they work if such changes appear to be motivated by reasons that are hostile to, or otherwise undermine, those traditions. In such cases, contrary to that old adage, academic politics are fierce because the stakes are actually very high.

This may explain, at least in part, why the ANU's management of the School of Music, alongside a number of other prominent discipline-centred controversies in recent years, have caused it so much grief. Changes it imposed on the School appeared to many to have been motivated by managerial priorities that seemed at best indifferent not only to the

particular traditions and needs of music scholarship, but also to this discipline's capacity to contribute to the public mission of a university more generally.

Those changes began in earnest with the release of a "Change Management Proposal" on 3 May 2012 that foreshadowed a complete overhaul of the School's curriculum to fit a proposed new budget and staffing structure. A 'three-week consultation period' followed, which then led to the publication on 15 June 2012 of a "School of Music Implementation Plan". This detailed a process by which full□time equivalent academic staff numbers were to be reduced from 23.9 to 13 and professional staff numbers from 9.23 to 7.5. The plan also assumed that full-time equivalent undergraduate enrolments would increase from roughly 70 to 80 per annum.

A key challenge I faced when I was appointed the new Head of the School later in 2012 was to provide a coherent academic vision for the School that could yet work within these new staffing limits and also restore lost public confidence in the University's stewardship of the discipline.[1] It seemed to me, at least initially, that the ANU was keen to rectify some initial missteps. On the basis of what was publicly committed after the publication of the Implementation Plan, alongside undertakings that had been made to me by the University at the time of my appointment, I believed it was indeed possible to re-secure the academic integrity and administrative viability of the School. Given such apparent circumstances again I would still assert it. Certainly, at the time they were enough to enable me to attract a team of outstanding academic and professional staff to work with me towards this goal, and by 2014 the School had not only turned around a good deal of the lingering public hostility towards it, it had also gone from 'zero to hero' in terms of research credibility, becoming briefly the most successful School of Music in the country for Australian Research Council (ARC) grants.

Ultimately, however these early post-Review successes counted for nothing because the ANU' s underlying commitments and undertakings were simply not met.[2] That fact must raise broader issues not only about the potential for misuse of review and change-management processes at the ANU but also about the University's stewardship of the contracts of trust that need to exist at all levels in order for any university to secure and sustain its underlying public mission.

At the time, the University's basis for not meeting the resourcing commitments was because the fall in enrolments that followed the public relations disaster of the first half of 2012 meant that student numbers, it argued, would no longer support them. I was at pains to point out at the time, however, that not only was it self-evident that that the ratio of staff-to-student enrolments is never a linear one (given that a core staff cohort would still be needed to offer a full undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum even if there were just a handful of enrolments), any failure to uphold the spirit as well as the letter of the 2012 Review so early on in the wake of the change management process would put the creditability of the ANU itself on the line. It would eventually lead to the loss of music altogether as a taught discipline at the ANU, a possibility we now know that the University's senior executive was indeed secretly contemplating in 2015. This was because the School would face an inevitable vicious circle of declining capacity and morale from within, and public confidence from without, leading to a further, and eventually catastrophic, decline in enrolments.

There was a predictable human cost to this further under-resourcing.. In their efforts to continue to deliver a high-quality music education to students, staff were burning out. Indeed, the School became an unsafe workplace and one sign of this was that I eventually had to make a claim to the ANU's then insurer, Comcare, for what Comcare acknowledged was a workplace injury 'sustained as a result of operational actions taken by your employer'. Unable to obtain assurances that this untenable situation would change, I eventually had no choice but to resign and left the School and the ANU in August 2015.

No one, it seems, has since been held to account for these outcomes. Rather, the so-called 'Podger Review', which was commissioned by the then recently appointed Vice-Chancellor, Professor Brian Schmidt, recommended a 'moratorium on action initiated by the University to pursue specific instances of past mismanagement or misbehaviour'.

That recommendation is extraordinary enough for its implicit acknowledgment that there indeed had been instances of mismanagement and misbehaviour. But it only becomes more so when placed against the content of the full report. For instance, Podger described the School he found by 2016 to be one 'plagued by a legacy of distrust, emotional stress, years of poor management and behaviour, sliding academic standards and financial pressures', and called for 'a complete overhaul of governance, funding, academic direction, enrolments, staff culture and community engagement.' He later observed in an interview with The Australian that this situation was one 'compounded by appalling issues [of] management and reports of widespread bullying.'

Podger also raised doubts about the legitimacy of the basis upon which the ANU had launched its 2012 changes. He noted that the School's finances included, for instance, 'an implicit component of the University's block grant (the National Institutes Grant or 'NIG'), which was a legacy of the School's former existence as part of The National Institute of the Arts. But the lack of clarity around the size and ultimate purpose of this money meant that the School

[1] I eventually published an extended essay discussing it entitled *Enlightenment or Entitlement: Rethinking Tertiary Music Education*. Platform Paper No 38 (Sydney: Currency House, 2014)

[2] A commentator reported in the *Campus Morning Mail* of 3 May 2019 noted that 'there's been a continuing running down of research capacity in the humanities, and the primary culprits are the universities themselves'. See https://campusmorningmail.com.au/news/humanities-research-crippled-capacity-not-absence-of-ability/

was unable to plan effectively or be truly responsible for its budget and was vulnerable instead to financial decisions being made by levels of management far removed from its own sphere of operation or influence.

The opacity around the ANU's use of the NIG is an issue that has also been raised elsewhere. A report prepared by Deloitte for the Department of Education in December 2014 entitled 'Review of the Australian National University (ANU) Act 1991 and the governance arrangements of the ANU' recommended statutory reform to 'provide the basis for framing clearer accountability' for its use of the NIG (17). It also recommended the ANU include in its Annual Reports 'an explanation of how the National Institutes Grant has been used in the relevant year' (18).

In addition, Podger's report noted that the student fee income figures for the School, that had been provided to him by the College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS) 'arguably… exaggerates the real deficits and their impact on CASS as they are based on a formula for the School's contribution towards CASS overheads that may not reflect the actual cost, or the efficient price, of the services CASS provides.' Whatever the truth is, what is clear is that the financial situation of the School of Music in 2012, and thus the justification the ANU had stated for all the distress that followed, was simply unclear.

Even if the stated recurrent operating deficit of approximately $2.7 million in 2012 was a completely fair and accurate representation of the non-funded cost burden of the School to the University, on that basis alone the whole change-management process was an abject failure. On 4 May 2016 *The Australian* reported that the ANU now faced a $3 million annual bill to 'rescue the school' from this institutional self-injury. Ultimately VC Schmidt announced the injection of an additional $12.5 million over five years. And since 2016 the School has churned through another five Heads or Acting Heads of School as well as seen a return to the pre-2012 state of affairs, in which its research was not even put up for consideration by the University for the latest Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) rankings.

In the face of such facts, Podger's 'moratorium' is now not tenable, if indeed it ever was. A proper inquiry is needed not only address these historic wrongs but also to demonstrate the University's broader commitment to the principles of public accountability, principles which ultimately underpin the mission of a great University. Such an inquiry would also help address the growing culture of distrust between academic staff and senior management that such a stand-out case of unaccountability has inevitably fed.

The ANU is, I suspect, especially vulnerable to such a culture taking root because, unlike other Australian Universities, its constitution does not provide for an external university ombudsman or similar 'disinterested' arbitrator to which staff can turn when managerial actions such as the School of Music Implementation Plan go so wrong. The current system of internal policies and procedures to manage staff complaints is no substitute for one. We need only to consider the findings of the recent Royal Commissions into the Banking Industry or Institutional Child Abuse to be reminded of the obvious limits, if not the likely outcomes, of an over-reliance by an institution on self-regulation.

Changes to university governance that have emerged over the past few decades across much of the globe have served to make the need for such an arbitrator only more urgent. Once upon a time, organisational structures existed in Universities, that gave all academic staff a significant say in their own management; leadership positions such as Head of Department and even Vice-Chancellor were commonly filled by election. Of course, such structures had their own issues, but they at least helped encourage a positively framed culture of mutual responsibility, openness and accountability on campus.

What tends to arise today, however, as researchers in the US have found, is based on a much more negative perception of the capacity, responsibility and core motivations of academic employees. Senior managerial appointments are now routinely made without genuine staff consultation. Loyalty within these ranks is secured by such tendencies as an over-reliance on internal promotion (as opposed to genuinely open external recruitment processes) and by the emergence of a considerable salary divide between such senior manangers and the staff they manage. In such a workplace, a 'rhetoric of instruction and compliance' replaces one once based in a 'collaborative discourse of request and consent'. Academics who reasonably question managerial decisions can find themselves stripped of their capacity to function in, let alone, enjoy, their workplace.

But it is not just particular individuals who continue to suffer. We are all the worse for it when our universities appear to be no longer concerned to place trust and mutual accountability at the core of their social contract with their own staff, or indeed with the wider world. If there is a longer-term moral to be learned from the as-yet unresolved troubles at the ANU School of Music, it is that the ANU's senior leadership should not only support the fearless, open, and publicly accountable, pursuit of truth within the disciplines it is charged with managing on campus, it should also be practising it (and be seen to be practising it) itself.

What makes universities valuable? One international student's journey

JOOWHEE LEE

Although universities have developed differently in each country, essentially all universities are similar: they are communities of students and scholars. Universities are communities where we realise social problems, raise issues and discuss how we could solve the problems we are facing using our collective intelligence. People cannot develop their thinking and ideas without interacting with others. Recently, there have been significant changes to research communities around the world. Some of these changes have resulted from the large increase in the number of international students. According to the Australian National University (ANU) statistics from 2017, the number of international students at ANU was over 9,000, 39% of the total student population. Looking at the undergraduate ratio, 56% of students are international students. This means that today, roughly one in two students you pass by on campus is an international student. International students are traveling away from home to study because they want to grow together within a research community. The university community itself changes with the arrival of new members, with international students bringing their culture and different perspectives with them.

However, both university administration and policy makers view international students as merely statistics, or as a financial resource. In an Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) news article published in July 2018 titled 'Australia's top universities are split about how many international students they should enrol', the contributors all agree that there is an obvious financial benefit to international student enrolments. Unfortunately, in this article and in wider debates about this topic, the voice of international students' experiences in Australian universities is not shared or encouraged. International students are just seen as numbers. On 6 May 2019, ABC's program, Four Corners included a documentary called 'Cash Cows: Australian universities making billions out of international students', which seemed at first to raise issues about the difficulties international students face. However, the program also stoked the public's fear that unqualified foreigners could immigrate to Australia through universities. In all current reporting, international students are viewed statistically, or as individuals using the Australian education system for their private interests. No media reports deal with the issues international students experience or the lack of support they are provided with at Australian universities.

In reality, international students have a high potential to contribute to the research community in Australia, but they are struggling with how to fully participate, as they face many fundamental difficulties which weigh on their experience and their studies. International students need help, but there are few safeguards or forms of support available. International students are required to communicate in English for academic purposes, instead of their mother tongue, and they must also understand and navigate different systems and cultures while in Australia. However, there are no English language centres or international student centres to support them. International students often have to work

during their studies due to high tuition fees, unaffordable housing, the high cost of living and other financial burdens. Some students suffer from a range of health issues, but Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) only extends to a limited range of medical conditions. How can international students be expected to know what kind of health issues might arise for them in the future, during their studies? Some international students have had to leave before finishing their studies or research because of visa extension problems, and highly motivated students must use their time to solve such problems instead of attending and contributing on their campuses; isn't this is a huge loss?

I think Australian universities must support international students and should listen to international students about the difficulties they face while studying abroad. Supporting the transition of international students to studying abroad requires a proper international and multicultural student support system. For instance, Australian universities could provide English writing classes for international students. This kind of support would increase the quality of research on campus. Academic advisors and counsellors who understand the cultural differences and difficulties faced by international students would also be helpful. This support would be worthwhile, as international students bring their experiences and networks with them when they contribute to their new universities, not only while they are studying, but also after they return to their home country.

Providing a support system for international students in Australia will bring diverse perspectives into the Australian research community and Australian universities. Such support would make universities much more valuable over the long term, rather than focusing on the short-term financial benefits. Vice-Chancellor Brian Schmidt has decided not to grow ANU any larger, due to concerns about growth beyond a certain point and reaching a balance between research and teaching. He thinks ANU should focus on the quality of education provided. I think a support system for international students is also one of the solutions for increasing the quality of education and research on campus at ANU. A support system for international students could help more international students to achieve their academic aims, and it will prompt needed reform of the university research community. By helping international students and supporting them to achieve what they came here to achieve, we can help international students to be proud of themselves as alumna and alumni of ANU. Please do not dismiss the people who are active members of ANU's research community, and who could make ANU more valuable.

Pedagogic Dissonance

MEERA ASHAR AND CHIRAG KASBEKAR

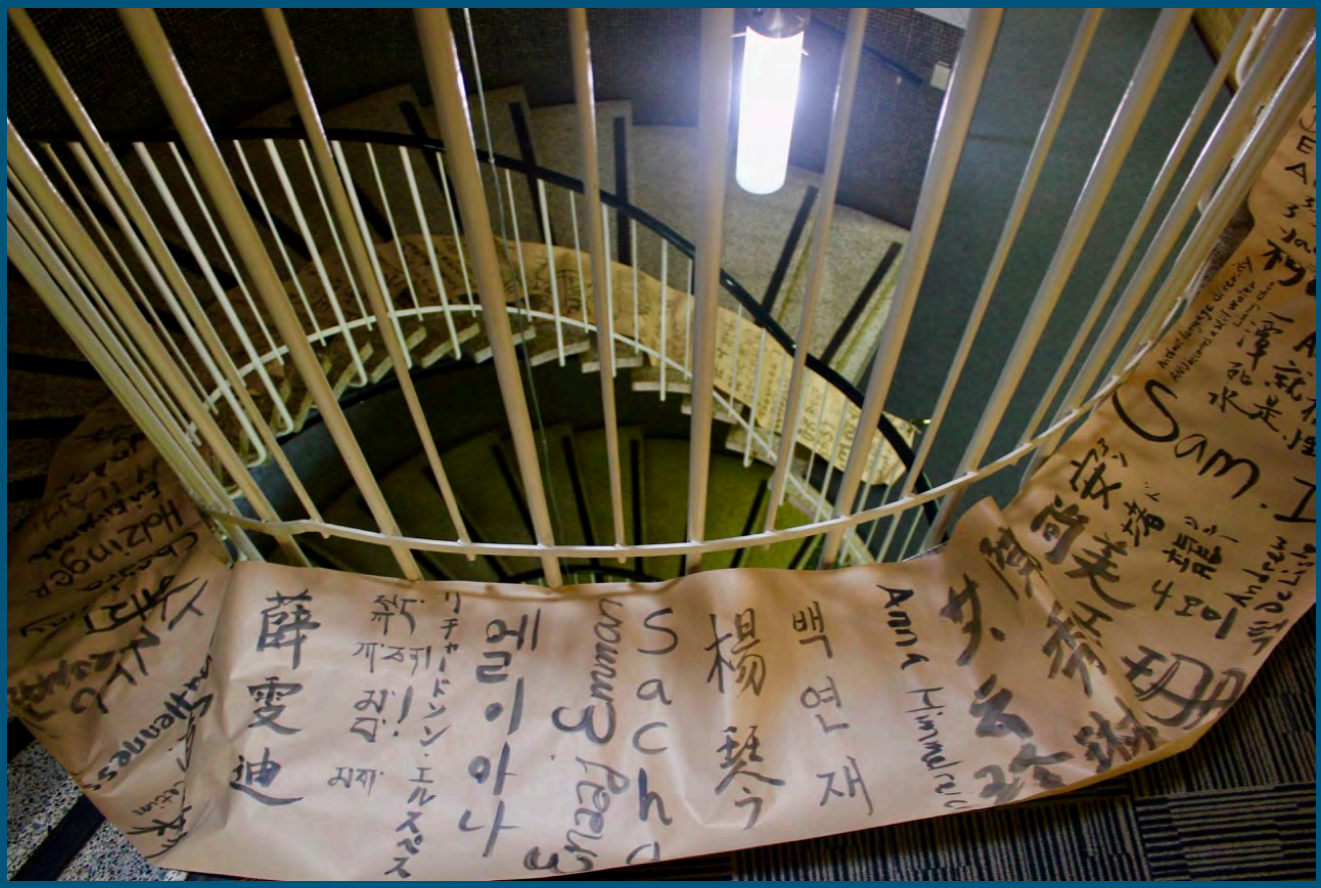
Welcome
to our university, where
you will experience

the best
education the world
can offer.

Our focus on teaching excellence,
and our endeavour to provide you learning
tailored to your needs*

will create an environment
that will facilitate
your journey to becoming
a leader in your field.

* Note to academic staff: Engagement with students remains 0.1% of your actual workload. (We thank you for your commitment to your students.)



CHL Review Dossier

PHOTOGRAPH: ANNIE McCARTHY

'A ruse to mislead': An insider's account of the review of the School of Culture, History and Language at ANU

ANONYMOUS

The review of the School of Culture, History and Language, which commenced in 2013, was an opaque process. It began with a shambolic retreat in which academic staff were invited to come up with 'blue sky' thinking about how the School could become great. The event was run by a paid external consultant who had apparently no knowledge of universities and thought that all problems could be solved by scribbling platitudes on butchers' paper.

In the months that followed, working parties were formed to address various aspects of the School's mandate, but there was no systematic attempt to examine the School's financial strengths and weaknesses and to build on the former while addressing the latter. Instead, the College management announced that the School was not viable in its current form and would need to be dramatically restructured. There were occasional announcements that some activity or other was an essential part of the School's future or that some other activity was a liability, but the figures on which these claims were based, if they were released at all, showed tendentious accounting that was clearly designed to demonstrate non-viability rather than to reflect the real situation. The overall financial figures relating to the School's performance and the performance of its different components were never revealed.

It was widely believed in the School that costs associated with the appointment of a new Director from overseas, together with the School's financial contribution to support four distinguished fellowships known as Laureates constituted a significant part of the School's problems. One back-of-the-envelope calculation suggested that these two factors accounted for almost the whole of the School's financial deficit.

