Roundel Scan to be placed here

Symposium

Nº 22. October 2002 NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF THE HUMANITIES

Manila trip takes historian on new course

For historian Mina Roces, from the University of New South Wales, an AAH Travelling Fellowship resulted in a welcome change of direction in her research.

Dr Roces used the fellowship to travel to the Philippines in January and found, by the end of her three-week stay, that her research project on the Filipino suffragists had taken a new course.

"Before then I was just writing about the dilemmas of the suffragist movement – my original title was 'Problematising the Suffragists' – but since my trip to the Philippines it has changed.

"I realised that all the debates around the suffragists were about defining the Filipino woman, so this became more the focus of my work and I am much happier with it now."

The traditional, ideal Filipino woman – shy, timid, beautiful and obedient – was disappearing by the 1920s as a suffragist movement emerged and the Philippines became increasingly modernised under America's influence. Despite this, Dr Roces, says there was still a general nostalgia for the ideal Filipino woman at this time.

In her current research, Dr Roces is examining this juxtaposition between the changing social and political culture and the persistence of the idea of the traditional Filipino woman, taking into account the art and fashion of the period.

"In the 1920s, national artist Fernando Amorsolo continued to paint rural scenes featuring this *dalagang Pilipina* dressed in traditional *balintawak* or *kimona*, shy, smiling, timid, posed against the backdrop of a never changing romantic rural landscape," Dr Roces said.

continued p. 2

Queen Maria I

Maria Kalaw, suffragist and beauty queen – just like her mother (see p.2)

A (sceptical) judge of the experts

Truth can be a complicated thing, perhaps most so in the courtroom. Indeed, for the Hon. Justice Ken Crispin, the "refracted truth" that jurors receive – after it has passed through the tangled wires of translation, reinterpretation, and rhetorical embellishment – almost has the form of a Chinese whisper.

"Truth [in the court] is refracted at a number of levels. Scientists interpret results, then communicate results to lawyers, who then re-package it for the jurors, who themselves can be influenced by subjective impressions and limited understanding."

Justice Crispin, an ACT Supreme Court judge, is one of the speakers at the Academy's 2002 Symposium, **Proof & Truth: The Humanist as Expert**, being held in Canberra on 14-15 November. Having been involved in numerous controversial and high profile legal battles, including the Azaria Chamberlain case, he has an astute understanding of the profound complexities of proof, truth and expertise.

All evidence – from whatever field it comes – has to be taken on its own merits, Justice Crispin says.

"Until, say, the Chamberlain case, there was an assumed stark difference between Science and Humanities; there was an expectation that anything said by a scientist was absolute fact. But there isn't any across the board difference at all. The cross-examination of a psychiatrist, economist, anthropologist, and biologist is not all that different in terms of the considerations that may undermine evidence."

For this judge, and most others, all expert opinion is received with a sceptical ear. Not only is such opinion all too often swayed by presupposition and assumption; it usually only reflects the (probable) truth or falsity of one aspect of the evidence or criminal act – not the whole picture. "Scientists are only looking at one little bit of knowledge that relates to one aspect of the crime, so they are really expressing an opinion having seen only five per cent of the jigsaw," he said.

continued p.11

INSIDE:

P.5: Special guest columnist, **Opposition Foreign Affairs Minister Kevin Rudd MP**, argues for the value of Asian language study in our schools.

P.3: **Terrorism and Australia's research priorities** – there is a link, as Dr Lawrence Warner demonstrates.

P.6: The **refugee crisis** and the Humanities – Dr Ann Kumar puts forward a case.

The Australian Academy of the Humanities

OFFICE BEARERS

President
Professor Iain McCalman
Treasurer
Dr Ann Kumar
Secretary
Emeritus Professor Graeme Clarke
Editor
Professor Bruce Bennett AO
International Secretary
Professor Robin Jeffrey
Council
(All of above)
Professor Ien Ang
Professor Barbara Caine
Professor Peter Cryle
Professor Malcolm Gillies
Professor Nerida Newbigin
Professor Graeme Turner

STAFF

Executive Director
Dr Lawrence Warner
aah.exdir@anu.edu.au
Executive Assistant
Dr Justine Molony
aah.office@anu.edu.au
Finance Officer
Lynn Parry
lynn.parry@anu.edu.au
Publications & Publicity Officer
Jane Castles
jane.castles@anu.edu.au
Library & Archive Officer
Dr Janet Hadley Williams
janet.hwilliams@anu.edu.au