In the course of 2015, it began to appear that the College management saw staff cuts, rather than just restructuring, as the only way to achieve viability for the School. Cuts would enable the School's share of the National Institutes Grant (NIG formerly known as the block grant) to be spread over a smaller number of academics. The NIG is in effect a subsidy which enables parts of ANU to avoid some of the financial pressures of the general funding system which counts numbers of students, value of research grants etc. There were two elements to this plan. One was not to renew any fixed term contracts, the other to find a way of disposing of continuing staff. An unconfirmed leak from the Dean's office indicated that the plan was to reduce the number of continuing academics in the School from 60 to 40. Around 8 academics left in this early stage of the review under various arrangements (including retirement and non-renewal of contracts), but the culling plan needed another twelve.

In late 2015 (might have been early 2016), the Dean issued a plan which basically involved cutting all small languages from the curriculum. This plan would have destroyed ANU's reputation as a place for studying Asian language and would have undermined its expertise on countries other than China and Japan. The plan generated a huge backlash. The smaller languages had devoted followers and students mobilized publicly. A Language Diversity group undertook a concerted campaign to have the decision reversed. The Dean then largely backed down, instead endorsing a plan that was said to give the small languages time to establish their viability by teaching online and expanding their markets.

Around this time, the College management announced that the financial position of the School was in such crisis that they would take over financial supervision, meaning that no School funds could be spent without their direct authorization. In effect, the School director lost his authority to manage the School. In early 2016, the Dean announced that the director was stepping down in order to spend more time on research. Very few staff attended the School reception held to thank him for his work as Director.

The focus then shifted to identifying non-language staff to be cut. The Dean produced a template that divided the School into departments of approximately equal size and which proposed a savage culling of mid-career researchers. Under this plan, one professor would have been removed, but the other 11 victims would have come from levels C and D (Senior Lecturer and Associate Professor). There was a strong reaction against this plan, too, and the Dean retreated, promising a process driven by (unspecified) criteria, rather than by an abstract template.

University rules permit staff to be made redundant, but only after a fairly complicated process. The Dean therefore announced an alternative route: CHL would be wound up, a new school would be cre-

ated embodying the vision that had (allegedly) been articulated earlier in the review process, and around 40 staff would be transferred administratively into that new school. Those not transferred would become redundant by virtue of the disappearance of CHL. The Dean would thereby avoid the slow and difficult process of individual redundancy determinations.

The College administration then appointed a 'Deliberative Committee' to recommend on which staff should be transferred to the new school and which should not. This committee consisted of the Acting Director, three of the four Laureates (one Laureate refused to take part), two academic staff who held College positions as associate deans, and a couple of non-CHL academics. The formal instructions to the DC were to apply criteria in order to determine who was the best fit with the future plans of the School. These plans, however, were so vague as to give the Deliberative Committee little practical guidance. The committee was given access to the CVs of all CHL academics, each of whom could also submit a one-page statement. Members of the Deliberative Committee were assured that they would automatically transfer to the new school.

Members of the Deliberative Committee were sworn to secrecy and there was deliberately no official written record of the discussions. In the subsequent discussion of the DC's recommendations, outsiders perceived that some members inadvertently dropped hints about the proceedings. It is hard to be sure how seriously to take these hints, but they suggest that in addition to considering the CVs and one-page statements the committee listened to unsubstantiated gossip from individual committee members which portrayed some staff positively and others negatively.

It appears that the final report of the committee was drafted by the committee chair and was not shown to all other members before it was passed to the Dean. The Dean then summoned each of the potentially affected CHL academics individually and pronounced their fate. It appears that in each case the Dean told the person that they had accepted the recommendation of the DC (which may not always have been the case). A senior university HR representative was present at each meeting and those who were not to be transferred to the new School were invited to make an appointment at which they were presented with information on the university's redundancy procedures. The twelve staff members were subsequently informed that they had failed to meet the required standards of performance in terms of teaching, research and service. In fact, those targeted included some of the strongest researchers and most enthusiastic teachers in the School.

The twelve academics identified for removal included four professors and two former or current Future Fellows (the FF is a prestigious mid-career fellowship awarded by the Australian Research Council). There was no obvious pattern in the selection, but it was noted that Southeast Asian Studies and History were especially severely hit. Some of those dismissed were perceived to have had enemies on the Deliberative Committee.

The fallout from the cull is another story, but there are a few things to mention:

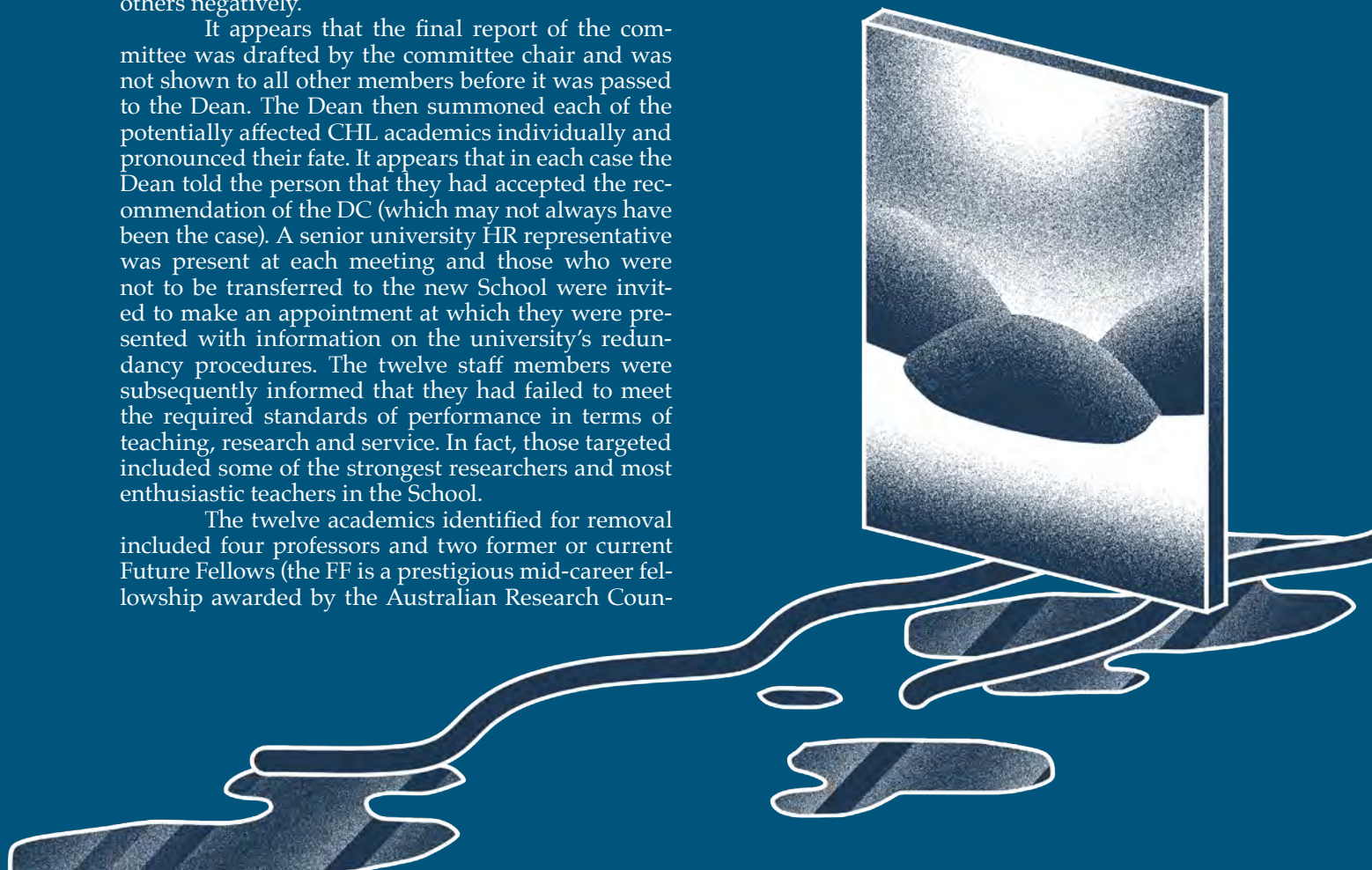
a. In the end, only one of the twelve was forced through the whole redundancy process. All the others either left for new jobs or reached some accommodation with the university.

b. No new School was ever created; this would have been a complex administrative process. The talk of transfers to a new school appears to have been a ruse to mislead the victimized staff that they were not protected by the usual procedures for redundancy.

c. All PhD students in CHL were offered funded extensions of program and visa extension fees in compensation for the disruption caused by the review process. These extensions merely covered the extent of the disruption for CHL's PhD students, and many students have fell through the cracks.

d. CHL continues to have difficulty meeting its teaching obligations because of the loss of staff.

e. The Dean was not reappointed on the expiry of their term. And remaining staff are encouraged to move forward and not to look back.



‘I was exhausted, both physically and emotionally’: Lina Koleilat interviews a member of the CHL Administrative Staff about the School’s 2013 review

The School of Culture, History and Language review of 2013, was that a big one?
Yes, it was a big explosion.

Were the professional staff involved?
Well, they always said, ‘You are involved’, but they already had their mind made up about how things were going to look, and basically you just have to go along with everything and accept the outcome.

Did the university management say that the restructure was going to affect professional staff as well?
In the early stage of the review in 2013, they said that we would all have to apply for our jobs, but then they didn’t end up doing that. For a long time we had that hanging over our heads as well.

Some jobs, they said would probably go and this is why some people jumped ship. When they did a restructure plan, although you couldn’t see peoples names you could see positions, and they went through a few rounds of this, rejigging it and working out which positions would come under what umbrella. Research Students just didn’t seem to fit anywhere.

So how many people left CHL during the restructure, not by being kicked out, but that they wanted to leave because it was a mess?
We all felt under extreme pressure about retaining our jobs. Certain staff member felt they were going to be targeted, um, definitely three admin staff left out of about 10. They had enough, and didn’t like how things were unfolding, the uncertainty of it all… they felt it was better to jump ship. After that the management didn’t make any more admin staff redundant.

Was it the same with academics?
A lot of academics did the same, they just couldn’t take the stress and uncertainty anymore and jumped ship. I think about six academics left before they formally notified anyone. The academics didn’t know who exactly was going to be targeted. They found out at one on one meetings with the Dean – which I understand wasn’t legal apparently.

Academics should have been able to apply for their jobs. Management should have said: there are five Chinese historian positions and you can all apply for these positions. But what they said is: there are five positions and these five are staying and these two are leaving. We still don’t know why they chose some people and not others.

So, at that time CHL had a large number of HDR students?
We had around 200 at the time.

Can you tell me how did all of this affect the student body from your view?
Other than the uncertainty, there was a lot of talk in the corridors, and a lot of rumours getting around. Some of them weren't true, but people were just panicking and of course those rumours got to the students.

I'm just glad I wasn't a student, being an admin staff was stressful enough. Some of the academics just shut off wouldn't talk to the students and a lot of them put the wind up the students by saying 'what are you going to do if I'm not here?'. Others that just left and wiped their hands of their students leaving them short of supervisors. No student went through unscathed, because they were affected through their peers if not directly from their panel members.

The management appeared to have given no thought as to how the review would affect students.

How many students lost their main supervisor?
There was quite a few that lost their main supervisor, the loss of 6 active academics who had lots of students caused some ripples. Some students transferred out with their supervisors and others had to be accommodated within CHL.

Can you tell me about the experience of the students who were in the fieldwork and had no idea what was happening?
Sheer panic. There was one in particular who arrived in the field in April, she lost her whole panel. We had to try to put together a panel for her while she was still away. This was no easy task. Other students were more fortunate, as their other panel members stepped up.

So this was all work you had to do, on top of your normal work. Tell me more about the extra work you had to do due to the review.
For me, the fallout from the Review created a lot of extra work on top of my normal duties. There were additional meetings to go to, and more crisis management tasks to take care of. Also a few academics had to really step up and do much more than usual, while also being told that they may also lose their job. It felt like everyone was on a roller-coaster. Some students really stepped up and became student reps which was great because other students were floundering and didn't know where to turn. It brought out a lot of good in people, with many going above and beyond to support their peers.

From your view, having worked in the sector for a long time, what do you think was wrong with the CHL review?
The whole way it was handled… It wasn't dealt with as the whole of the school, it was broken into academic, student, staff, while all the time it was affecting everyone. There was so much back fighting, because Management turned everyone against each other due to the way they handled things. It was horrible. The emotional strain that I felt was exhausting, I tried to keep on a strong face at work, but I'd get home and I'd be snappy and my partner would say to me 'what the hell is wrong with you?' and I'd say 'another bad day'. It was my release you know, but it affected my home life. I felt I had to be strong and supportive for everyone around me at work. We were like a family, we were there for each other.

There may have been support out there, but I don't' think anyone came to me and said 'are you ok?' I mean students probably did but no one from the university management. I certainly formed a strong bond between myself and the people I worked with at the time, we were all in the same boat. We felt like the College management created the problem and left everyone underneath it to tread water until a solution was found.

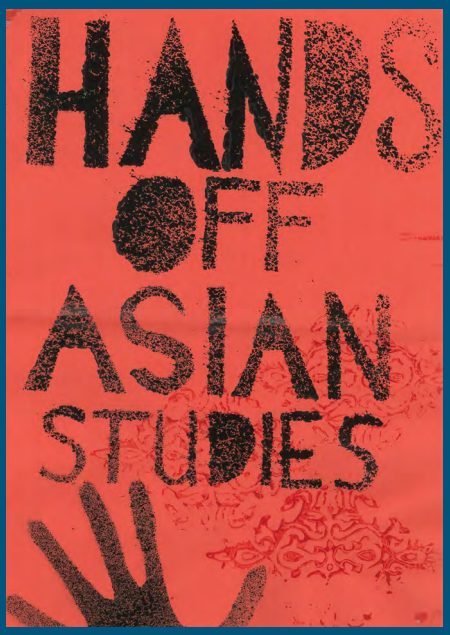
How did you think that CHL review ended? Do you think it ended?
Obviously for some people it hasn't ended. For me, I was exhausted, both physically and emotionally. It was so draining; some people became great listeners, [who others] gravitated to talk to.

Did they accept new students during the review?
Yes, students applied during the review but didn't apply to work with longer standing academics, they all applied for younger academics. New student numbers dropped from the usual 30 down to 5 in a couple of years, and all the new ones coming in applied to be supervised by younger academics. So the school felt obliged to take them on.

Do you think the way the review allegedly ended was ok, in your view?
I think they made the best of a bad deal. Admin probably came out the least scathed.

Administrative/professional staff were holding the fort really.
Yes, if admin were dissolved, I would hate to think of where things would have gone, seeing as how things were going on a daily level. The admin team gained strength from each other. We were a great team.

Any other thoughts on the review?
I'm happy to now put this behind me and live another chapter of my life. I was exhausted, and found it very difficult to do my job properly by moving from one thing to another and then in the back of my mind not knowing if I was going to keep my job. The university management were oblivious to all of us and to what we had to go through.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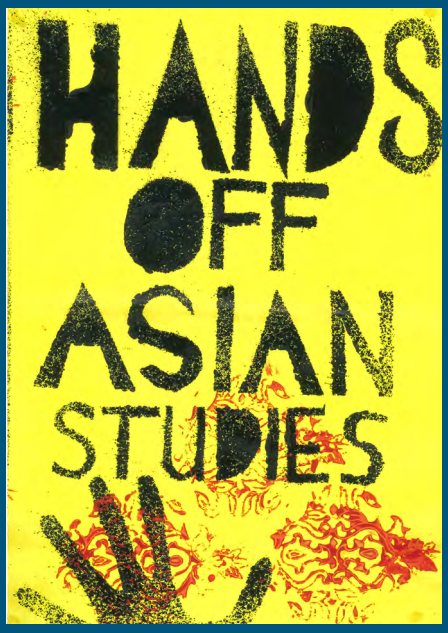
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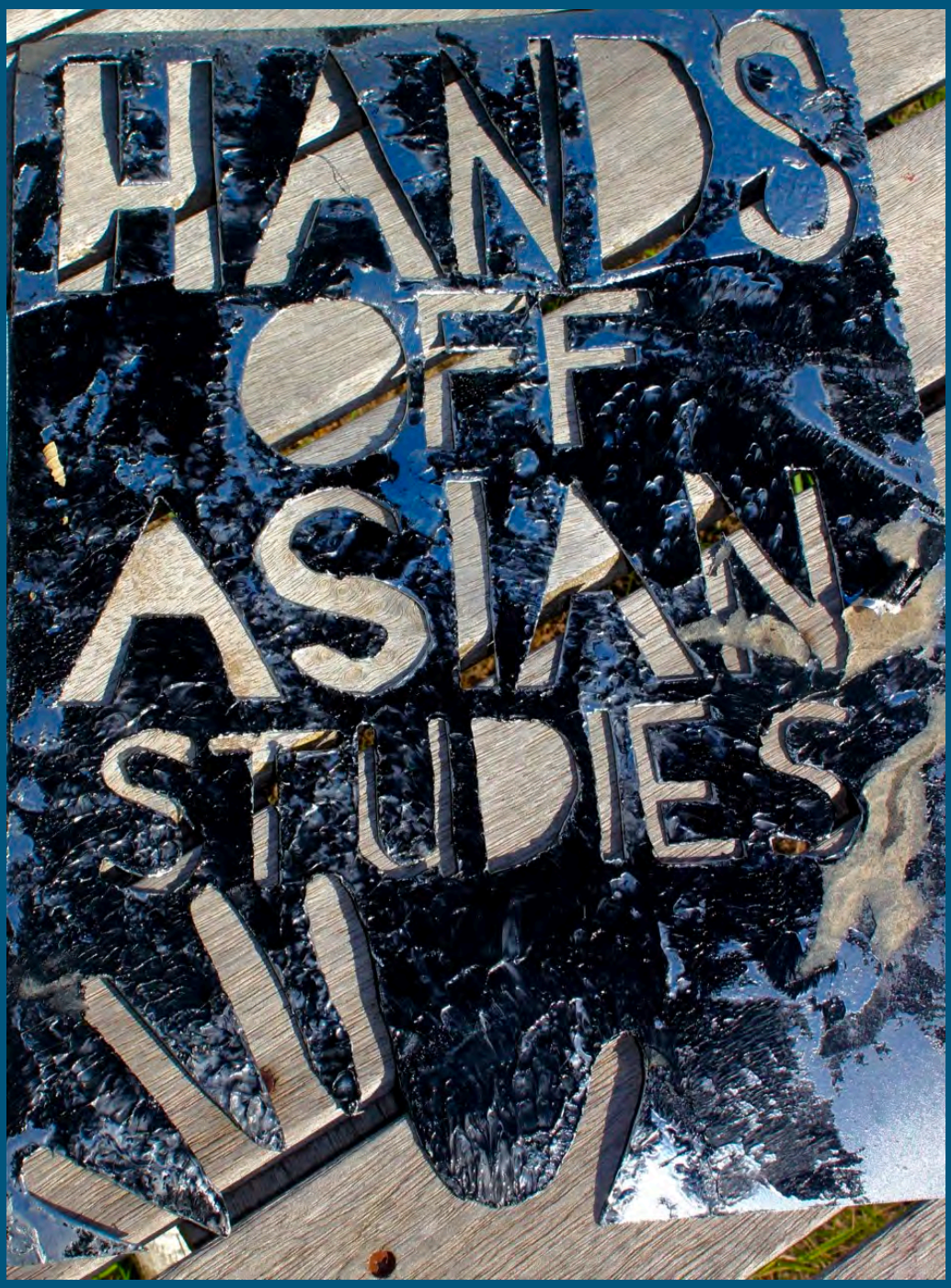
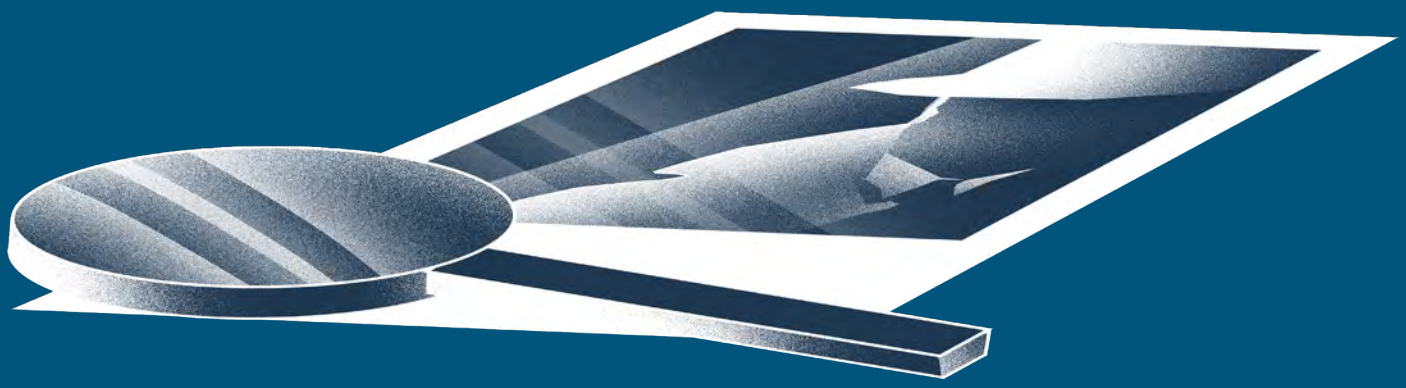


POSTERS: ANNIE McCARTHY

Associate Prof K And The Special Committee

(with apologies to James Church)

TESSA MORRIS-SUZUKI



James Church is the pseudonym of a former CIA operative who writes remarkable detective novels set in North Korea. His main character is an oddly plausible and endearing North Korean detective named Inspector O. In addition to his novels, Church also writes columns in the online journal "38 North", which feature conversations between himself and Inspector O – who has since been appointed to assist in conducting North Korea's backdoor diplomacy. They meet in bars and gloomy cafes in various Asian cities to discuss the issues of the moment. Church's dialogues with Inspector O cast a sharp eye, not just on the byzantine world of North Korean politics, but also on the vagaries of the US political system, particularly since the advent of the Trump regime.

Casting my mind back, rather reluctantly, to the restructuring of CHL, the image that kept surfacing in my mind was of the world of James Church and Inspector O.

The characters who appear in the dialogue that follows bear no resemblance to any real person living or dead. But the emotions are very real.

Associate Professor K had asked me to meet for a cup of coffee, but rather oddly (I thought) specified that we should meet in a quiet corner of a café off campus where, he said, "we wouldn't be overheard".

When I entered the dark wooden booth of the off-campus café, I found Associate Professor K already there, looking rather unwell. He seemed to have aged in the past few weeks, and I noticed that his hand was shaking as he stirred his chai latte.

"I think they have me targeted", he said quietly as I sat down.

"They?" I asked. "Who do mean by 'they'?"

"You know", he said, "The authorities. The people who are planning the restructure."

"Can you be more specific?" I asked. "Who exactly are we talking about here?"

"Well, that's what we don't really know. I've heard rumours that it may all be being driven by the Deputy Party Secretary, but others say that it's really the Finance Minister or the local party boss. Or maybe it's all three of them. Possibly with others. You know they've set up a Special Committee," he added darkly.

Well, of course I knew about the Special Committee. Everyone knew about that. I laughed. "You don't need to worry about the Special Committee," I said, "that's just a group of your colleagues. There'll be processes. There'll be criteria. All you need to do is make a case. And anyway, how could they possibly target you? You a world-renowned expert in your field, and you're one of the most productive people on campus. Look at all the Hero Worker awards you've received."
But Associate Professor K was not reassured. "I've heard that the only criterion they're using is that you have to be a Good Person. Not someone who Makes Waves, you know. I'm having difficulty providing the quantitative data to prove that I meet that criterion.
I tried another tack. "Besides," I said, "They surely won't need to get rid of more than three or four people. Look at all the retirements we've had recently. And after all, what's the budget deficit? One million? Two million?"

"That's another thing we don't know," replied Associate Professor K. My cheerful tone clearly wasn't getting through to him. "Three weeks ago they said five million. At the beginning of this week it was one million. But now it's apparently gone up to eight million."

"But that's ridiculous," I exclaimed. "This is a university, not some dodgy back-street small business. They must know what the budget bottom line is."

"Apparently it all depends on which budgetary parameters you use," replied Associate Professor K.

I was glad to get out of that gloomy café and back to the university campus. Spring was in the air. The sky was blue, and the shining glass tower of the new biotechnology block was rising from its construction site. This was Canberra, after all, not that seedy bar in Shenyang where I was accustomed to have my meetings with Inspector O. This was a place of plenty, free speech, a fair go, due process, trade unions...

The next I head from Associate Professor K was a rather sad little email.

"The Special Committee has found that my services are no longer needed by the university," he wrote. "Apparently I didn't meet the Good Person criterion. I will be made redundant. Thank you for all your support over the years. Can I drop by your office to return those books I borrowed five years ago?"

Needless to say, I wasn't having any of that. I marched down the corridor and found Associate Professor K in his office, already packing his belongings into boxes.
"This is crazy," I said. "They can't do this. They have to give you reasons for their decision."

"Not when there's a budgetary crisis, or so I'm told," he replied. And, as it turned out, he was quite correct. He wasn't the only one. We weren't, of course, officially allowed to know how many people had failed the Good Person test. That was classified information, and the members of the Special Committee had been sworn to absolute secrecy. But the rumour mill was soon at work. It seemed that the number might be nine or ten, or maybe more. Professor G was said to be on the list, and Dr. L, and Professor C too. Surely not? Was that possible?

By now, petitions were being signed, and letters written to the newspaper, and our gallant students were organizing to defend their academic staff.

A month or two later, Associate Professor K came to my office seeming a little more cheerful, though he still looked ten years older than he had a few months ago. "Better news," he said. "I've been given a reprieve. Some kind colleagues have found a place for me in the Strategic and Communications Research Unit."
"That's great," I said. "But," as a thought struck me, "if there was room in the budget to employ you somewhere else in the university, why didn't they try doing that before telling you that you were surplus to university requirements and being made redundant?"
"Maybe the budgetary parameters have changed again," suggested Associate Professor K helpfully. "And there's a catch. It's only a one-year contract. After that, everything's up in the air. I'll have to work 18 hour days to prove my worth."
"Don't worry," I said cheerfully. "You'll knock their socks off."

Well, that was three years ago now. We've all moved on since then. Water under the bridge. There are rumours that the authorities realised that mistakes were made. Maybe they even instituted some kind of internal enquiry. Perhaps there's a report about what went wrong, with a list of lessons and recommendations, locked away in someone's filing cabinet.

Associate Professor K had his contract renewed for another year, but I think the uncertainty was getting to him. He took early retirement, and the last I heard, he was thinking of going into mango farming.

For a while we thought that someone from the Central Committee might come to give us some kind of explanation, but that never happened. And anyway, better not to dwell on the past. The new biotechnology block is finished and has won the Henry Steiner Award for Modernist Architecture, and the university's new shopping mall and multi-media teaching precinct are nearly complete. Time to look to the future. Let bygones be bygones.

After all, it couldn't happen again, could it?

Semi-Fictionalised Reminiscences and All Too Real Questions

DARIO DI ROSA

As the students' representative of my department, I had just came out from a small but, significant, battle about the Postgraduate and Research Students Associate's (PARSA) budget allocation; an outrageous amount of money for 'social activities' (which I read as 'partying') and close to nothing for student housing or parental facilities. My leftist ego still emboldened, I opened one of those emails from the administration that promised to be as boring as you can expect. It was. It informed the recipients that the School was going to have a meeting to talk about some budgetary issues and that we were all invited. I almost moved to check the next email when a sentence caught my eyes; PhD students were the School's *stakeholders*. "You don't call *me* a stakeholder!" I thought. "You want to use this Orwellian bureaucratic language? Be my guest, I'm going to attend this meeting!" It turned out to be the first of a seemingly endless series of meetings and consultations.[1]

The story of the School of Culture, History and Language (CHL) review is one that is not easy to tell with any objectivity. I have my own views on who played what role (willingly, or not) and what it was meant to achieve. Yet, I am going to abstain from putting my views forward. The climate in which this story took place is fraught with a constant and stubborn negation of any discordant statement. The oft-used word to describe the review, "process", implied that nothing was set in stone. Until it was.

The most basic, and effective, mechanism that the review put in place was the principle of 'divide and conquer'. This technique took many forms, often subtle, but not always. One in particular was unmistakably clear. In the dining hall of University House, CHL staff were subjected to hours of what at first sight looked like a perversion of the stereotypical team building exercises that firms impose on their employees from time to time. The hovering aura of cheap psychology soon gave way to the exercise's intended effects. Staff were grouped first into geographical areas of expertise, then according to disciplinary affiliation. The Pacific was pitched against Asia, sub-regions within Asia were pitched one against the other, and each discipline had to justify its existence. What are you worth? The budget, we were told, was tight. The implication was that someone had to go. *Mors tua vita mea*. My feeling was that everyone was facing the hit man's dilemma (Hart 2005). Each section of the Coombs building became a trench, the barricades made of palpable silence. It is to the credit of staff that morality did not go down the gutter, but morale certainly did.

It is not by chance that the issue of value attribution framed the 'review process', given the current situation where students are clients and universities are run like businesses. The School's worth had to be assessed. An external eye might have helped to make such an assessment. To grant impartiality, an external committee was hired (it would be nice to know at what cost). They met with some of the postgraduate students, including myself. Among the external committee members there was an anthropologist and a Pacific historian, whose work I both greatly admire. Having been able to converse in a common disciplinary language and with a shared understanding of the ANU's role in shaping Pacific history as a discipline, I left that meeting somehow relieved; an moment of sanity, for once. It is my understanding that the recommendations of the external review committee were not fully (if at all) considered in later decisions.[2]

The two paragraphs above should give a sense of what the (almost) two years of 'review' might have been like for all those involved. Fighting to shape the review's outcome felt like a Don Quixotesque endeavour, tinted with something sinister. The adversaries, like the windmills, were unmoveable, their mechanisms keeping grinding, despite what happened around them. Only they were not windmills, but human beings. "Don't take it personal, it's just business"; the hit man's dilemma again (Hart 2005: 1). This story could be written playing along with the theme of the fiction of things, institutions as personae, with real people seemingly being impersonal entities. Not now though. There is something else that I would like to reflect on.

[1] 'Consultation' has skyrocketed to the top three of my least favorite English words since.

[2] One of the committee members reportedly said: "It is not at all clear to me how the recommendations of the review, or our conclusions, have informed these decisions, and indeed, whether the exercise was in reality, a nominal one, and that other plans were already in train at the time." Rowan Callick, 'ANU's Brian Schmidt Faces Test with Language School Cuts', The Australian, 5 April 2016, (accessed on 9 April 2019).

By the end of the review process, student engagement was at its peak. The 'Hands Off' campaign and the creation of the undergraduates' Language Diversity Group, dominated the protests. Yet, these two efforts were born out of the division of the early stages. Management had to keep its hands off Asia. With only one course offered on a Pacific language (Tok Pisin), it is clear that 'languages' meant 'Asian languages'. Old subterranean divisions remerged. CHL is the result of the merging of the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies (RSPAS) and the Faculty of Asian Studies (FAS), respectively, research and teaching oriented institutions. Such divisions are physically visible, with the two components housed in the Coombs and Baldessin buildings. Given its legacy, naturally 'languages' offered the most courses, thus generating revenue. The later transformation into 'Hands off Asia-Pacific' was oblivious to what the geographical label entailed (and CHL *was the place* where such kinds of reflection could be meaningfully unpacked). 'Studies' was the umbrella term that made the disciplines disappear. Undergraduates, the clients, had more to say in some matters than the stakeholders (or workers, as I would rather call them). The logic of consumer capitalism, at least from my point of view, remained intact. The sense of urgency created by the approaching deadlines of the review shut out the very possibility of serious analysis of what was, and has been, going on. The CHL review posed questions of an enormous magnitude about what universities should be, what place they have, or *should* have in a given society, how all of their constituent parts can, or might interact, for its governance. It was too much to ask of anyone. There is no blame in my words, as bitter as they sound.

As a student representative, the biggest difficulty was to rally people (rightfully) closeted in their offices, and to raise awareness. Not all departments had representatives, so there was almost no network to tap into. It had to be created virtually from scratch. I cannot be credited for having achieved this, so it is going to be someone else's story to tell. The PhD students population is a fleeting one, composed by people living mostly on scholarships, often tied to the time constraints of their visas. The university might well be a home where you develop fond and meaningful relationships, but for many it is, perforce, a transitory period of time. It is hard, and frankly not entirely just, to ask people to sacrifice time and energies, already stretched thin by their PhD work, to engage with something as massive as the CHL review. A structure that grants a certain amount of continuity and that keeps alive a school's institutional knowledge is, in my view, of primary importance.[3] There is no good-for-all recipe, and things have to be worked out on the ground. PhD students are workers, and it is from such perspective that we should start. Unlike companies that can move their production to wherever labour is cheaper, universities are deeply emplaced.[4] They need to attract their workers, and the workforce is an international one. The status of 'non-citizen' has all sorts of implications for the worker, including the very possibility of shaping working conditions or having a say on the company's strategies. University workers of all levels need structures to face managerial decisions. Contradictions like these should be exploited to see the desired change. Desires, though, can be dangerous if wished for carelessly to genies. What kind of democracy do we want in our universities-workplaces, the consumer-citizen or the Soviet one? We should keep thinking while we act.

"Fighting to shape the review's outcome felt like a Don Quixotesque endeavour, tinted with something sinister. The adversaries, like the windmills, were unmoveable, their mechanisms keeping grinding, despite what happened around them. Only they were not windmills, but human beings."

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[3] The renovation of Coombs building might well whitewash the recent CHL history, but the ghosts of the review are going to inhabit this place, nevertheless.

[4] The fact that the ANU is in Canberra, a capital city with its own complex demographic and socio-economic dynamics, made it hard to find cross-sectional solidarity from other workers. It is not that all universities are ivory towers; they can integrate with the urban social milieu. In the case of the ANU, the fact that student housing is removed from other suburbs was a choice, not a natural fact. Recent attempts to shape the campus seem, at least seen from afar, to point towards the building of an ivory Kindergarten.

Language Diversity at ANU: One Perspective on the CHL Review, 2016

ERIN MCCULLAGH

In 2016, I worked as a part of Language Diversity at ANU, to stop proposed cuts to programs in the College of Asia and the Pacific's School of Culture, History and Languages (CHL). While working with the group, I learned valuable lessons about the university.

2016 was not the start of the review, rather it marked the point at which the review came to the attention of students. To summarise, there were two main impacts that the review would have on the future of the school. One was the loss of staff members and the casualisation of future staffing. The other was the movement towards teaching some languages (so called 'less-commonly taught' languages - a name which solidifies their status rather than attempting to change it) using online platforms. The school administration continually denied that these languages would be moved completely online while removing the face-to-face element. However, the recent whisperings regarding moving Burmese language courses to an entirely online platform only three years after the language began, proves there were some things we were not being told.

The review taught us many hard lessons, among which these five stand out as the most valuable to future generations of students.

1. The university as a business

The university is a business and undertakes many measures to ensure that its business runs smoothly. One way in which they do this is through conducting financial 'reviews' to measure sustainability in the various colleges and schools. As students, we can accept that these reviews must happen and try to understand the reasoning behind it, however there is a point at which our acceptance reaches its limit.

Whether or not a student body can accept review findings depends on the collegiality of the school in question. In the case of CHL, that collegiality was our most important asset.

2. The university as a hub of collegiality

The university can be a hub of collegiality. This is not always the case, particularly when class sizes can be large, tutorials sparse and the student population an ever-changing group of people.

CHL was and still is a rare example of collegiality both between students, and between students and teachers. It was this collegiality that led students to draw a line in the sand when it became clear that the school was undergoing a review.