CONTACT INFORMATION

Postal Address
GPO Box 93, Canberra, ACT 2601
Address
3 Liversidge Street, Acton, ACT 2601
Tel. numbers

General inqures [+61 2]	6125 9860
Publications	6125 8950
Publication subsidies	6125 8950
Travel fellowships	6125 9860
Overseas exchanges	6125 9860
Accounts	6125 9871
Media	6125 8950
Fax. number	6248 6287

E-mail
See staff e-mails above
Web
www.humanities.org.au

***SYMPOSIUM* NEWSLETTER**

Editor
Professor Bruce Bennett AO
Deputy editor and designer
Jane Castles
Contributing editors
Dr Lawrence Warner
Dr Justine Molony
Printing
Paragon Printing
ISSN 1446-3261
Comments, letters and contributions to Jane Castles: aah@anu.edu.au

Manila trip takes historian on new course

Continued from p.1

For Filipino women, American colonisation brought with it a dilemma central to their identity and power. The Americans were pro-women's rights, so to support suffrage was to side with the colonial rule and oppose national independence. "For Filipino women, supporting the nationalist project meant lobbying for a government that would disenfranchise them as women," Dr Roces said.

The irony of the battle was exemplified in 1935 when women voters were asked to vote for a constitution for the Philippine commonwealth that would disenfranchise them. The paradox that women were allowed to vote for a constitution but not to vote for politicians in office is not lost on Dr Roces.

Dr Roces said the travelling fellowship was useful because it had been difficult to find relevant sources in libraries in Australia and the United States. "It is a problem with this topic, the sources are really scrappy and you won't find them in very many libraries." Using her own contacts initially (friends and relatives), Dr Roces was able to discover rare and extremely useful source material, such as articles from women's journals and magazines held in private collections.

For more information about the Academy's Travelling Fellowships and other international programs visit www.humanities.org.au.

Above: UNSW historian Mina Roces. Front page shot: Maria Kalaw was the daughter of suffragist Pura Villanueva, who won the title of Carnival Queen, 1908. Kalaw was also a prominent suffragist and was Carnival Queen in 1931. A Barbour scholar to the University of Michigan, she worked as a journalist before becaming a senator in the 1950s.

AAH project on collaboration gets ARC backing

An AAH project on collaborative work with cultural institutions will receive $95,000 under the Australian Research Council's Special Project scheme.

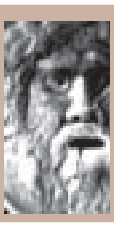
"Partnerships in Humanities Research: An Evaluation of Collaborative Projects with Cultural Institutions", to be led by Council member Ien Ang FAHA, will comprehensively evaluate research collaborations involving Humanities researchers and various industry partners within the broad cultural sector. The emphasis will be on on collaborations between Humanities scholars and representatives of cultural institutions, such as museums, libraries, media organisations, or relevant government agencies.

Preliminary results of the evaluation will be presented at a symposium with relevant stakeholders, from which a monograph will be published for Humanities academics and those working within cultural institutions.

It is hoped the project will increase the capacity of Humanities researchers to contribute to innovations in the cultural sector. It will provide the Australian Academy of the Humanities, the ARC and the Government with new knowledge about how Humanities researchers can respond more effectively to the economic, social and policy conditions and challenges of the 21st century.

For more information contact Ien Ang at i.ang@uws.edu.au.

PROOF AND TRUTH
THE HUMANIST AS EXPERT
THE AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF THE HUMANITIES 2002 SYMPOSIUM



November 14-15 2002

The Shine Dome
Canberra
www.humanities.org.au

Languages, terrorism, Skaldic poetry, and Australia's research priorities

Below, in an edited version of a talk given at the National Research Priorities Strategic Forum, 26 June 2002, Canberra, AAH Executive Director Dr Lawrence Warner argues that the value of Humanities research and education cannot be denied in a post-September 11 world.

On 11 September 2001 (Australian time), the Languages Committee of the Australian Academy of the Humanities convened in the Academy's brand-new home. We had been frustrated in our attempts to secure funding for innovative language-teaching schemes from the Department of Education. This led us to wonder: Does our country not have a need for intelligence-gathering capabilities? Colin Nettelbeck FAHA brought to the committee's attention an article in the April 2001 *New York Times* which claimed that the FBI had in hand evidence of terrorist activity directed against the World Trade Center in 1993, but that no one who understood Arabic was involved in the relevant intelligence-gathering operations.