The creation of a cohort in CHL was something that distinguished the school from others in the university. There are two factors that lead to the creation of a cohort in this case; the first is through language study and the second is through small class sizes. Language study - particularly of languages which have complex writing systems - requires a high concentration of contact hours. This means that the same people see each other many times per week - for example, first-year Mandarin students can spend around nine hours per week in class together - allow-

ing for the formation of strong friendships. Indeed, during language study it is impossible not to engage, as classroom exercises often involve partner or group work. As the same group of people finish beginner level courses and move into intermediate and advanced, the group grows stronger. Relationships with lecturers and tutors also deepen, as students are continually taught by the same people.

In addition, class size is an important factor. Although not all classes in CHL were language classes, most were small; that is, containing less than fifty, sometimes less than twenty students. Once again, this fosters strong relationships between students and teachers, particularly if students study the same types of subjects over a period of years.

The strong cohort of students who cared deeply about issues affecting the school was part of the nature of CHL. It was only to be expected that these students would seek to protect themselves and their teachers from the university's cost-cutting measures. The bonds between students and teachers wove together to form a stronger network than the school administration anticipated.

3. The university as a clever opponent

The university was and always has been a clever opponent. Advocacy movements did make an impact in 2016, mainly through the use of print and social media to hit the university's reputation. At the time, it felt mountainous. We showed the university that the student body does listen and does care. We educated ourselves about the issues, fought for our rights, appeared at important meetings and made as much noise as we could. Now, what remains? I have noticed recently that students are being invited to more meetings than previously, and that the university is being more careful about its image now. Looking back at the outcome of the review, however, there were many things which we could not stop. The changes recommended as part of the review, such as language classes moved to online platforms, are still being implemented, yet the students and in some cases the teachers are not being told until the very last moment.

The university has learnt an ironic lesson. It will conduct reviews with far more secrecy than before. The changes implemented will happen quickly and quietly, with barely any time for student and teacher bodies to react. Perhaps what we have taught the university is the importance of fighting dirty.

But if the university has learnt lessons about the way it conducts reviews, the student body has also learnt from this. We have set a valuable precedent for advocacy and the use of the student voice. Memories are held within places like rings within a tree's trunk, and the memories of our protests will remain. Yet, as the campus and the student body continues to change, we need to make sure that the memory of places such as the Union Court amphitheatre, which saw many protests over the years, does not disappear along with them.

4. The university as a place of constant change

The university is constantly changing - and nothing changes more often than the population of the people who fill it. The advocacy movements which rose up to protect CHL from the review faced many challenges. Overall, the effect was something like a firework which fizzles out after a short time. The reason why the movement could not be sustained over a long time can be boiled down to a few primary reasons, one of which is that the student population is replaced completely at least once every four-to-five years. It doesn't matter how hard one person fights, at some point every student graduates.

The second biggest challenge is burnout. The university is a formidable opponent, and continuous fighting is exhausting and not entirely conducive to good grades. As key individuals experienced burnout, and the future relied on students who had never actually experienced the review, it became harder to find people to take up the fight.

5. Thinking outside the university box

The university teaches us to think inside a box. Like it or not, we graduate knowing how to write essays not to demonstrate depth of thought, but to get high distinctions. We are taught to think critically, but not how to apply this thinking to our own situations. In history classes we learn about revolutions, in law about standing up for our rights. We learn the importance of language and culture to understanding. The university seeks to challenge these key learnings by refusing to fund programs it has taught us are important. The university should have expected a backlash.

At one point in 2016, I was told in no uncertain terms by a member of the administration to 'grow up'. The risk of becoming too emotional is always there with advocacy, but I was clearly being told to accept the review and understand that there are more important things to worry about in life. However, 'growing up' should not be synonymous with 'giving up'. The differences in age and the amazing wisdom of some of the other PhD students, tutors and senior lecturers I was working with proved to me that this fight wasn't centred around immaturity or denial. We weren't throwing a tantrum but locking onto a very real issue that would affect students far into the future. The important thing is to be mature, calm and considered, but not to 'grow up' if that means accepting a reality you don't believe in.

The university will not reform its ways. Reviews will happen again and again. Students must be prepared for this. We must use the structures that are put in place to create chains of communication between ourselves and the faculty, and thereby put ourselves into the process. We are an inherent part of the institution, and we must teach the university that we deserve a role in the way it is run.

The belligerent fight, which taught the university to be smarter in its ways, was not the best way to fight. The best thing to do is instead to keep our eyes and ears open. Act quickly and quietly, open the floor to conversations, let them know that we are watching them, and make our voices heard where we can. Keep the memories of previous movements alive, remember what we can achieve, and remember not to settle for less.

At Loss: International Students at the Centre of University Restructuring

EVI ELIYANAH

On a bright morning in March 2016, I came to my office at the Australian National University (ANU) with an extremely heavy heart. I heard that my primary supervisor was one of the academics losing their positions due to the school review. I could not help swearing all the way as I entered the building from Childers Street.

I could not imagine the future of my research, of my endeavour to finish what I had started three years earlier. I felt suffocated, despite the good weather and fresh air. Over time, the pain caused by my chronic endometriosis started to intensify due to depression. I started seeing a counsellor to help me manage my psychological wellbeing. This was all caused by the uncertainties surrounding the lengthy review process. That's when I started having a series of anxiety attacks.

Experiences of university restructuring are not universal. The process affects students differently. Sadly, these experiences are often neglected during the restructure process and in its aftermath. While a university might save millions of dollars in its upcoming budget, the students affected by the process are the ones who suffer the most. This is my experience of the university restructuring process as an international student at ANU.

In a protracted process beginning in 2014, my primary supervisor and more than ten others, lost their positions as a result of the review of the School of Culture History and Language (CHL). The situation seriously affected my thesis writing, but it also led to a series of health, financial, and immigration issues, for myself and others.

The prolonged process of the school review took a toll on the psychological wellbeing of many students. Many of my colleagues at CHL, both international and domestic, had to see a counsellor to help manage our mental health. The process led to a lot of uncertainties: would our supervisors stay or leave? If our supervisors had to leave, who would take over the position? What sort of adjustments would be made with a new supervisory arrangement? These were the imminent questions bugging us each and every day during the review process.

Meanwhile, the school continued to reassure us that the transition would be smooth, if any of our supervisors left. But such reassurance does not negate the fact that any changes to a supervisory arrangement would entail some adjustment, big or small. If the new supervisor taking over already had a high workload and high level of research supervision, students would not be able to enjoy the same level of attention and quality supervision. I was lucky that I could still involve my supervisor in my panel as an external supervisor. Still, it was not a smooth process of negotiation and I had to make some adjustment to my thesis flow and work rhythm.

Final year students like myself were some of the most anxious because any shift in supervision was extremely disruptive to us. A new supervisor might not like the framework we had been working on, or had a different way of doing things. A new su-

pervisor might simply not have adequate time for intensive supervision for a final year PhD student due to prior commitments.

As the psychological burden mounted due to the review process, it was much harder for me to focus on my writing. There were days when I was unable to produce a word for my thesis. There were days when I only stared blankly at my computer screen. I was anxious and depressed and the pain caused by my chronic endometriosis intensified. I had to take days off from writing each month due to the unbearable pain. I had to see doctors, an acupuncturist and a chiropractor, all to help me manage the pain. In order to develop strong advocacy for students amidst the review process, a lot of time was committed to attending meetings. As a result, an extension of study time for myself and others became unavoidable.

International and domestic students also experienced their program extensions differently. As international students, we are unlikely to have the same support systems in place as domestic students. I was an international student receiving a fixed-term scholarship under strict visa conditions. The extension of study time meant that I had to find an alternative source of income and extend my visa.

Previously, my scholarship was my primary source of income. My visa conditions did not allow me to work more than twenty hours per week. Due to the mounting pressure of completing my PhD, I chose to not work during my final year, but it was not easy due to the review process. I was unable to seek a scholarship extension because the provider of my scholarship assessed that the university must take responsibility, financially, for the extension I was seeking.

The extension of study time also meant visa extensions for international students. Certainly, there is an option to finish your PhD offshore for international students. However, this option is often not feasible, as students will not have the same level of access to resources and will be absent from a stimulating academic environment. Thus, finishing the PhD onshore is still the best option. Yet, doing so means, in most cases, undergoing a visa extension process, which tends to be time consuming and expensive. It is not a simple process.

Applicants for visa extension must provide evidence of financial support, be it a scholarship, or personal funds. They must also undergo a medical check-up (which is not cheap) and pay for the visa processing fee, on top of health insurance. PhD students with dependents will also likely have complex financial issues as a result, having to spend a great deal of money on the visa extension process. The visa extension process can also take a lot of time – sometimes weeks. Sometimes the result of the visa application is not in the applicant's favour.

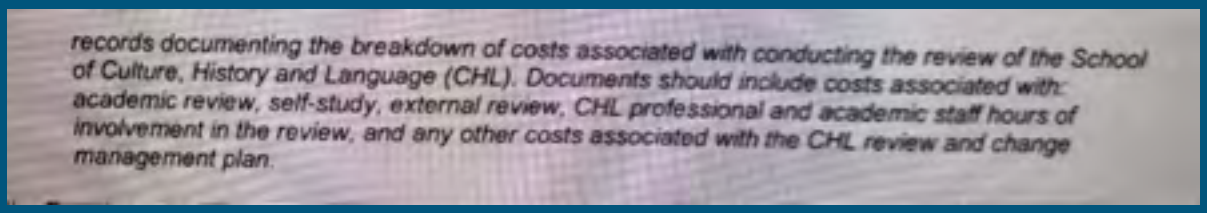
Just like the recognition of study time extension, the visa-related issues caused by the review process was barely acknowledged by the school, or the university more broadly. Student representatives must advocate for the rights of students to get financial support for visa extensions vigilantly during meetings with the university. The psychological impacts of the review were also more intensified, as the review process did not take the experience of students seriously. At meetings with the school and the university, student representatives must continue to reinforce that the disruptive nature of the review process was very real. It took many meetings to negotiate and advocate for students' rights, but in the end, the school agreed to fund an extra six months for PhD students seeking extension. In short, restructuring in a university is an ugly experience. The ramifications of the process are experienced differently by those affected. The different experiences of the review must not be undermined and must be taken into serious consideration.

Documents Unearthed on ANU's CHL Review

LINA KOLEILAT

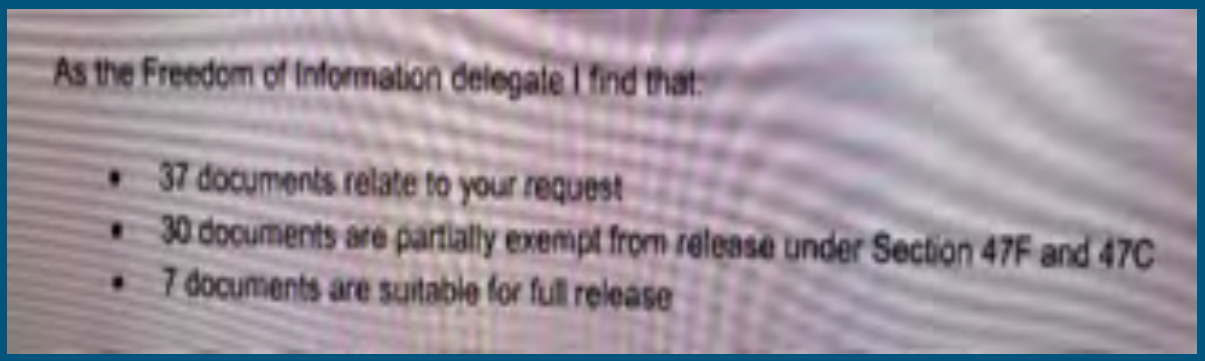
In March 2016, the Collective of Concerned CHL Higher Degree Research (HDR) students placed a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to the University Records office demanding information about what the extended CHL Review had cost the university so far. The most important information gathered from the FOI process was the lack of information and the lack of organisation and costing set by university management for the CHL Review. We will be publishing all FOI documents in full on our website—demosjournal.com—in the online version of this issue as part of our CHL Review Dossier.

In our FOI request we asked for the following:


records documenting the breakdown of costs associated with conducting the review of the School of Culture, History and Language (CHL). Documents should include costs associated with: academic review, self-study, external review, CHL professional and academic staff hours of involvement in the review, and any other costs associated with the CHL review and change management plan.

Since providing access to the documents is in the general public interest, to the ANU community specifically and to the general Australian tertiary education system, we were able to negotiate the processing charges of the FOI and reduce the charges from $510 to $382.50. The Collective of Concerned CHL HDR Students ran a fundraising campaign and gathered the funds to process the request.

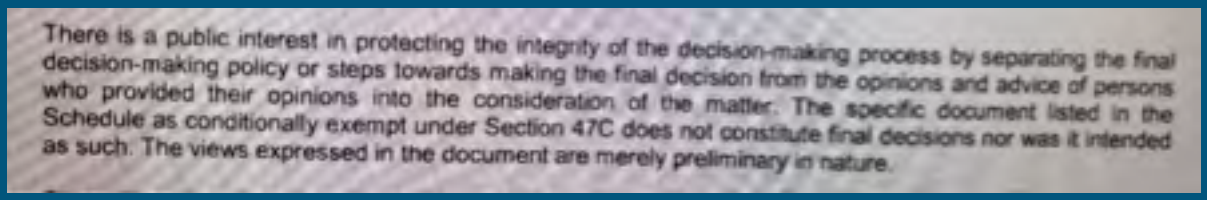
On 20 May 2016 a decision letter was issued by University Records in response to Freedom of Information Request No. 201600008C, included the attachment of 37 documents illustrated in this piece. Please note that all documents relating to this FOI will be available in full online at demosjournal.com. Some excerpts from the decision letter:


As the Freedom of Information delegate I find that:

- 37 documents relate to your request
- 30 documents are partially exempt from release under Section 47F and 47C
- 7 documents are suitable for full release

The documents received, which covered the period between February 2014 and March 2016 merely showed that costs associated with coffee and tea and catering for meetings and forums related to the review constituted 12% (or about AUD $8,000) of the total sum amount of the costs shown on all the documents (this total was AUD $61,963.52). The External Review Panel cost was AUD $53,794: 86% of the total amount was spent on the external review committee members' honorarium, tickets, accommodation, transport and meals. A document we are also publishing in this dossier shows that the advice and recommendations suggested by the external review committee were not followed by the university.

One of the ironies of integrity of the process of the FOI is how integrity is guaranteed by private rather than public deliberation as seen in the excerpt following:



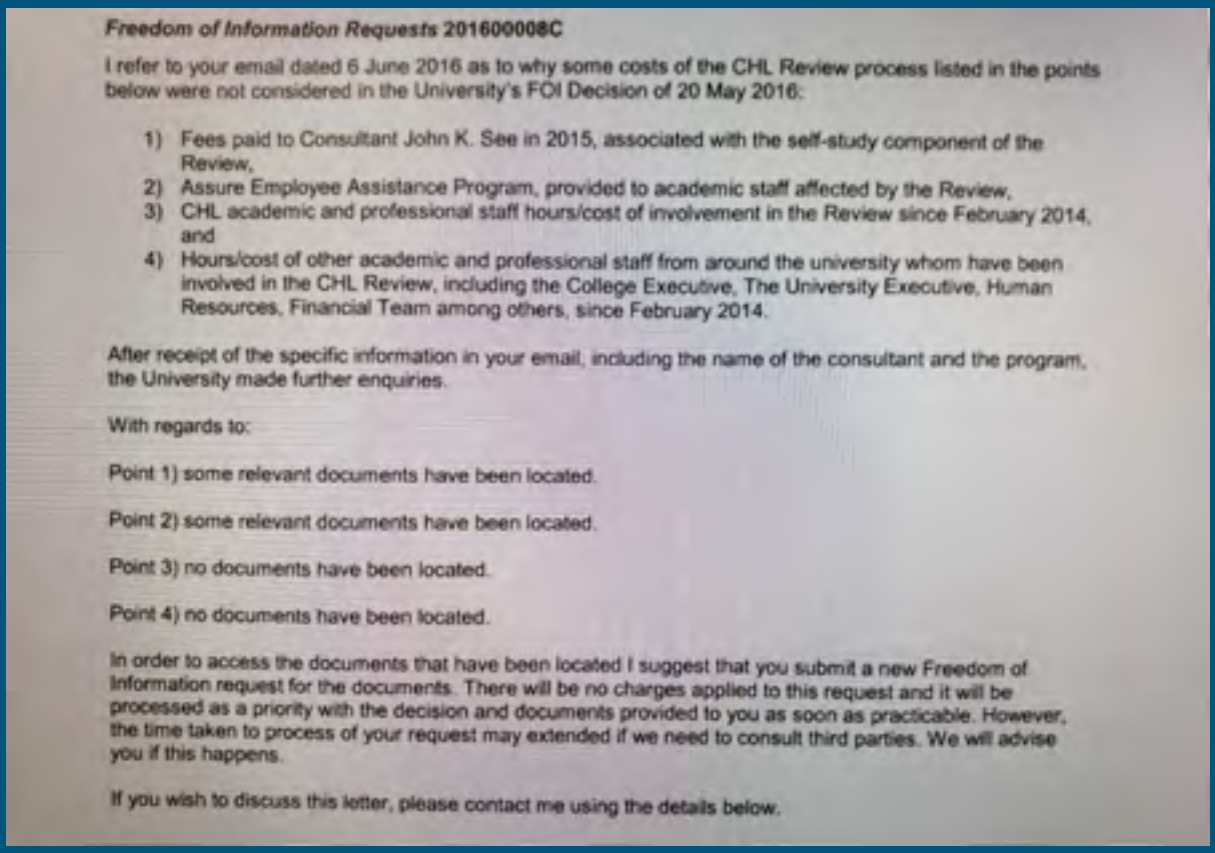
There is a public interest in protecting the integrity of the decision-making process by separating the final decision-making policy or steps towards making the final decision from the opinions and advice of persons who provided their opinions into the consideration of the matter. The specific document listed in the Schedule as conditionally exempt under Section 47C does not constitute final decisions nor was it intended as such. The views expressed in the document are merely preliminary in nature.