By the next morning, the awful consequences of that situation had become all too evident. Little had changed since 1993. On 8 September 2002, the *New York Times* would again report: "The chronic shortage of language experts is the National Security Agency's Achilles' heel — so much so that one of the most sensitive bits of intelligence revealed about Septempber 11 was that the N.S.A. had intercepted an al Qaeda message on Septempber 10 saying, 'Tomorrow is zero hour.' But no one translated it until after it was over." Intelligence veterans stress the importance of getting back to the basics: better trained intelligence officers, experts in Middle Eastern and South Asian cultures who are fluent in the languages of the region.

This is only the most dramatic sign of the simple fact that a nation's foreign language capacity is crucial. An unfortunate truth, however, is that the situation in Australia is no more promising. Recent statistics indicated that the number of languages taught in Australia went down from 67 in 1995 to 53 in 1999. In the 1970s there were five professors of Russian; today there are none, and virtually no independent departments of Russian. There is no fully dedicated professor of German; we are down to four professors of French. Moreover, Asia knowledge and language skills (see p. 5) are of critical importance to Australia's future security, as the recent tragic bombings in Bali highlight.

As Australia undertakes the research priority setting exercise, it is imperative that we protect and nurture pure research. We simply do not know where future benefits will come from and we must ensure that doors are not closed: our priorities on September 10 might differ greatly from those we recognise on September 12. The assumption behind the Government's decision not to implement Humanities priorities until next year's round was that our disciplines really aren't priorities at all.

One problem the Humanities always face is how easy it is for others to ridicule obscure research that seems to have little direct "relevance" to our lives today. During the weeks leading up to the Strategic Forum at which I presented this talk, I heard three very prominent people quip about Old Icelandic Skaldic poetry in connection with the term 'basketweaving', offered as areas of research of no relevance to Australian priorities.

Intelligence veterans stress the importance of getting back to the basics: better trained intelligence officers, experts in Middle Eastern and South Asian cultures who are fluent in the languages of the region.

This is a salutary example to take on board as we think about the process of the priority setting exercise. We should not be too quick to pigeonhole either Skaldic poetry or, indeed, knowledge at large, into predetermined categories.

People are not just talking about clouds in the sky when they mention Skaldic poetry. Skaldic poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages (http://skaldic. arts.usyd. edu. au/), based at the University of Sydney, is a good example of how Australian research has achieved international prominence: the project is sponsored by the Australian Academy of the Humanities and endorsed by the Union Académique Internationale.

The Skaldic Poetry Project is also at the forefront of the use of information technology to push the boundaries of knowledge and innovation. The Academy's E-Humanities special project (http://www.ehum.edu.au) recently sponsored a seminar on the Text Encoding Initiative, a computer markup language that has placed what might seem to be terribly old-fashioned materials at the forefront of scholarship in ways immediately attractive to our students (who are too easily ignored in discussions about Australia's research priorities). The seminar was led by a scholar of Chaucer who was assisted by the research associate with the Skaldic poetry project.

Before we dismiss Skaldic poetry as obscure, we should ask where New Zealand's tourism industry would be if Tolkien had not studied Old English and Old Icelandic – by no means a frivolous question. Where, too, would the Australian film industry be if George Lucas had not been so interested in the writings of Joseph Campbell? And setting aside such questions of applicability (an area with which we Humanities scholars are often uncomfortable), we should also ask: what will future generations make of the cultural activity in which we are engaged today? Discussion of research priorities is no less concerned with national identity, and is no less a creative process, than was the creation of Skaldic poetry in the Scandinavian Middle Ages. In that sense, our nomination of 'Creative Australia' as one of three priorities is already bearing fruit. For more information on the Academy's position on research priorities visit the policy section of our web site.

The E-Humanities Gateway: an Australian first

The enthusiasms of the early 1990s digital gurus have been replaced by a more sober realisation that traditional humanities skills and values can be extended in their reach by engagement with digital technology. Our modes of research , and our communication of it, are gradually changing.