We have then followed up with University Records office asking them in an email:

"Some of the things we know are missing from your response include:

1) Fees paid to Consultant John K. See in 2015, associated with the self-study component of the Review.
2) Assure Employee Assistance Program, provided to academic staff affected by the Review
3) CHL academic and professional staff hours/cost of involvement in the Review since February 2014
4) Hours/cost of other academic and professional staff from around the university who have been involved in the CHL Review, including the College Executive, The University Executive, Human Resources, Financial Team among others, since February 2014."

On 22 July University Records replied with the following document (excerpt):



***Freedom of Information Requests* 201600008C**

I refer to your email dated 6 June 2016 as to why some costs of the CHL Review process listed in the points below were not considered in the University's FOI Decision of 20 May 2016:

1) Fees paid to Consultant John K. See in 2015, associated with the self-study component of the Review,
2) Assure Employee Assistance Program, provided to academic staff affected by the Review,
3) CHL academic and professional staff hours/cost of involvement in the Review since February 2014, and
4) Hours/cost of other academic and professional staff from around the university whom have been involved in the CHL Review, including the College Executive, The University Executive, Human Resources, Financial Team among others, since February 2014.

After receipt of the specific information in your email, including the name of the consultant and the program, the University made further enquiries.

With regards to:

Point 1) some relevant documents have been located.

Point 2) some relevant documents have been located.

Point 3) no documents have been located.

Point 4) no documents have been located.

In order to access the documents that have been located I suggest that you submit a new Freedom of Information request for the documents. There will be no charges applied to this request and it will be processed as a priority with the decision and documents provided to you as soon as practicable. However, the time taken to process of your request may extended if we need to consult third parties. We will advise you if this happens.

If you wish to discuss this letter, please contact me using the details below.

No documents have been located for the costs of the time wasted by staff, academics and students who were involved in this process that stretched over three years. Even for the academics who were paid for their time, the external review committee's work was not taken into consideration by ANU university management. Instead of reading, writing, thinking and debating, the school community was dragged into years of stress and anxiety in meetings and forums that had no tangible outcomes and no clear purpose. The real cost of the review are long term costs members of the CHL community paid with their time, the effects of stress on their bodies and their families, these are costs not to be shown in redacted documents provided in a Freedom of Information request, nor will they be shown, considered or appreciated by the university management. The cost of the CHL review is still palpable in the School community, in people who left, and those who stayed with a lingering aftertaste of injustice on why some of their colleagues had to leave... and when will they be next.

Friday, 20 May 2016 at 10:26:59 AM Australian Eastern Standard Time

Subject: Re: CHL Review Draft Letter of Invitation
Date: Tuesday, 3 February 2015 at 7:02:58 PM Australian Eastern Daylight Time
From: Veronica Taylor
To: Ken George, [redacted], Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
CC: CAP - CHL Director, CAP Dean EA

Dear all:

Many thanks.
I confirm that the travel funding for the review is coming from the College.

[redacted]

Best wishes,

Veronica

Professor Veronica Taylor | Dean, College of Asia & the Pacific and Director, Research School of Asia & the Pacific| HC Coombs Building #9 | The Australian National University | Canberra ACT 0200 | Australia| Tel: +61 2 61252221| Fax: +61 2 61254214 | CRICOS Provider #00120C

From: Kenneth George <ken.george@anu.edu.au>
Date: Sunday, 1 February 2015 8:44 PM
To: [redacted], "Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)" <dvc.academic@anu.edu.au>, Veronica Taylor <Veronica.Taylor@anu.edu.au>
Cc: CAP - CHL Director <dir.chl@anu.edu.au>, CAP Dean EA <cap.dean.ea@anu.edu.au>
Subject: Re: CHL Review Draft Letter of Invitation

Dear [redacted], Marnie, and Veronica,

First, my thanks to [redacted] for the draft letter. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

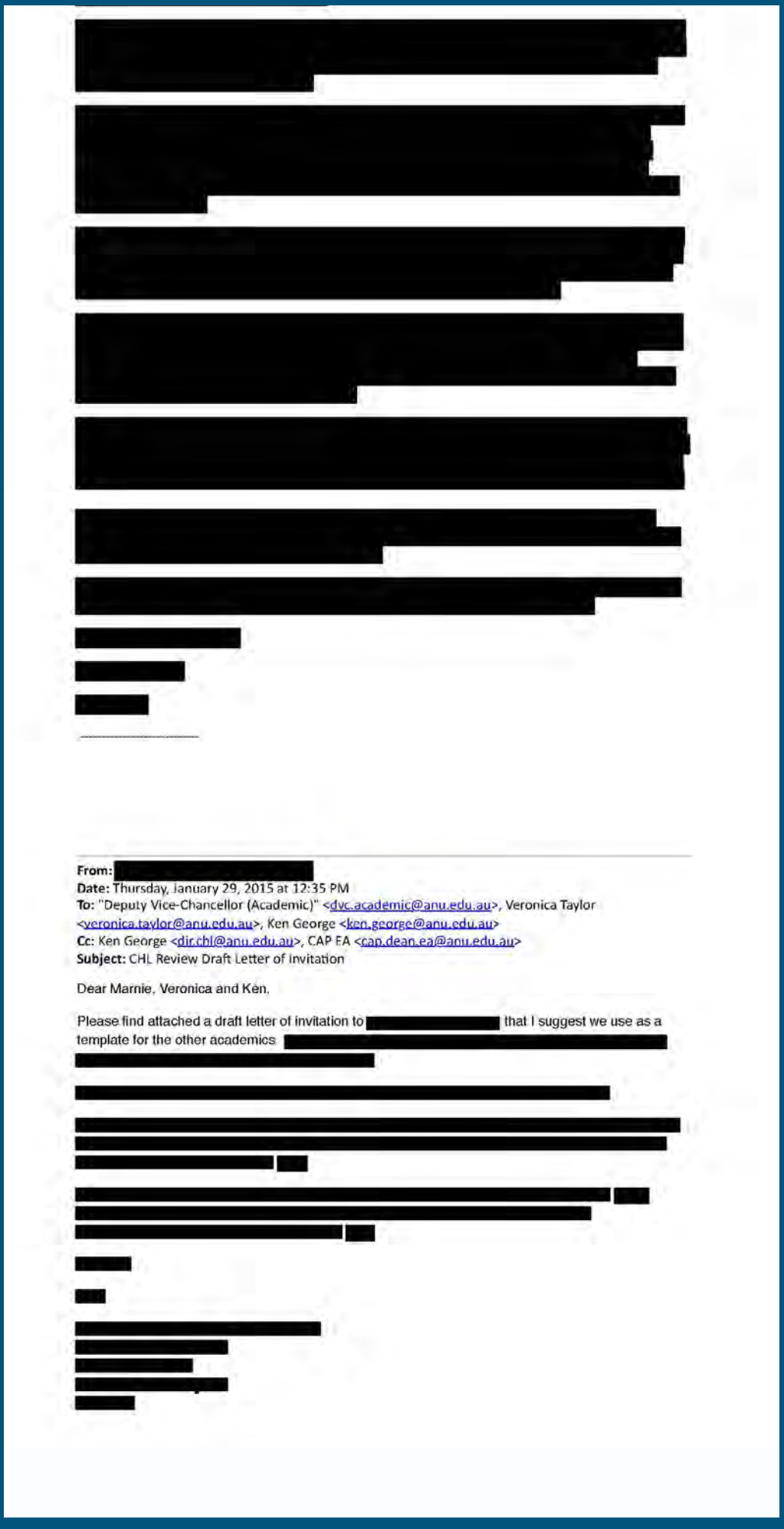
[redacted]

As always
Ken

Professor Ken George | Director, School of Culture, History and Language, ANU College of Asia & the Pacific | HC Coombs Building #9 | The Australian National University | Acton ACT 2601 | Australia | Tel: +61 2 6125 5125| Fax: +61 2 6125 1463 | CRICOS Provider #00120C

[redacted]

[redacted]

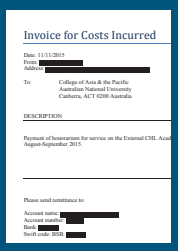


From: [redacted]
Date: Thursday, January 29, 2015 at 12:35 PM
To: "Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)" <dvc.academic@anu.edu.au>, Veronica Taylor <veronica.taylor@anu.edu.au>, Ken George <ken.george@anu.edu.au>
Cc: Ken George <dir.chl@anu.edu.au>, CAP EA <cap.dean.ea@anu.edu.au>
Subject: CHL Review Draft Letter of Invitation

Dear Marnie, Veronica and Ken,

Please find attached a draft letter of invitation to [redacted] that I suggest we use as a template for the other academics [redacted]

Doc. No.	Date	Size	Description	Decision on access	Exemption
1	14 August 2015	1 page	Invoice from Peppers Gallery Hotel Canberra	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
2	14 August 2015	1 page	Invoice from Global Business Travel	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
3	14 August 2015	1 page	Invoice for costs incurred re payment of honorarium for service	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
4	11 November 2015	1 page	Invoice for costs incurred re payment of honorarium for service	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
5	11 November 2015	1 page	Invoice for costs incurred re payment of honorarium for service	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
6	11 November 2015	1 page	Invoice for costs incurred re payment of honorarium for service	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
7	11 November 2015	1 page	Invoice for costs incurred re payment of honorarium for service	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
8	9 February 2016	1 page	Tax invoice from Vanilla Bean John Curtin Cafe	Full Release	
9	17 February 2016	4 pages	Tax invoice from University House	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
10	1 September 2015	5 pages	Vendor application form	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
11	Undated	1 page	Expense reimbursement form	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
12	13 August 2015	1 page	Tax invoice from University House	Full Release	
13	18 August 2015	1 page	Tax invoice from University House	Full Release	
14	14 August 2015	1 page	Tax invoice from University House	Full Release	
15	10 August 2015	1 page	Cabcharge invoice	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
16	10 August 2015	1 page	Hotel Op Pity Ltd invoice	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
17	10 August 2015	1 page	Chats Cafe invoice	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
18	21 August 2015	1 page	Rydges Sydney Airport Invoice	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
19	11 August 2015	2 pages	Bakery Op Pty Ltd invoice	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
20	11 August 2015	1 page	Bakery Op Pty Ltd invoice	Full Release	
21	12 August 2015	1 page	Invoice from Global Business Travel	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
22	15 August 2015	1 page	Invoice from Peppers Gallery Hotel Canberra	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
23	15 August 2015	1 page	Invoice from Peppers Gallery Hotel Canberra	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
24	14 August 2015	1 page	Invoice from Peppers Gallery Hotel Canberra	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
25	10 August 2015	2 pages	Invoice from Peppers Gallery Hotel Canberra	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
26	10 September 2015	1 page	Expense report	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
27	9 March 2016	1 page	Invoice from Corporate Catering by Mr Cappuccino	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
28	24 March 2016	1 page	Tax invoice from Vanilla Bean John Curtin Cafe	Full Release	
29	7 April 2016	1 page	Tax invoice from Vanilla Bean John Curtin Cafe	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
30	13 April 2016	1 page	Tax invoice from Vanilla Bean John Curtin Cafe	Full Release	
31	7 May 2015	1 page	Invoice from Global Business Travel	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
32	13 May 2015	1 page	Invoice from Global Business Travel	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
33	15 June 2015	1 page	Invoice from Global Business Travel	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
34	18 June 2015	1 page	Invoice from Global Business Travel	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
35	7 July 2015	1 page	Invoice from Global Business Travel	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
36	7 July 2015	1 page	Invoice from Global Business Travel	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy
37	3 February 2015 7:02pm	3 pages	Email from Veronica Taylor to Ken George, 3rd party, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Re: Re: CHK Review Draft Letter of Invitation	Partial release	S47F – personal privacy S47C – deliberative processes



Invoice for Costs Incurred

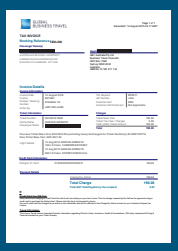
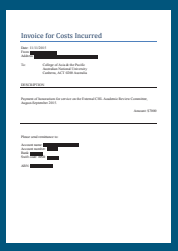
Date: 11/11/2015
From: [redacted]
Address: [redacted]

To:
College of Asia & the Pacific
Australian National University
Canberra, ACT 0200 Australia

DESCRIPTION

Payment of honorarium for service on the External CHL Acad
August-September 2015.

Please send remittance to:

Account name: [redacted]
Account number: [redacted]
Bank: [redacted]
Swift code: BSAU [redacted]


Invoice for Costs Incurred

Date: 11/11/2015
From: [redacted]
Address: [redacted]

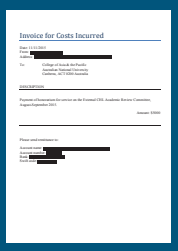
To:
College of Asia & the Pacific
Australian National University
Canberra, ACT 0200 Australia

DESCRIPTION

Payment of honorarium for service on the External CHL Academic Review Committee, August-September 2015

Amount: $7000

Please send remittance to:

Account name: [redacted]
Account number: [redacted]
Bank: [redacted]
Swift code: [redacted]

Invoice for Costs Incurred

Date: 11/11/2015
From: [redacted]
Address: [redacted]

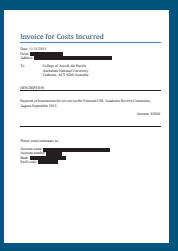
To:
College of Asia & the Pacific
Australian National University
Canberra, ACT 0200 Australia

DESCRIPTION

Payment of honorarium for service on the External CHL Academic Review Committee, August-September 2015

Amount: $3000

Please send remittance to:

Account name: [redacted]
Account number: [redacted]
Bank: [redacted]
Swift code: [redacted]

Invoice for Costs Incurred

Date: 11/11/2015
From: [redacted]
Address: [redacted]

To:
College of Asia & the Pacific
Australian National University
Canberra, ACT 0200 Australia

DESCRIPTION

Payment of honorarium for service on the External CHL Academic Review Committee, August-September 2015

Amount: $3000

Please send remittance to:

Account name: [redacted]
Account number: [redacted]
Bank: [redacted]
Swift code: [redacted]

Tax Invoice


PAID IN FULL

GST Free











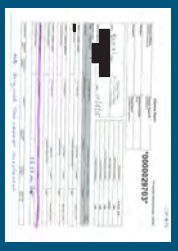





















Dear Vice-Chancellor

During the CHL review, numerous academics and professional associations wrote letters to the ANU Vice Chancellor in support of CHL and its community and against the cuts. In addition to the excerpts from some of the letters presented below are two letters printed in full. Demos journal's editorial team thank the respective associations for their kind permission to re-print their letters. We will be publishing these letters in full on our website—demosjournal.com—in the online version of this issue as part of our CHL Review Dossier. If the university failed to recognise the valuable work of CHL's scholarly community, the letters preserve the respect it deserved.

American Anthropological Association

January 4, 2016

"I am writing to urge you in the strongest possible terms to reconsider the university's decision to reduce next year's budget for the School of Culture, History, and Language (CHL). We understand that the proposed budget cuts would result in a dismissal of up to one-third of CHL's professional staff, an irretrievable loss of expertise that serves the international community of anthropological scholars as well as the Australian National University.

At the American Anthropological Association, we look to our colleagues at the ANU for their intellectual leadership in the social anthropology of Asia and the Pacific, their illumination of immigration policies and lived experiences, and their extensive international collaborations in archaeology and natural history."

Association for Asian Studies

April 11, 2016

"It is… with no small concern that we have learned of proposed cost-saving measures—the elimination of "less commonly taught languages" (some of which, as we know, are spoken by many millions) and the likely reduction of highly-trained professional faculty engaged in language instruction. Skilled language- learning is the cornerstone of our profession; it opens the door to the study of culture, religion, politics and everything else and is therefore a critical asset for anyone who wishes to acquire in depth understanding of the region. It is almost certain that these measures would compromise the quality of instruction at ANU and as a consequence, also compromise the ANU "brand" as certification of high quality training in Asian Studies, a field that serves the academy, diplomacy, business, and policy while informing the general public about this critical, diverse, and complex region. We understand that cost-saving measures are never undertaken lightly, but we would urge you to think very carefully in this instance of the risk of destroying a valuable asset whose renown is not only national but global."

Yale University Council on Southeast Asian Studies

April 11, 2016

"We make no exaggeration when we say that the programs being threatened are not only important to ANU's international reputation, but are in fact globally important resources with far-reaching impacts felt all the way around the world. In the world of Southeast Asian Studies, the ANU's School of Culture, History, and Language is a central player in the field. It is what we Southeast Asianists, referencing the ancient mandala polities of the region, would call an "exemplary center."

The reputation of the faculty and the language and area studies training in the threatened programs at ANU has been built up over a long period of sustained commitment to careful research, study, and program development. The list of faculty in this program both current and emeritus reads like a "who's who" of our field.

The proposal to cut these particular programs seems out of synch with developments in global research interests within academia as well as with more pragmatic concerns that are central to geo-political and economic developments around the world, and especially for Australia."

South Asian Studies Association of Australia
January 14, 2016

"South Asian Studies at CHL has an illustrious history and at present is at the cutting edge of research and teaching on the subcontinent, especially in history, anthropology and literary studies. During the last decade South Asia expertise across Australian Universities has been weakened severely by a wave of retirements and, in most instances, these positions have not been replaced. As a consequence, budget cuts or job losses at CHL would cause irreparable harm to efforts to re-build South Asian studies in this country."

The Southeast Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies
April 11, 2016

"The School's faculty represent some of the most respected names in Southeast Asian studies with award-winning publications and reputations for serving in leadership positions in the field internationally. The School has also earned a reputation for advancing the future of the field by hiring some of the strongest young scholars and promoting their research careers. This means that many have looked to ANU as a leader to envision the future of Southeast Asian Studies. Given this international reputation, our members were baffled to hear that ANU was considering substantial cuts to the School.

The core of this excellence in research and student training is language study. The choice to de-prioritize, or de-professionalize, language instruction particularly for Southeast Asian languages that are offered by few other institutions, poses a troubling threat to the future of scholarship. Not only does Australia's future lay in greater interactions with Asia and thus in students trained in Southeast Asian languages, language study forms the core of innovative and insightful future policy and research work."

International Union of Anthropological and Ethnographical Sciences
January 4, 2016

"Well-researched reports by the Asian Studies Association of Australia have revealed that Asia expertise has been in decline in Australia, while the ANU has been rightly regarded as a remaining bastion of strength until now. The loss of this strength will leave Australia poorly equipped to meet its future with confidence. While easy to dismantle, an established center of research, once disrupted, could take decades to rebuild its reputation and its ability to attract the best scholars from around the world and, meanwhile, remaining staff may be demoralized seeing their colleagues dismissed."

Vietnam Studies Group (A Section of the Association for Asian Studies)
April 7, 2016

"In conclusion, we respectfully suggest you to build on a strength of ANU, not gut it."

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Asian Studies Program, School of Languages and Cultures
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

7 April 2016

To Professor Brian Schmidt,
Vice Chancellor, Australian National University

We the staff and students of Asian Studies and affiliated departments at the University of Sydney are writing to express our serious concerns over the proposed changes to the School of Culture, History and Language (CHL) in the College of Asia and the Pacific at the Australian National University (ANU). A number of the undersigned are graduates of CHL. We are particularly worried about the impact these changes will have on staff and students at ANU, on Asian Studies throughout Australia, and on Australia's engagement with the region.

At a time when Australia is looking to orient itself further to the Asia Pacific region, cuts to this School could have disastrous effects. If Australia is meaningfully to engage with its neighbours as part of its participation in the Asia-Pacific region it depends on knowledge of Asia. The most recent of the many reports on Australia and Asia, the Henry Report, *Australia in the Asian Century*, emphasised that, "As a nation we also need to broaden and deepen our understanding of Asian cultures and languages, to become more Asia literate." (p.2). Part of the ANU's foundation is to serve as Australia's national centre for Asian Studies. If the ANU cannot provide this knowledge base, no one else will. While our university is currently making a major investment in supporting research and teaching on Southeast Asia and China and has maintained its support for Indonesian, in the last decade Hindi, Thai and Vietnamese Studies have disappeared, and Sanskrit can only be maintained through making use of the ANU's on-line offerings. Many other universities, including three in the greater Sydney area, have ceased teaching Indonesian.

The proposed changes at the ANU directly threaten the integrity of language courses. Already Tibetan and Javanese have been cut. Now other languages such as Burmese, Vietnamese, Thai, Hindi and Sanskrit will only be taught by short-term, rather than permanent staff, mainly through on-line offerings. Anyone who has studied a language knows how important face-to-face teaching is, and also that maintaining programs depends on staff security of employment. It looks like only one continuing member of staff will be left as the dedicated teacher of Indonesian language. Cumulatively, these are the languages of 1.5 billion people, including people in our multi-cultural society. To downgrade these languages would be to severely lessen our understanding and interactions with a major part of the world.

In the university sector, to divorce teaching and research is to weaken both. In most rankings, the ANU is the top or one of the top three universities in Australia. In the Asian region, that enviable reputation is based on the long-standing commitment of research on Asia, including the training of many Asian leaders. Undermining the critical mass of Asianists, and lowering morale through the process of cutting jobs or removing tenure,

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THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

will have a direct impact on the esteem in which the ANU is held. The loss of staff would also be a loss of collective experience and engagement with the region. Each staff member brings to the ANU their own academic networks and in-country knowledge, which is vital both for international collaboration and for the running of short-term exchanges, such as those supported by the New Colombo Plan scheme. The threatened cuts would also be cuts in relationships with Asian universities and communities.

The threatened cuts are already having a direct impact on students, and their efforts to support CHL are admirable. While it may seem that our university would be the beneficiary of students leaving the ANU, this would not really be the case, as we, along with other universities in Australia, benefit from on-going collaboration with our colleagues in CHL, in areas such as seminars, joint research grant application, and the largely-undocumented collegial activities of thesis marking and sharing of intellectual resources. All these would be threatened by the proposed cuts.

We recognise that Federal funding formulae are resulting in serious underfunding of Australian universities. Nevertheless, within universities there are always opportunities for cross-subsidisation, for example most Faculties of Medicine in Australia would not be able to exist as self-sustaining units. The discipline of Critical Accountancy Studies has demonstrated how budgets and accounts can be manipulated as tools of power, and while we have received only varying second-hand versions of the budgetary situation, it seems that claims of a "deficit" cannot be taken on face value unless the whole of the university is taken into account. In addition, surely Asian languages and cultures are a vital national priority, and cannot be reduced to a monetary calculation.

We call on the ANU management to understand the greater value that CHL provides the ANU community, its importance to Asian Studies in Australia and its significant role in strengthening Australia's ties with the Asia Pacific.

Signed,

Professor Adrian Vickers FAHA, Director, Asian Studies Program
Dr Mark Allon, Lecturer in Sanskrit and Buddhist Studies
Dr Olivier Ansart FAHA, Chair, Japanese Studies Department
Dr Lionel Babicz, Lecturer in Japanese Studies
Dr Siobhan Campbell, Research Associate, Asian Studies
Dr Thushara Dibley, Deputy Director, Sydney Southeast Asia Centre
Dr Dwi Novi Djenar, Chair, Indonesian Studies Department
Professor Michele Ford, Director, Sydney Southeast Asia Centre
Dr Keith Foulcher, Honorary Fellow, Indonesian Studies Department
Dr Vannessa Hearman, Lecturer, Indonesian Studies
Dr Su-Kyoung Hwang, Lecturer in Korean Studies
Dr Chiew Hui Ho, Lecturer in Buddhist Studies
Dr Nerida Jarkey, Senior Lecturer in Japanese Studies
Dr Mats Karlsson, Senior Lecture in Japanese Studies
Professor Michael Lewis, FAHA, Japanese Studies
Dr Duk-Soo Park, Senior Lecturer in Korean Studies
Dr Rebecca Suter, Senior Lecturer in Japanese Studies
Dr Wei Wang, Lecturer in Chinese Studies
Peter Worsley, Emeritus Professor of Indonesian Studies
Dr Seiko Yasumoto, Senior Lecture in Japanese Studies
Dr Xiaohuan Zhao, Senior Lecture in Chinese Studies

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Professor Vivienne Bath, Director of the Centre for Asian and Pacific Law
Dr David Brophy, Lecturer in Modern Chinese History, NTEU Branch Committee
Professor Linda Connor, Chair, Department of Anthropology
Helen Dunstan, Emeritus Professor of Chinese Studies
Dr Robert Fisher, Senior Lecture in Human Geography
Dr Holly High, Senior Research Fellow, Department of Anthropology
Professor Meaghan Morris, Department of Gender and Cultural Studies
Dr Robbie Peters, Director of Development Studies, Department of Anthropology
Dr Jane Chi Hyun Park, Senior Lecturer, Department of Gender and Cultural Studies
Dr Andres Rodriguez, Lecturer in Chinese History
Dr Aim Shinpeng, Lecture in Comparative Politics, Dept of Government and International Relations
Dr Stephen Whiteman, Lecturer in Art History

Steve Dodds, PhD student
Sharon Elkind, DSS student
Natali Pearson, PhD student
Wayan Jarrah Sastrawan, MA (Research) student

Jermaine Craig, Honours student
Sayumi Hansen, Honours student
Vivian Honan, Honours student
Kip Maddox, Honours student
Shiffa Samad, Honours student
Michael Varnay, Honours student
Lauren Waring, Honours student
John Wilton, Honours student
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Professor of Medical Anthropology
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ASIA CENTER
Victor and William Fung Director

March 10, 2016

Prof. Brian Schmidt
Vice-Chancellor
Australian National University

Dear Professor Schmidt,

First can I extend my own congratulations on your appointment as Vice-Chancellor of ANU. I wish you well in the position, and in particular in the challenge of burnishing ANU's fine international reputation for the accomplishments of its faculty and students.

As a member of the committee to review the School for Culture, History and Languages I have received several communications from faculty, past and present, to let me know of their dismay about the decisions that have been taken to reorganize the School and in particular, to reduce faculty numbers quite dramatically. As it has been explained to me, while the plan states that 15 people will 'transition', which I take to be a euphemism denoting involuntary departure for some or all from the University, in fact when others on contracts and recent 'early retirements' are considered the total number of positions lost in recent times will be much higher. Without quibbling over short or long term numbers it seems to me that it is inevitable that this will damage ANU's decades-long eminence in these fields.

It is in fact astonishing to me that a University that has one of the world's great Asian and Pacific studies programs, organized around the deep study of culture, history and language, seems to be in the process of destroying the program when many universities in the rest of the world are building Asian studies.

It is not at all clear to me how the recommendations of the Review or our conclusions have informed these decisions and indeed whether the exercise was in reality a nominal one and that other plans were already in train at the time.

This aside, in my view it would be a major backward step to dilute the expertise and jeopardize the profile of ANU as one of the pre-eminent universities internationally for its expertise in the humanities and social sciences focusing on Asia and the Pacific. As Director of Harvard's Asia Center with a long research career in China, and a professor of both medicine and anthropology I have long been familiar with the ANU, its research and graduates as beacons of excellence, public scholarship and expertise in the field.

It saddens me to read the overview of the management plan. It concerns me equally that our careful deliberations and advice would appear to have been, if not superfluous, then certainly set aside. Perhaps this was done in the interest of unwinding problems that seem to have been caused largely by structural decisions taken by the University in the past and a lack of appropriate oversight, resources and governance at an executive level to ensure that these were appropriate, viable, sustainable and academically sound.

But whatever the reason I would ask you to rethink the management plan. Surely there is a way of proceeding that does less damage but rather strengthens what is already one of the great strengths of ANU.

I am happy for my letter to be shared with staff but wanted to do you the courtesy of writing personally rather than in broadcast mode and leave this to your discretion. I have only shared it with fellow review committee members at this stage.

With good wishes,

Arthur Kleinman, M.D.
Victor and William Fung Director
Harvard Asia Center
Esther and Sidney Rabb Professor of Anthropology
and Professor of Medical Anthropology and Professor of Psychiatry
Department of Global Health and Social Medicine
Harvard Medical School

PHOTOGRAPHS: ANNIE McCARTHY

Knights in the Garden

MICHAEL FARRELL

Much clanking in the rhododendrons, knights in the garden
Black knights, white knights, knights of the haiku table
Goes at pashing and tableaux of Glenrowan, garden knights

Much enjoyment of metal frustration, knights in garden
Larkspur, machine parts: satiric neighbours miming
Knights in the garden. Medieval war makes some tired

Makes some frisky. Makes frightening music says jockey
Says poetry critic. Makes mornings crispy says armour
Factory. Iris beneath the visor, keep to hydrangea path

Those were the knights' instructions, do not be
Distracted, they were told by popup tulips popup dahlia
Beds, hail popping down from heavens to put dents in

Their mail. Much clanking in the broom cupboard on
Inclement days. That's the way, I hear, amplified
Through golfing gear, relegated hi-fi equipment, I don't

Know what houses have. Knights in the garden
Undergrads or sorcerers on the run; large fauna avoiding
Shooting parties between other kinds? Garden suits

Made for wooing, chasing and prevention of casual assault
Some knights feel their armour is rusted on, while
Gardens feel they can't grow or present themselves to other

Kinds of visitors including bees, for the jousting
Jousting with words and ideas too, clang of helmets in
Disputes. Knights in the garden flinging gladis to

Provoke duels over 80s trivia. So many blemished ideals
And faces protected from the casual ear or gaze. Who
Are they all? They must have gardens of their own to go to

These knights, where they can read obscure Swiss
Geniuses, reenact enrolment ceremonies from the world's
First university, viz, Fez, to spill wine inside their outer

Skins, desire others who are similarly invisible, greyly
Unattainable in gardens. Trail ivy through the beer bottles'
Brown, visual music; in the black, visor-down dawn

Ending the Neoliberal University

TIM HOLLO

"Universities aren't just a place where people get qualifications. They are a public space; they're public institutions, for the public good."

This is an edited version of an address to an NTEU election forum in April 2019, when the author was Greens candidate for the seat of Canberra.

Universities are a critical site not just of learning, but also of social change, of progress, of democracy. Universities are where the ideas for social and democratic change tend to be born and incubated, because they are where analysis of social, economic, and environmental outcomes is undertaken, and where solutions to the problems identified are developed. They are where people and ideas come together, formally and informally, to challenge each other to rethink, cross-fertilise, establish new connections, learn from and inform one another, create new paths and re-establish old ones. They are where we train the next generation of teachers, engineers, doctors, lawyers, economists, to be not just technically better, but also more thoughtful, and where we reimagine those fields for the changing world. They're where we develop vaccines, think through more effective forms of democratic decision-making, learn from and come to terms with our history, and come to understand ourselves better, physically, psychologically, sociologically, ecologically.

Universities aren't just a place where people get qualifications. They are a public space; they're public institutions, for the public good.

Over the last thirty years, however, a progression of neoliberal reforms, starting with the Dawkins reforms under Hawke and Keating, have undermined the ability of universities to play their vital social and democratic role. These institutions for the public good are being turned towards private profit. Instead of sites of learning and wisdom, the corporate, managerialist, instrumentalist approach has sought to turn them into factories, with academics and professional staff the replaceable and interchangeable cogs in a machine churning out students as widgets; good little workers, ready to play their role in the market.

The Greens have long advocated against this, and this election we presented the most comprehensive and exciting platform in this space for a generation - a platform that would go a considerable way to reversing the damage, with an explicit agenda of decorporatising higher education and supporting students and staff to do what you're supposed to do.

The Dawkins reforms were by no means all bad. They opened up access, and introduced a level of accountability that is, to some extent and in some form, necessary. But they began the process of turning public good institutions into part of the all-encompassing marketplace. A process which began in part as an attempt to enhance the social mobility that higher education provides, has ended up doing the opposite.

The key aspects of the neoliberalisation were: the reintroduction of education by fee for service; increasing the competitive processes for grants; and replacing collegiate decision-making with corporate, managerialist, KPI-based decision-making. All three of these have increased out of sight in the intervening 30 years, under Liberal and Labor governments, abetted by senior management, and exacerbated by funding cuts, most recently through the freeze in Commonwealth Supported Places and in research block grants, as well as cost of living going through the roof while student support falls through the floor

"If we know anything at all about the future of work - and there's a lot more we don't know than we do - it's that the vital skills of the future, the ones that computers can't replace, will be analytical, critical thinking, care and creativity, and an understanding of human nature and ethics."

The impact on students has been immense. Fees are now amongst the highest in the OECD, and the threshold for paying back the debt is now well below median income. At the same time, while accommodation on and off campus is increasingly expensive, Youth Allowance, Austudy and Abstudy have

stagnated, meaning a great majority of students have to work, sometimes multiple jobs, to put themselves through uni. This both limits access to tertiary education to those who can afford it, and drastically limits the extracurricular student life which is a vital part of learning. Hanging out on campus and discussing the ideas you've been studying with other students is how deep learning happens and is now largely a thing of the past. Add to this the destruction of student life and support on campus through Voluntary Student Unionism, another classic neoliberal intervention, and the student experience is increasingly anaemic.

Concurrently, there's been a dramatic reduction in options for student learning, through the narrowing of curricula and the focus on job-ready training... for jobs which probably won't exist in the same form in the coming years. If we know anything at all about the future of work - and there's a lot more we don't know than we do - it's that the vital skills of the future, the ones that computers can't replace, will be analytical, critical thinking, care and creativity, and an understanding of human nature and ethics. Those aren't taught and learned through job-ready programs and narrow curricula, but through broad, challenging, interconnected programs.

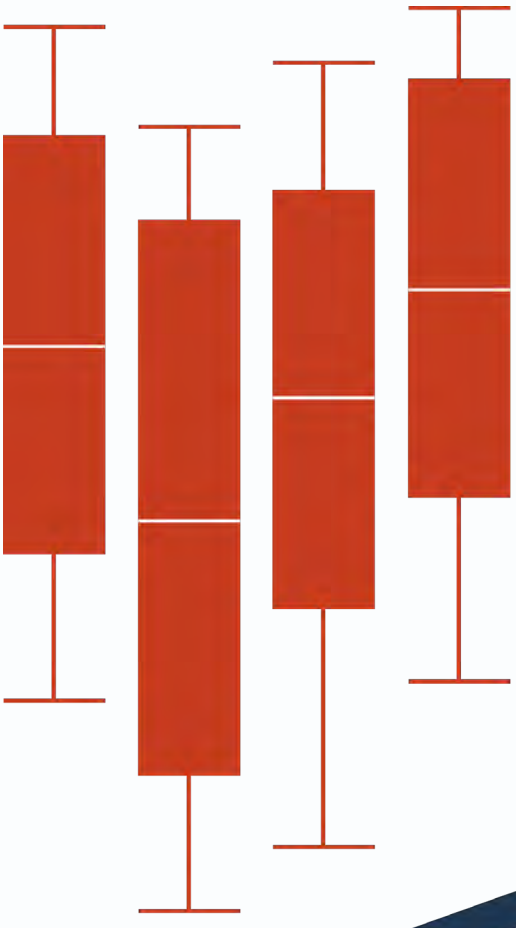
Ironically, the narrow focus on training for the existing market is preparing students astonishingly poorly for the real world. A return to public good education would do a far better job. But it would also produce a generation better prepared to challenge entrenched power. And that's just what those in power are seeking to avoid.

"The old idea of the academy as a commons, where knowledge is shared to the benefit of all, is replaced by private ownership of knowledge for commercial purposes."

The impact on teachers, researchers and professional staff has been, if anything, greater.

One of the basic tenets of the university as a public institution is the principle of academic freedom, and this principle has been whittled away - and in some cases hacked at. The hacking has been done by Coalition governments, through political interventions such as the national interest test for ARC grants, and, in the Howard years, the instructions handed down to deprioritise research regarding climate change, for example. The deep-seated anti-intellectualism of the Liberal and National parties, egged on by the commentariat, is horribly destructive and short-sighted. But the whittling away has been done by governments of both stripes, furthered by senior management, through KPIs, underfunding, corporate partnerships, and the destruction of job security.