Funded by an ARC Special Project grant to the Academy, the E-Humanities Gateway is a first for Australia. There have been other initiatives to chart digital library projects, but this is the first attempt to coordinate information for scholars on Australian developments in information technology as it applies to the creation and analysis of humanities source materials in digital form. The creation of the gateway (still in progress) follows the Computing Arts conference in Sydney in 2001.

There was a general feeling at the conference that the time had come for a stocktake of work in this general area, with its many methodologies. There has been steady development in Australia of individual projects within academic departments and centres, but it was time that initiatives were plotted and linked. Often the only way we knew that work was being done in a particular field in Australia was when someone overseas told us about it.

The other main aim has been to provide training in digital research methods for scholars, librarians and advanced students. The Text Encoding Initiative guidelines and Geographical Information Systems have been the subject of the two workshops held so far. Selected papers from the 2001 conference, together with a report on several Australian projects, are to be published soon, and another conference is planned for 2003.

Many challenges remain if the teething problems of e-humanities research are to be overcome and the field is to prosper in Australia. The Academy is active in addressing them: through this e-humanities project, the NSCF series of forums, and other projects (such as the Authenticated Electronic Editions offshoot of the Academy Editions series).

Melissa McMahon has been appointed as our E-Humanities project officer, and Creagh Cole (Sydney), Hugh Craig (Newcastle) and others have been guiding the project's activities.

The e-humanities gateway will be officially launched on 1 November by Professor Iain McCalman at University of Sydney (Woolley Building). A highlight of the launch will be a presentation by Anne Kenney, a specialist on digital preservation at the Cornell University Library, on future e-humanities possibilities.

For further information, please visit the project's website at:www.ehum.edu.au.

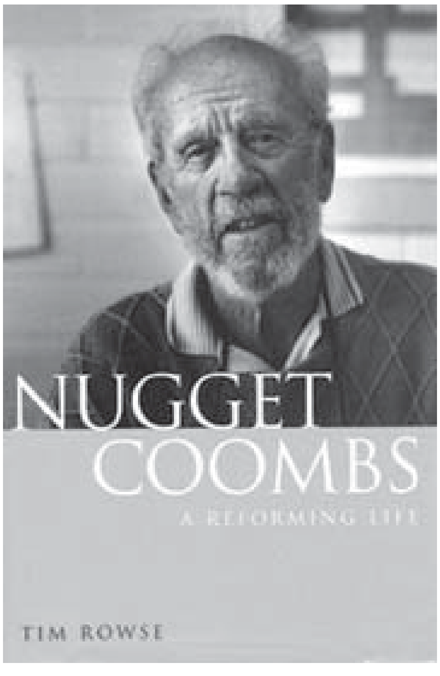
Paul Eggert FAHA

PROFILE: Tim Rowse

Continued from p. 12

servants are supposed to be guided by a democratic mandate. Their service of this mandate is what counts, not whether that mandate and their 'heart' are in alignment (think of Howard on gun control in 1996). To be true to one's own lights is more an aristocratic than a democratic virtue. So whatever Coombs' virtues were, they are not captured well by words such as "true" – unless we specify "true to what is expressed or implicit mandate".

Another way to understand your word "true" is "typical or exemplary of public service tradition". Coombs could be described as atypical in his public service career. Apart from eight months in 1942 as Director of Rationing and his years as Chair of the Australian Council for the Arts and then the Australia Council, he was never a senior officer in a department administering a service or a social field. He was either in a department or council dedicated to generating policy ideas for other departments to implement (Postwar Reconstruction, the Council for Aboriginal Affairs), or he was the CEO of a large Statutory authority with commercial functions (the Commonwealth Bank) or a central banker. His trajectory was in this way extraordinary. It maximised his chances of being a Public Intellectual attached to government – hardly the *typical* opportunities of an Australian public servant.



Your word "last" evokes the nostalgic element in the popular regard for Coombs. He's often an icon of values thought to be under threat from neo-liberalism. In *Nugget Coombs: a reforming life* I've tried to distance myself from this way of valuing Coombs. I find that it puts a screen between us and the history of Coombs' own styles of economic rationalism.

What's the future for Humanities in the 21st century?