Insecurity of work in our universities is at crisis point. And it's particularly offensive when set in the context of bloated salaries for senior management. According to the Australia Institute, over 25% of university jobs are now casual, and standard employment has dropped below 50%. The majority of classes are taught by casuals, and some 80% of researchers are now on contract. Where things are bad for academic staff, they are often even worse for professional staff, expected to do more with less, and with even less negotiating pow-



er. 25% of all university employees get no sick leave, parental leave or days off.

This drives many out of fields they are passionate about and incredibly good at and into jobs outside unis because they are desperate for stability. Without passing judgement on the staff, it is also problematic for students, being taught by people with the sword of Damocles hanging over their head, and with little to no institutional support. And it is hugely destructive of academic freedom and public interest research. In the academic precariat, with short term contracts based on securing grant funding, rolling post-docs, casual teaching positions semester by semester, it's almost impossible to build long-term public interest research, and it's all too easy to suppress dissent and control the research agenda. It has, of course, a disproportionately negative impact on women, and on people from non-traditional backgrounds, further eroding the diversity of attitude and approach which is so vital to public good research and teaching.

Underfunding drives research away from public interest and towards private profit, both incidentally and by direction. If governments won't fund your work, and there's little philanthropic funding available, you have no choice but to seek corporate funding. That has led to a less independent and increasingly instrumentalist research agenda, as well as the normalisation of the deeply problematic idea that research should be tied to corporate interests. More broadly, it feeds into a tendency to prioritise STEM over HASS, as more easily commercialisable, undermining the vital public good work of learning to understand ourselves better.

The increasing difficulty in securing funding also drives a shift from cooperation to competition, and corporate funding introduces commercial-in-confidence clauses, further reducing the capacity to share ideas and cross-fertilise. The old idea of the academy as a commons, where knowledge is shared to the benefit of all, is replaced by private ownership of knowledge for commercial purposes.

Competition is also driven by the obsession with KPIs. While accountability is important, the increasing imposition of student teaching assessments, requirements to publish a certain number of papers in a certain suite of journals, often disconnected from a real understanding of the discipline, and obsessing over ERA rankings, is very damaging to collegiality. The silliness of it all was brought home to me recently when my partner was seeking to submit a paper co-written with two colleagues at two other universities and they could not find a suitable journal that all three institutions deemed worthy. That's not accountability - it's pointlessness. What's more, there's evidence that women and people of diverse backgrounds tend to receive lower scores on student assessments, due to deep cultural issues, making it that much harder to build a career.

Overarching all of this is the question of funding.

It is a shocking indictment that Australia now ranks 30th out of the 34 OECD countries in terms of public expenditure on education. But it's also ridiculously easy to fix, with the political will to tax those who can afford it so as to support the public good. The Greens are proposing to not just unfreeze block grants and CSPs, but to increase per student funding by 10%, totalling $16 billion over the next decade, to give students, academics, researchers, professional staff, the resources you need. We can make that commitment because we are the only party that unashamedly believes in taxing the wealthy, taxing corporations, closing loopholes, removing perverse subsidies. If we taxed those who can afford it, we could fund our unis properly and so much more.

Simply providing more funds would take some of the pressure off, and create more academic freedom, enabling some corporate partnerships to be shelved, supporting the revaluing of humanities, and opening space for public good. But there's more to our policy. We would tie the increased per student funding to requiring administrations to reduce the casualisation of the workforce. In order to qualify for certain funds, universities would have to demonstrate progress towards proper employment practices. That would do even more to reverse the neoliberalisation.

But at the heart of the corporatisation of universities is student fees. The reintroduction of fees, more than anything else, turned unis into profit-focussed bodies. By ensuring that corporations pay their fair share of tax, the Greens would abolish tuition fees for all undergraduate degrees and TAFE courses, and will increase Youth Allowance, Austudy and Abstudy by $75/week.

It won't do everything, because the corporate, managerialist approach has become culturally ingrained at universities. But the way you start change is by making strategic interventions that both undercut the existing systems and begin building the new. By abolishing student fees and lifting student support, increasing public funding of teaching and research, and requiring decent employment practices, that's what the Greens seek to do.

This won't happen overnight. But it can happen. The Greens have a long history of putting ideas on the agenda that are first ignored, then laughed at, then attacked, and finally adopted. We will negotiate important steps in the right direction, and we'll keep the pressure up for more. Margaret Thatcher was wrong - there IS an alternative. The era of the neoliberal university is coming to a close.

A Public University for the Commons: a Contribution to a Growing Discussion

THE MATTERS OF CONCERN COLLECTIVE (MOCC)

The Matters of Concern Collective (MoCC) is a group of academics and PhD students from a range of disciplinary backgrounds who have come together in response to existing conditions in universities in Australia. MoCC operates in a horizontal structure, and works collectively on issues pertaining to the state, purpose, direction and possibilities of higher education in this country. We have invited a series of speakers with a diverse range of disciplinary expertise to share their perspectives in public talks and seminars on how and why privatization of the University has manifested over time and what we can do about it.

We consider higher education to be an area that cannot be the sole domain of specialists and scholars within the field. We believe higher education is 'of the commons'; an area belonging to and inalienable from the public domain and which reflects and affects conditions in wider society. As such, as we are building an interdisciplinary 'learning community' together with a number of similar groups of academics and students which are mushrooming around the country.[1] We are pooling our collective experience in tertiary curriculum design, pedagogy, knowledge translation and research to higher education as a commons, as our contribution to a healthier society.

While the theoretical debate continues over the role of the State and the redundancy or recoverability of a welfare state model, it is evident that the public University is incrementally being corporatized. As noted by several scholars in this field, the steady integration of the managerial model into universities in Australia and abroad is part of a global phenomenon that has seen the agency academics once had over direction and priorities stripped away and replaced with the control of professional managers (many from the private sector).[2] Those who experience the most immediate and negative impacts from this re-structuring are students and junior academic staff, which hardly bodes well for the emerging generation.

Among the many significant implications of this transition from public to private ownership of the commons, some of the most glaring can be seen in institutional and political responses to anthropogenic climate change. It is undeniable that planetary climate disruption from global heating is largely due to carbon emissions from our fossil-fuel dependent economies. There is a demonstrable need for a whole-of-society response to meet the challenges presented by this disruption, the scale of which demand both rapid incorporation of existing knowledge into curricula and policy and the development of entirely new ways of learning, being and organising across sectors of our societies. Yet our higher education institutions, as potentially key drivers of such deep and far-reaching changes, are obstructed by the same managerial structure and ethos which foster inertia in the public and political will to mobilise for large-scale, far-reaching inter-sectoral change. It is our contention that the privatization of the public University should be seen as an intrinsic part of the ongoing commodification of the commons, and in the context of climate disruption, that this process is inimical to the kind of change we need to make. Compared to a realistic and viable response to global economic conditions, the ongoing privatization of knowledge institutions is counter-productive and unsupportable if the accelerating erosion of a flourishing web of life is anything to go by.

How did we get here?

Over the last forty years and particularly since the Washington Consensus was declared in 1992, the neoliberal economic model of putative 'open markets', 'free trade' and 'minimal state intervention' has been projected as fostering robust individualism and autonomy through entrepreneurial competition and innovation. This ideology claimed private management or ownership of essential services would allow for greater efficiency whilst promising lower taxes.

[1] Some other groups include the Ngara Institute and the Public University Forum (PUF).

[2] Margaret Thornton (Ed.) *Through a Glass Darkly: The Social Sciences look at the Neoliberal University, Canberra:* ANU Press, 2014; Raewyn Connell, *The Good University: What Universities actually do and why it's time for a radical change,* Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2019; Blackmore, J. Brennan, M. and Zipin, L. (eds), *Repositioning the university: governance and changing academic work,* Rotterdam: Sense Publishing, 2010; Halfmann W. and Radder R., 'The Academic Manifesto: From an Occupied to a Public University,' *Minerva,* 2015, 53(2): 165-187; Richard Denniss, 'Dead Right: How neoliberalism ate itself and what comes next,' *Quarterly Essay,* 2018: June.

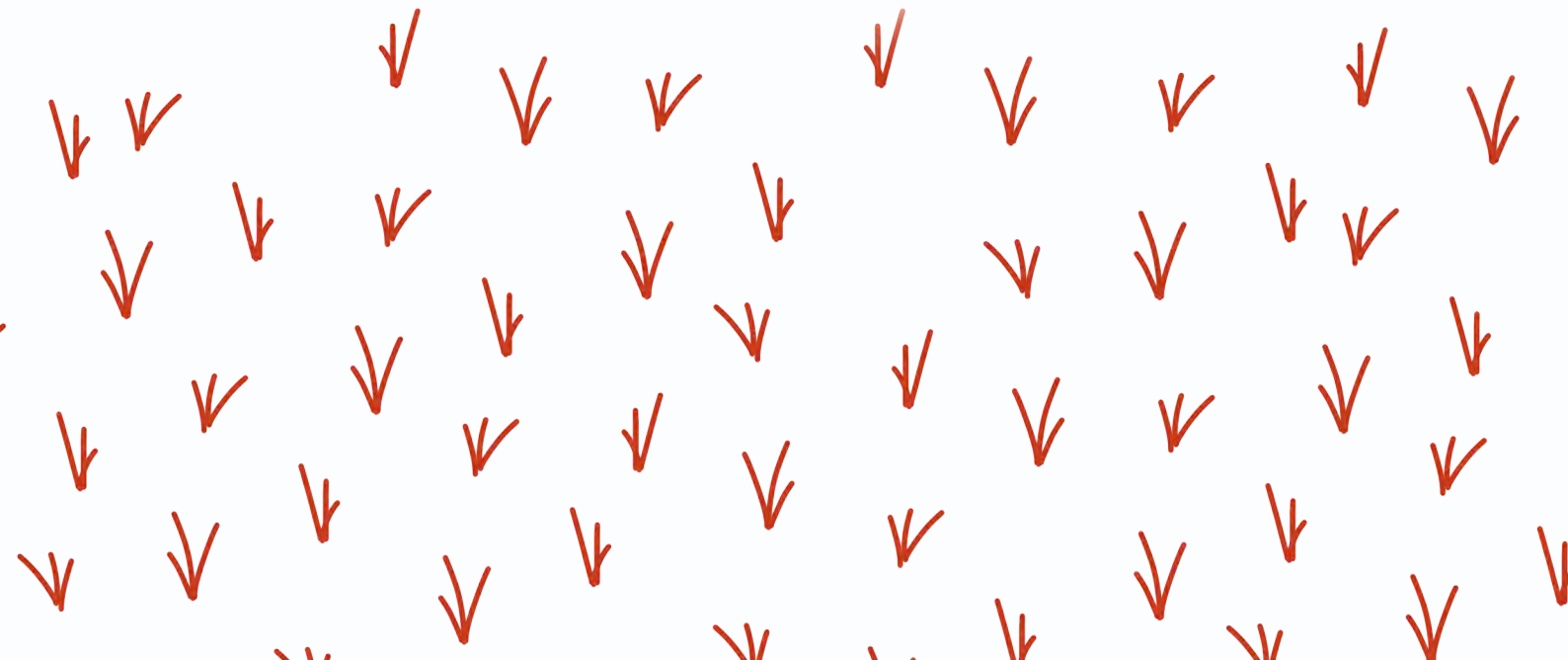
Rather than producing a 'smaller' state, however, it is well-established that governments under pressure from powerful transnational interests have actively sought to create 'competitive' conditions for foreign direct investment. This has included leasing or selling off state assets and facilitating 'attractive' deregulated markets with low or negative taxation for multinational corporations. Given that some of these now represent more concentrated wealth than the annual GDP of most nations, this has certainly ensured the 'creation' and greater flow of wealth to fewer hands. Contrary to disingenuous claims of greater prosperity overall, the negative impacts are numerous. They include the deeper stratification of access to essential services, in which quality comes at a premium and increased inefficiency at the 'cheaper' end, wage stagnation for regular workers, reduced managerial transparency and accountability, diminished state sovereignty and regulatory control and a decline in living standards. Ironically, in many cases states must 'buy back' these services to retain a semblance of functionality. The higher education sector is certainly not immune to this phenomenon. In this context it is crucial that we find ways to renew the fundamental purpose of these institutions which have been shaped by public labour, knowledge and resources for hundreds of years to deliver knowledge that is essential to a sustainable society.

Impacts from eroding the public University

Since the privatization of the public University, as launched by the Dawkins report in the late 1980s under the Hawke-Keating Labor government, a gulf between a subclass of academics, or academic 'precariat', and a combination of senior 'professoriat' and Executive management (and private corporations). In a basic bargain, a class of casualised academics are expected to cover for the shortfall in available academic skills to maintain the everyday functioning and demands of the University at the requisite standards. As a form of endless internship, the expectation, both official and informal, is that casualised academics, irrespective of award level, perform at a high standard on sub-standard flat rates and fixed totals regardless of the labour required for completion. Since simply 'stopping work' when the allotted hours are expended is not possible, expectations are unrealistic, incommensurate with standards in other sectors and unsustainable as they do not reflect basic needs (i.e. sick leave, holiday pay, employment security, etc.). In short, skilled academic labour is 'skimmed' for a fraction of the actual cost while undercutting salaries and standards in general.

This is just one example from a hybridized public-private managerial model in public Universities within deregulated higher education. with a. Justified in various strains of 'economic realism', the overall stability of secure employment which is essential to the practice of research and teaching has been eviscerated. Although professional staff and academics in the public University have consistently received salaries which are lower relative to equivalent positions in the private sector, the public University was designed to support all students irrespective of financial background. This was reflected in a cooperative model – libraries, facilities, food halls, shops, common spaces, parking and transport run at subsidized rates. In short, the culture of a public University has been for learning based on inquiry, openness, critical thinking, original research and collegiality. It has not been based on the pursuit of profit.

The Abbott government introduced student fee deregulation in 2014, completing the steps put in place by the Howard government and reversing a long-held standard. The 'assets' of the public university have been steadily leased or sold-off to private contractors. The number and salaries of high-level managers have increased in proportion to decreased numbers of academics in permanent positions. A select professoriat have been 'rewarded' for their active or tacit support for this transfer. Along with the lack of consideration and consultation with academics that is now 'standard practice' in the managerial mode, there is a deeper betrayal of public good will in the careful construction of knowledge communities.



The model is fairly clear: full fee-paying students, casual teaching-only 'instructors', professional staff, and a few permanent academics on privately-run campuses overseen by a top-heavy Executive team on commercial salaries. Under this regime, the basic purpose of higher education is to increase the 'student-customer's' job-competitiveness in a deregulated market. This is achieved through the acquisition of specialized skills measurable against a narrow set of indicators designed by corporate managers. This limited vision fails students and teachers. Teachers are restricted in space, time and freedom to pursue meaningful research and curriculum design. Students are ill-prepared for the uncertainties they will face over the course of their entire lives. It also fails society and future generations. Rather than cultivating critical thinking and cooperative skills, for example, which are required for building sustainable communities who are able to transform and regenerate society for all, it is simply reinforcing 'survival modalities' which perpetuate conditions of adversity, insecurity, information-control, discrimination, social polarization and fragmentation.. The 'age of entitlement' may be over, as individuals, families and communities are abandoned to the predations of big capital, but this is hardly the way to evolve.

Higher Education Reform

For too long academics and students have accepted that a return to a public University model is unrealistic and either tolerated or openly advocated the culture that a private model of higher education entails. Not only self-serving and acquiescent, this position is ahistorical and a form of false consciousness. There are clear ethical, social, political, economic and historical reasons for correcting this drift. Maintaining a higher education system that sustains an informed society is the foundation of functional democratic systems. We already know from the case of secondary and tertiary education in Finland that the replacement of Key Performance Indicators and standardized testing with individually-tailored education with an emphasis on critical thinking and individual and group-led research across all disciplines is a key ingredient for a successful society. When all costs and benefits are included, a similar shift of focus in the education model in an Australia of comparable size and scale would suggest a way to reverse this illiberal trend. We may even have the foresight to support the design of a new model of education to serve a more representative and decolonised population amid rapidly changing social and global conditions.

Such a diverse and inclusive whole-of-society approach would value and nurture forms of knowledge which will adequately prepare and respond to the complex unprecedented challenges we face.

Public or Perish

As the corporate University model tunnels tertiary education toward the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution, students, academics and staff can do well to re-learn the value and practices of solidarity. If we have learned anything from the industrial revolution, it is that the permanent acceleration of productivity and waste in the global economic system is socially and environmentally unsustainable. We also know from the impacts of global warming and large-scale climate disruptions which are exponentially magnifying now (not in 50 or 100 years), that a significant change in our education system is imperative to better reflect the core values and needs in our society as a whole and not those of a small section of it.

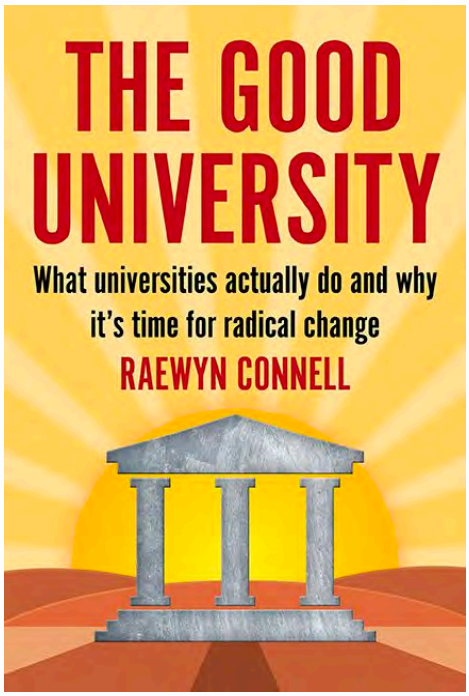
It is no coincidence that for-profit managerial practices and structures now entrenched in the neoliberal state of Australia have targeted the public University at a moment in which both major political parties have been unable to implement an overall plan of action to reduce carbon emissions and prepare for extreme weather conditions and their myriad implications.