Questions like that make me feel inadequate, but what the hell. Public policy will be very foolish not to invest money in training an intelligentsia through exposure to the Humanities and Social Sciences. So I'm optimistic that it will always be possible to make a case for the social utility of the Humanities. Perhaps it reflects my own position within the Humanities, but I think that we must be careful to cultivate a kind of ambivalent partnership with the Social Sciences. On the one hand, there is much overlap between the Humanities and Social Sciences. On the other hand, I think there are critical elements and reflexive habits in the Humanities that can be brought to bear on the Social Sciences, particularly on those disciplines whose public authority is in inverse proportion to their reflexivity (an inverse relation that we Humanists sometimes envy).

On a slightly different tack, recently I've been reading (dipping, to be precise) in the sociology and history of science. I'm impressed by the richness of this branch of learning. It has much to say to us about the forms of modern authority and about our own complicities, as intellectuals, with authority. In the teaching of all the Humanities, I'd like the history of forms of intellectual authority to become a core theme.

Asia knowledge crucial to future prosperity

Below, ***Federal Opposition Foreign Affairs Minister Kevin Rudd MP*** *says an Asia-literate Australia – the kind fostered by a recently axed Asian language and studies in schools program – is crucial to the nation's economic competitiveness.*

The decision taken in the last Federal Budget to discontinue funding for the National Asian Language and Studies in Australian Schools Strategy (NALSAS) from 1 January 2003 is short-sighted and not a decision in the long-term national interest.

We are now in the eighth year of the implementation of NALSAS – conceived originally as a twelve-year strategy. A longer term strategy was agreed upon for the simple reason that in order to obtain real rather than nominal benefit to both Australia's social and cultural fabric as well as real benefits to the economy, any strategy needed to be implemented over the course of the education of an entire generation of Australian school children.

Australia's international competitiveness lies not just in the creation of a competitive exchange rate, competitive interest rates, the removal of trade barriers and increasing productivity of the economy. Our international competitiveness depends on the ability to penetrate the range of linguistic and cultural barriers which exist and which prevent or limit our ability to sell products and services in the emerging markets of our region. Equipping the next generation of Australians with the full range of linguistic and cultural skills necessary for Australia to maximise its opportunities throughout Asia makes economic sense.

As a direct result of the NALSAS strategy the total number of school students studying Asian languages more than doubled over the past eight years. As an example, in 1994, there were 200 000 students of Japanese in Australian schools. By the end of 2000 that figure had risen to 425 000. Similarly, in 1994, there were 90 000 students of Indonesian in Australian schools – a figure that had risen to 260 000 by 2000, while over the same period the total number of students of Mandarin had jumped from 40 000 to nearly 80 000. In total, 750 000 Australian students (nearly 24 per cent of the total student population) were studying a NALSAS language by the end of 2000. The strategy was demonstrably working – and this is supported by the 1999 and 2002 evaluation reports of NALSAS, both of which recommended the continuation of the program for a further four years.

The decision to pull the plug on this program – which for a decade up until the last budget enjoyed rare bipartisan support – will mean that the collective energy, dedication and vision of thousands of Australians over the past decade toward closer engagement with Asia will be further undermined.

Why axe a program that had previously enjoyed the political goodwill across both major parties, that was clearly equipping the next generation of Australians with the necessary cultural and linguistic toolkit to operate within, and benefit from, our region, and that was providing clear and tangible benefit to our economic wellbeing?

As a nation, we need to set a course on Asian engagement – a bipartisan course – and stick to it. An essential part of this approach needs to be the creation of an Asia-literate Australia.

What is now necessary is a campaign of national advocacy – to restore not just the centrality of comprehensive engagement with Asia to its proper place in this country's continuing foreign policy, but also NALSAS and other programs dedicated to the development of Australia's long-term Asia-related skills base. The burden of advocacy does not lie just with those in the business of professional politics. The burden also lies with professionals beyond the business of politics who must now participate fully in the public political debate on this important national enterprise.

Roundtable on Asia report

A roundtable to discuss the recently released report, *Maximizing Australia's Asia Knowledge: Repositioning and Renewal of a National Asset*, was held in August. Participants included Shadow Foreign Affairs Minister Kevin Rudd MP.

The report was produced by the Asian Studies Association of Australia, with the help of a $2000 grant from the Academy, and calls for a range of measures aimed at promoting Asia knowledge in Australia. Professor Tessa Morris-Suzuki FAHA, of the Australian National University, said economic globalisation and security concerns meant it was "more vital than ever for Australians to know their neighbours".

"We've got a quiet crisis," accoding to Professor Robin Jeffrey, FAHA, FASSA, one of the authors of the report. "Australia's expertise on Asia has been a small but significant presence in world scholarship and on the Australian landscape for 40 years; but it's withering away at the very time that more and more Australians engage with Asia regularly for work and pleasure. We are in danger of engaging more and understanding less."

Maximizing Australia's Asia Knowledge argues that the need for Australia to make special efforts to understand countries of Asia is unique, Professor Jeffrey said. "Culturally, there is so much that is so different; geographically, Asia is so close and so intimately connected to Australia's economy and security." The report includes many statistics that highlight the contraction of opportunities for Australians to learn about Asia: study of India/South Asia, once possible at 15 universities, is now conducted at only five; study of west and central Asia has shrunk to the point that Australia's only journal devoted to the region has closed.

> *We are in danger of engaging more and understanding less*

"For Australia's long-term harmony, prosperity and security, we need a far larger proportion of Australians equipped with languages and knowledge of Asia," Professor Jeffrey argues. "We need both diffusion and depth. Our report outlines costed policies... to maintain Australia's specialist knowledge and to spread it more widely in the community."

The refugee crisis and the Humanities

Dr Ann Kumar, historian, Indonesian specialist and Vice-President of the Academy, says the Humanities have a major role to play in developing long-term strategies to tackle the refugee crisis.

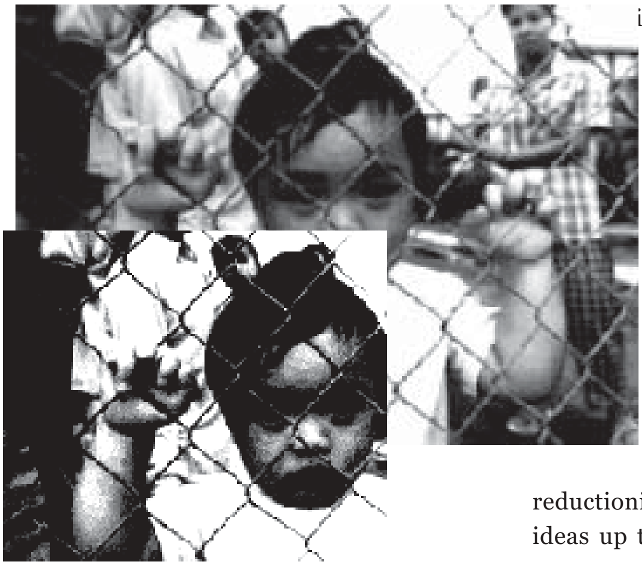
Reaction to the “refugee crisis” now needs to be moved out of panic mode and into the development of sustainable, long-term strategies. The Humanities can make a vital contribution to this process in at least three different ways.

1. Providing specialist expertise

Of immediate practical and financial use are strategies addressing the need to identify the origin of refugees, in a situation where bona-fide refugees tend to come mainly from Afghanistan or Iraq, and illegal immigrants mainly from Pakistan and Iran. The Government has been using *soi-disant* speaker-profiling services located in Europe, an expensive option with the additional disadvantage of having recognised and acknowledged methodological problems that make it unlikely that results obtained will withstand scrutiny in court.

What is really needed is a report on the linguistic situation in the areas concerned, looking at language, dialect and sociolinguistic variation. Australian linguists in the area of Descriptive Linguistics and Sociolinguistics possess the expertise to produce such a report. Some also possess the expertise necessary to then evaluate the probative value of tests devised to indicate the origins of applicants for refugee status, using fairly complex statistical procedures based on Bayes’ theorem, which is now increasingly used in the judicial system. This is a procedure for continuously updating belief in the truth of a hypothesis using a formula that contains a term for quantifying the strength of evidence. It belongs to the “logic and mathematics” area to which the Humanities can legitimately lay claim.

Such specialised skills are essential not only for the achievement of the utilitarian ends of government but also for one of the major humane values: the achievement of justice and fairness through the legal system, for all of us. Experts on Indonesia – the nearest transit stop to Australia – could do more to inform the wider community of the Indonesian perception of the crisis. This is that Indonesia has been subjected to megaphone diplomacy and made a scapegoat for election campaign politicking; that the Government has used the media to try to “shame” Indonesia by presenting a highly prejudicial picture of its actions *before* discussing these through diplomatic channels; and that moves to repair the bilateral relationship have been driven by Australia’s narrow interests alone. Nor has any sensitivity been shown with respect to Indonesia’s much larger problem of over a million internal displaced persons. Abandoning careful diplomacy for self-indulgent grandstanding and ignoring the other side’s problems are luxuries that Australia simply cannot afford. They will cost too much in terms of developing the cooperative strategies with Indonesia that we need if we are to contain this and other important ongoing problems.