The stakes are high. We must re-evaluate and re-think our higher education priorities, principles and structures. We must do so in a way that does not reproduce a narrow set of policy criteria that disproportionately privilege the few. Reform to reflect higher education as a commons will:

- help to re-distribute access and opportunities and will strengthen standards of fair work in all sectors of our society.
- contribute to public awareness and demand for the need to return public money to public Universities and other public institutions that deliver essential services. These funds can be returned from greater regulation of private sector influence in politics, rolling back subsidies to and re-introduced and increased taxation of multinational corporations.
- re-establish the public University as central to consolidating the public good as the basis of society, a site of possibility and an inalienable part of the commons. We understand the current state of higher education as inextricable from the wider economic, social, political and environmental problems we face. We regard higher education as a means by which to generate viable alternatives to these problems through the tools of human knowledge. We believe that reform and a return to a public University model will help to protect and enrich the commons from the depredations of large-scale concentrated and privatized power around the world, to maintain longer-term flourishing in the web of life.

The Future of the University: An Interview with Raewyn Connell

LINA KOLEILAT interviews **RAEWYN CONNELL**, the author of *The Good University: What universities actually do and why it's time for radical change* (Monash University Publishing, 2019)



Shall we start with your definition of what a University is?

There's a formal definition: a university is an institution authorised to grant degrees and licenciates. But that doesn't tell us much about the social reality.

I think it's important to recognize that a university is a workplace, with many different occupations that have to work together. It's a place for the production and circulation of organized knowledge - the process we call 'research'. It's a centre for the most advanced levels of education, both general and specialized. It's also an important cultural symbol, standing for science, knowledge, culture and professionalism.

All of those features are currently under threat.

You mention in your book some of the problems that Universities today are facing, could you please outline some of these problems briefly?

In Australian universities, the main current problems are:

1. Government policies that redefined universities as competing firms operating on a market, rather than public institutions meeting social needs. That's consistent with the ideology of neoliberalism. Governments following this agenda have cut the proportion of public funding for higher education, and have forced universities into commercial rivalry, rather than cooperation.
2. There has been a managerial revolution inside universities (supported from outside by the rich and powerful) that has shifted policy-making, executive power and income into the hands of corporate-style managers. An important consequence is the growing casualization of academic staff, especially in teaching, and the outsourcing of many operations/professional/support roles. Both trends save money in the short term and reduce the universities' skill base and capacity in the long run.
3. Australian universities have never broken from the monocultural curriculum that sustains our dependence on the global North, and marginalizes alternative knowledge frameworks, of which there are many in the world. This sharply reduces the cultural wealth that can be incorporated in our teaching, and in our research. The corporate culture that values knowledge essentially as a means to generate revenue, makes this narrowing worse.
4. Australian universities have always been sites of privilege and social exclusion, on grounds of class, race, gender, and more. This has been challenged, especially by women, but is still a reality. We now see corporate-style universities producing new hierarchies and finding new ways of legitimating social inequality.
5. For all these reasons, Australian universities have been losing the respect once given them as centres of truth-telling. Their corporate advertising constantly bends the truth, conceals uncomfortable realities, and creates a fictional image of the university. Without any serious debate, we are on a slippery downslope of trust.

Towards the end of the book, you discuss what is the 'Good University' and how we can take action to reach that, could you tell us more about this?

I think it's really important to go beyond critique and to spell out positive goals for action. I offer five criteria for a good university: it will be democratic, engaged, truthful, creative, and sustainable. Through the book I spell out the meaning of these ideas.

At the same time, I recognize there are limits to what a single university can achieve. So I also offer criteria for a good university system. It will be cooperative (rather than competitive), publicly funded and socially inclusive. It will work with multiple knowledge systems, and will work for inclusion and social justice on a world scale as well as a local one.

As to action, I have always been in favour of do-it-yourself reform: building examples of good practice and cooperative relationships in the classroom, the staffroom, the laboratory and the office. Staff and students of any university can do a lot directly to realize criteria for the good university.

But local changes are vulnerable. Good local initiatives can be wiped out by aggressive managers, by restructures, by hostile national policies, or by being starved of resources. So it's important also to act on the larger scale. I argue for building coalitions among groups who will gain from a better university system. We need to be arguing and organizing at the level of government, and indeed internationally.

In your last chapter you argue that the unions who represent university workers will be central in strategies of change. Being an NTEU life member, how do you see the role of the unions in contributing to meaningful change in the University?

The union's bread-and-butter work has two sides. One is negotiating wages-and-conditions deals, currently in the 'enterprise agreement' framework. The other is doing lots of case-by-case work for members of staff facing managerial bullying, unfair treatment, forced redundancy, irrational re-structuring, or other workplace problems.

On the basis of that grassroots experience, unions also act as policy advocates in public arenas. This goes farther than just lobbying for more funds. The union can also play an important role in defining purposes for higher education and research, talking about the realities of the sector rather than the glossy images, and circulating ideas for change. The NTEU has been doing more of this in recent years, and to my mind has become the main forum for serious, critical discussion of higher education in Australia.

In an article in Overland, Rowan Cahill says that your book should be a mandatory read for Australia's Vice-Chancellors. If you could talk directly to Australia's Vice Chancellors, what would be your message?

(a) Sell the Mercedes! Universities don't need glossy facades or status symbols.

(b) Cut your salary. Shrink the income inequality within universities, which has grown to an anti-social level.

(c) Tell the Ramsay Centre to crawl back into its cave. Insist that your university's curriculum is not for sale, and make a public point of it.

(d) Face your responsibility for sustaining the university and its workforce in the long run. In the short run, that means ending the casualization and outsourcing of work. You can do this! It will require skill and commitment as a manager of change: but that's what you are there for, isn't it?

(e) Spend at least half your working week face-to-face with your rank-and-file workers. Every week. Find out how your university really works.

What is your message to students and early career academics navigating The University today?

To students: universities ought to be places of excitement, passion and discovery. Every student who makes a commitment to university study deserves that experience. It will require hard labour: a university is a workplace, not a holiday camp (despite the advertising!). Universities have been changing for the worse, and very often students' experience is one of boredom and disengagement. But there are still a lot of committed, interested and interesting staff - both academic and general staff - who want your experience to be good.

Search for these possibilities. It will take time, since universities are large organizations, much more complex than schools. One of your main resources is the other students. It's normally worth putting effort into meeting new people, joining clubs and societies, forming reading and discussion groups. You are likely to have some bad experiences along the way, which may include rigid bureaucracy, unavailable academics, loneliness, racism or sexual harassment. Don't put up with any of these. If you are badly treated, there are usually pathways to get redress, and ways to work for something better. You can be part of the re-making of universities.

To early career academics: some of you will have a great experience from the start, others will have a rough time. Whatever happens, don't keep it to yourself: share knowledge and know-how with your colleagues. Generally, universities have become tougher for young academics: most of the teaching is done in insecure employment, and it is significantly harder to establish a career path than it used to be. Put in a decent effort, but don't harm yourself with overwork, that's not smart: academic work too has to be sustainable. Remember that the problems you face are often intractable for individuals, but not for joint action. Join the union! And better still, since unions aren't perfect, be active in the union and make it more effective.

To new members of the non-academic staff (professional, general, operations staff): remember that you are just as important to the working of the university, to its teaching and research, as the academic staff are. Your experience and ideas matter, so speak up and be heard. Some of you will be in insecure positions, vulnerable to outsourcing, and all university staff now are vulnerable to restructures. There's often little you can do about this individually, but much can be done collectively. Join the union! Despite the commercialization, universities still do teaching and research that matters for our whole society. If all the workforce take pride in that side of the work, there is a better chance of good universities for the future.

Contributor Biographies

Meera Ashar is a historian of ideas at the School of Culture, History and Language at the Australian National University and Director of the South Asia Research Institute. Her work examines the categories and conceptual frameworks with which we seek to make sense of human societies past and present.

Rosie Joy Barron is a PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Education, where she is involved with the NTEU. Her views expressed here are the result of her research and experience, and entirely her own.

Lachlan Clohesy is an academic and union organiser. He has taught history and politics at multiple universities since completing his PhD in 2010, and is a Campus Visitor in the School of History, College of Arts and Social Sciences at the Australian National University. Lachlan is currently employed as an organiser with the ACT Division of the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU), however views expressed in this article are his own and should not be interpreted as representing the views of the NTEU. You can find him on Twitter at @LachlanClohesy.

Raewyn Connell is (as her Twitter bio @raewynconnell remarks) a busy sociologist and an obscure poet. She is proud to be a Life Member of the National Tertiary Education Union.

Trained as anthropologist in Italy, **Dario Di Rosa** received a PhD in Pacific History at The Australian National University. His work focuses on issues of historical consciousness as means to write a history from below that encompasses local versions of the past shaped by the reverberations of colonialism into post-Independence life in Papua New Guinea. He is currently contributing to tertiary education through short-term contracts, joining the numbers of the precariat class.

Evi Eliyanah started her PhD journey in February 2013. Her PhD research explores the complexity of gender politics behind the production of representation of ideal masculinities in Indonesian cinema. While finally being able to secure a six-month funded extension from CHL, she was unable to submit her thesis within the new time frame. She had to leave Canberra to resettle in her home country, Indonesia, in early October 2017. She was finally able to submit her thesis, Reconfiguring Ideal Masculinity: Gender Politics in Indonesian Cinema, in early February 2019, and her degree was conferred four months after the submission. Evi's latest publication on Indonesian cinema can be accessed through Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures, Social Sciences, International Journal of Indonesian Studies.

Anne Elvey is author of Kin (Five Islands Press 2014), This Flesh That You Know (Leaf Press 2015) and White on White (Cordite Books 2018), and co-author of Intatto-Intact (La Vita Felice, 2017). She is managing editor of Plumwood Mountain: An Australian Journal of Ecopoetry and Ecopoetics. Anne holds honorary appointments at Monash University and University of Divinity.

Michael Farrell has a PhD from the University of Melbourne, where he works as a sessional supervisor and examiner. He is also an adjunct fellow at Curtin University. Michael's books include I Love Poetry (Giramondo), Cocky's Joy (Giramondo), and Writing Australian Unsettlement: Modes of Poetic Invention 1796–1945 (Palgrave Macmillan). He edits Flash Cove, a print only poetry magazine: flashcovemag@gmail.com.

David Fenderson grew up in Canberra and currently lives in Melbourne. He has work forthcoming in Antithesis and Interior.

Emma Hartley is an occasional writer and clandestine poet based in Canberra. She studies international relations and human rights at ANU.

Bianca Hennessy is a PhD candidate in the ANU's School of Culture, History and Language, living and writing on Ngunnawal land. She is interested in how decolonial ideas in Pacific Studies can shape pedagogy, research methodologies, university cultures and community-building in Oceania and Australia.

Tim Hollo is an environmentalist, musician and political strategist. He is the Executive Director of the Green Institute, founder of Green Music Australia, and recently ran as the Greens candidate for Canberra. Formerly, he was Communications Director for Christine Milne, has worked for and sat on the board of Greenpeace, and has spent 20 years campaigning for climate action. Tim has been published widely, including in The Griffith Review, Crikey, ABC, Fairfax and the Alternative Law Journal.

Amber Karanikolas is a writer and subeditor at *demos journal*. Their work has appeared in Overland, Archer Magazine and Flood Media, among other places. They tweet at @grim__tweet

Chirag Kasbekar studies and teaches about organisations at the Research School of Management at the Australian National University. His work examines the evolution of organizations over time and geographic space, particularly the impact of social change on this evolution.

Lina Koleilat is a PhD candidate in the School of Culture History and Language at the ANU. She is the editor of *demos journal*.

Joowhee Lee is a PhD candidate in ANU's School of Culture, History and Language, College of Asia and the Pacific. She is one of the many international students who are working, studying and struggling every day at ANU.

Ivo Lovric graduated from the ANU School of Art in 2011 with a Doctor of Philosophy in Visual Arts. Ivo remains committed to working with various media – poster design, animation and video production – in order to agitate for social and political change. The poster, The Precariat, resulted from a collaboration between Ivo Lovric and Professor Margaret Thornton from the ANU College of Law, as part of the ANU Vice Chancellor's College Artist Fellowship Scheme (VCCAFS) in 2015. The collaboration produced a series of posters addressing the effects of corporatisation on the university sector.

The Matters of Concern Collective (MoCC) is a collective of PhD students and early career academics who have been meeting, reading, discussing and debating issues relating to the higher education sector since 2018.
www.mattersofconcerncollective.org/

Erin McCullagh studied Languages (Japanese and Mandarin) and International Relations, graduating in 2017. She was one of the founding members of Language Diversity at ANU. After working briefly in the public service, she moved to Japan where she is working on regional revitalisation projects.

Rosalind Moran has written for anthologies, websites, and journals including Meanjin and Overland. She co-founded Cicerone Journal and was awarded 2018 Undergraduate Awards Global Winner for her research into biopics.

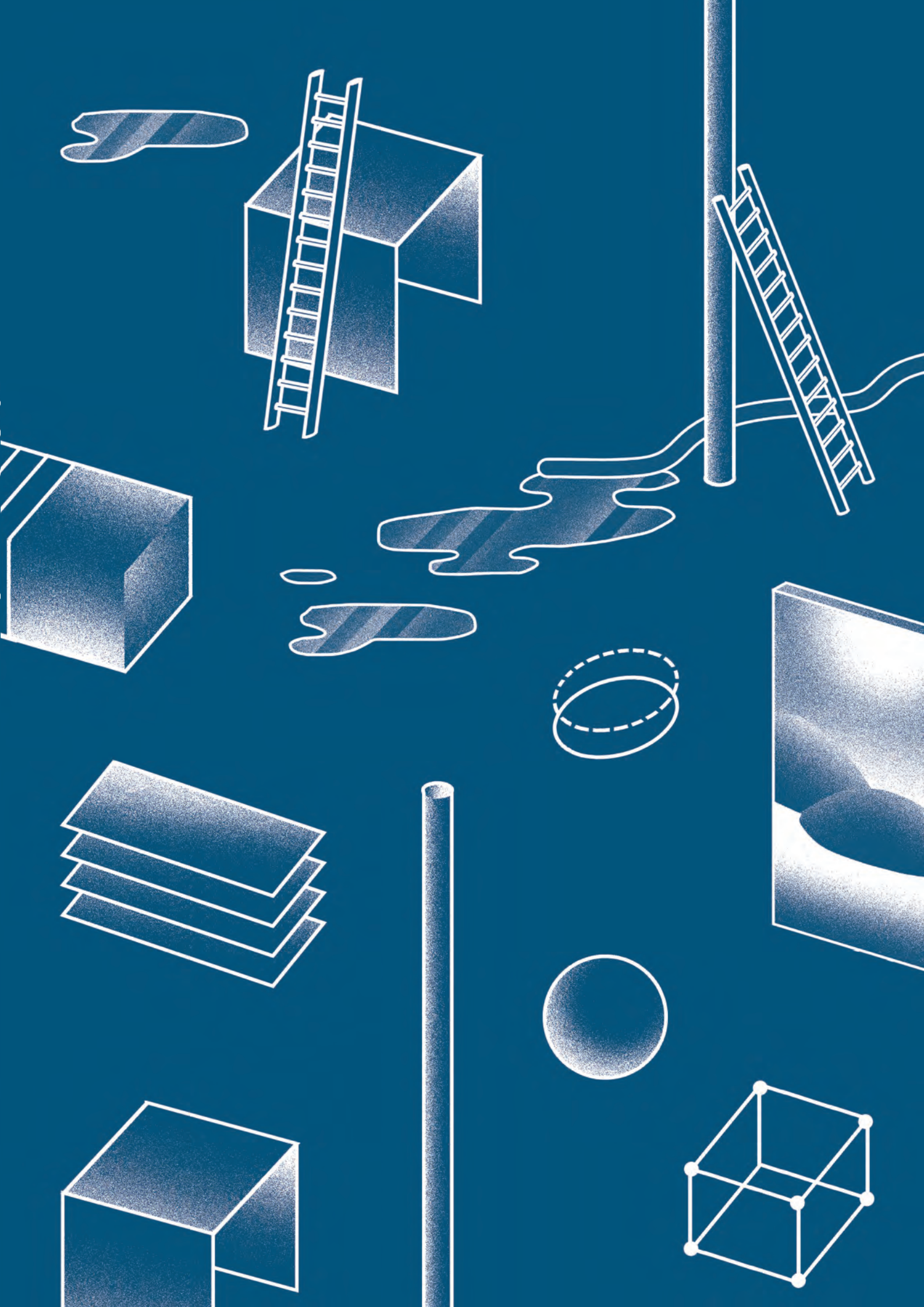
Tessa Morris-Suzuki is Professor Emerita of Japanese history at the Australian National University. Her research focuses on modern Japanese and East Asian history, looking at topics including memory and reconciliation, migration, ethnic minorities and grassroots movements. Her recent books The Living Politics of Self-Help Movements in East Asia (co-edited, 2018); The Korean War in Asia: A Hidden History (edited, 2018) and a novel The Searcher (2018, published under the pen name T J Alexander).

Having previously completed a BA in English Literature and French Language and Culture at the ANU, **Anthony Moore** is currently studying for a Master of Translation, with an eye toward French to English literary translation. Anthony has also published in Woroni, the ANU's long-running student publication.

Caitlin Setnicar is a recent honours graduate in Anthropology. Her thesis examined the cultural, structural, and institutional causes of customers behaving abusively towards retail workers.

Margaret Thornton is an Emerita Professor in the ANU College of Law, Australian National University. Her publications include 'Privatising the Public University: The Case of Law' (Routledge, 2012) and an edited collection, 'Through a Glass Darkly: The Social Sciences look at the Neoliberal University' (ANU Press, 2015).

Professor **Peter Tregear** is a graduate of the Universities of Cambridge and Melbourne, and a former Fellow and Lecturer in Music at Cambridge. Active internationally as a scholar and performer, he held the post of Executive Director of the Academy of Performing Arts, Monash University and more recently Professor and Head of the ANU School of Music from 2012–2015. Peter is a recipient of a number of awards, including the Charles Mackerras Conducting Scholarship, and a 'Green Room' award for 'best conductor, opera' (2008), and is the co-founder of The Consort of Melbourne, and IOpera. Academic interests include Weimar Republic music history, Australian music history, and contemporary cultural politics. Peter is a regular contributor to The Australian Book Review, among other journals, and is currently Chair of the AMF Australia Foundation.



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