The Asian Studies community also has scholars with a deep and thoughtful understanding of Islam, which is clearly a major issue in the unusual levels of public hostility to this particular refugee group. It need hardly be said how urgent it is to establish dialogue in this area.

2. Providing a space and frameworks for discussion

The Humanities can also make an important contribution by providing a space where the issue can be discussed in a more dispassionate and informed way than if it is left to the shock jocks.

And we have the frameworks for this discussion. The category of difference, in one way or another, has been central to most of the important theoretical approaches of the last generation, such as the work of Foucault, Derrida, and Lacan. Though the category of difference has perhaps mainly been used to explore differences *within* populations, it could also be used to explore differences *between* populations, if intelligently handled.

Like difference, the subject of representation is also a major preoccupation of the new Humanities, and in the case of the present issue one thinks of Said’s famous work *Orientalism*, which draws on the work of Foucault. In it Said argues (to put it considerably more baldly than he does) that the much-touted scholarly production of the West on the Orient was in fact a project of mis-representation designed to reinforce the West’s sense of self and subjugate the Orient by creating a negative stereotype of the Oriental “other”. The “refugee crisis” has produced a much cruder sort of ing, such as the use by prominent figures of verbs with incorporated nouns like “lip-sewing” (and for all I know “child-throwing”) to indicate habituality of abhorrent practices in other cultures. This stereotyping can only be inflammatory and the Humanities must draw attention to such mischievous manipulation of language.

3. Addressing the media.

I have given a necessarily reductionist account of some complex ideas up to and including formal logic. But, as our science colleagues have already learned, *we have to do just this* if we are to be heard. We have to develop media competence and not succumb to failure of nerve in addressing issues which are certainly as important to our future as any in science.

We in the Humanities are always claiming support on the grounds of how much we contribute to society. Unlike Indonesian intellectuals, we have not had to face prison for expressing our views on important issues. If, when such issues arise, we cannot even bring ourselves to provide the expertise and insights that are well within our competence, we can hardly complain if scholars in the Humanities are seen as either dusty specialists in the arcane or trendy po-mo babblers, neither group of any use to the wider community.

Tall poppies get their reward

The following is a response by Professor A.N. (Derry) Jeffares FAHA on to Justine Molony's article (Symposium 21) on the foundation of the Australian Humanities Reseach Council.

Where it all began: Adelaide University's gates (as they were then)

The Editor having very kindly asked me to react to Dr Justine Molony's "From little things big things grow", *Symposium*, No.21, June 2002, I thought I should make this a personal response since, as she put it, I was "the initiator of its (the AHRC's) formation (and the only fellow remaining from that time)".

When I came to Adelaide in 1951 as Jury Professor I thought I ought to familiarise myself with Australian literature beyond my knowledge of Henry Handel Richardson, Banjo Patterson, Adam Lindsay Gordon, Marcus Clarke, Leonard Mann and Kenneth Slessor. So I set myself to a chronological course of reading: in this I was greatly helped by my colleague Dr Brian Elliot. I thought that there might be interesting parallels between Australian and Canadian writing, and persuaded Steve Stackpole of the Carnegie Corporation to finance a tour of Canadian Universities for Brian in which he would also meet Canadian writers. This would be the first visit in an exchange program; it would be followed by the visit of a Canadian academic to Australian universities the following year.

Brian knew that I thought that Australian academics working in the Humanities needed more financial support so that they could meet others in different Australian universities and discuss topics of common interest. I envied the scientists their Academy of Science, the social scientists their Social Science Research Council; there was no centralised body to cater for the various disciplines in the Humanities.

After making most useful contacts there and laying the foundation of his extensive knowledge of Canadian literature (which led to excellent and often usefully comparative seminars on the subject in Adelaide from which many of us benefited) Brian returned with news of how successfully the Canadian Humanities Research Council worked. As a result I got in touch with its Chairman, Professor A.S.P Woodhouse, of the University of Toronto, and got very useful advice from him; this was later supplemented by the views of his colleague Professor Claude Bissell, late President of the University of Toronto and Honorary Foundation Fellow of the AAH, who came to Adelaide the following year and also visited other Australian universities.

> *I envied the scientists their Academy of Science, the social scientists their Social Science Research Council; there was no centralised body to cater for the various disciplines in the Humanities*

Armed with knowledge of how the Canadians had set up their Research Council, we managed to get together an interested group to discuss our needs and plans. It took considerable ingenuity to assemble half a dozen Arts academics from other universities in Adelaide in 1953 (lectures, paid for by various funds, even external examining - unheard of before in Adelaide and disapproved of by many! - and a chance personal visit). Following this meeting, there was enough support for me to write to academics in other universities to enlist their interest.

Of those who supported my suggestions for a Research Council enthusiastically the foremost was Professor Sir Joseph Burke, who arranged a meeting in Melbourne. Others were Professor James Auchmuty, who later became the superb first Vice-Chancellor of the University of Newcastle (his life has recently been chronicled by Kenneth R. Dutton in a most skilful evocation of the man under the title *Auchmuty* 2000), and Professor Alex Mitchell (later to become Vice-Chancellor of Macquarie University) of the University of Sydney and his colleague Professor Ralph Farrell. From the University of Tasmania came support from Professor Triebel; from St Mark's College in Adelaide Sir Archibald Grenfell Price lent his approval. And, of course, there was Sir Dale Trendall, then Master of University House, Canberra, who became a tower of strength and was aided by Sir Harold White, the National Librarian. There was much correspondence, much to-ing and fro-ing.

In his 'Introduction' to *The Humanities in Australia* (1959) Trendall gives an account of the aims of the Humanities Research Council and tells of the foundation of an interim council of 20 members in Melbourne in 1954. One of the first problems raised by careful (which was often to say doubting!) academics was how a Council could be set up which would have support from the universities and yet be rigorously selective in the quality of the scholarship of its potential members. Like Agog, however, we had to tread carefully. I remember arguing most energetically in one Melbourne meeting that we should set up a selection committee and ruthlessly assess the published work of members of Arts Faculties in the various universities of Australia to determine the initial membership. This was regarded as very bold ('what, decide it ourselves?!'), for it might suggest that some academics were more equal than others. It was finally agreed, after I produced what I still think

Continued p. 10

Eclectic gatherings at two NSCF round tables

Researchers, lawyers, artists, curators, librarians and IT experts gathered at the National Library of Australia on October 3-4 for the National Scholarly Communication Forum's 15th Round Table.

The topic was a broad-ranging one – the intellectual, legal and functional challenges and opportunities of non-written forms of text (film, music, icons... you name it) – and it made for much lively, thought-provoking debate (see p.9 for opinion piece by Professor Malcolm Gillies).

NSCF Round Table 14, on issues relating to privacy and scholarship, was held in August at the National Archives. Attendees of the final session reached the following four major conclusions (see the NSCF section of the AAH web site for details and one disclaimer):

1) There is an obligation on researchers, records creators and custodians of personal information to institute and observe codes of ethical practice and regimes of information access that respect and guarantee the right to privacy and the cultural concerns of indigenous Australians.

2) While deceased individuals do not have a right to privacy, the privacy of living people may sometimes be infringed by the provision of access to information on deceased persons who had relationships with people still living.

3) Records should never be destroyed solely for the reason of protecting personal privacy. Rather, the need to protect personal privacy should be addressed through suitable access regimes and researcher codes of ethical practice, both of which require sanctions for unethical and/or unauthorised privacy infringements.

4) Australia should pursue a harmonised, comprehensive and consistent cross-jurisdictional legislative regime of access to personal information encompassing privacy, archives/public records, and freedom of information legislation.

The NSCF is sponsored by the four Australian learned Academies, with a membership from a wide range of bodies representing academics, librarians, copyright specialists, and others. It aims to disseminate information about changes in scholarly communication in Australia and to make policy recommendations.

Images from "Sights and Sounds". Clockwise from top: Michelle Potter, Regis Lansac, Meryl Tankard and Malcolm Gillies; SBS Lawyer and copyright expert Sally McCausland; Sights & Sounds organisers Justine Molony, Robyn Holmes, Marie-Louise Ayres and Jasmine Cameron; Lawrence Warner and Linda Barwick.

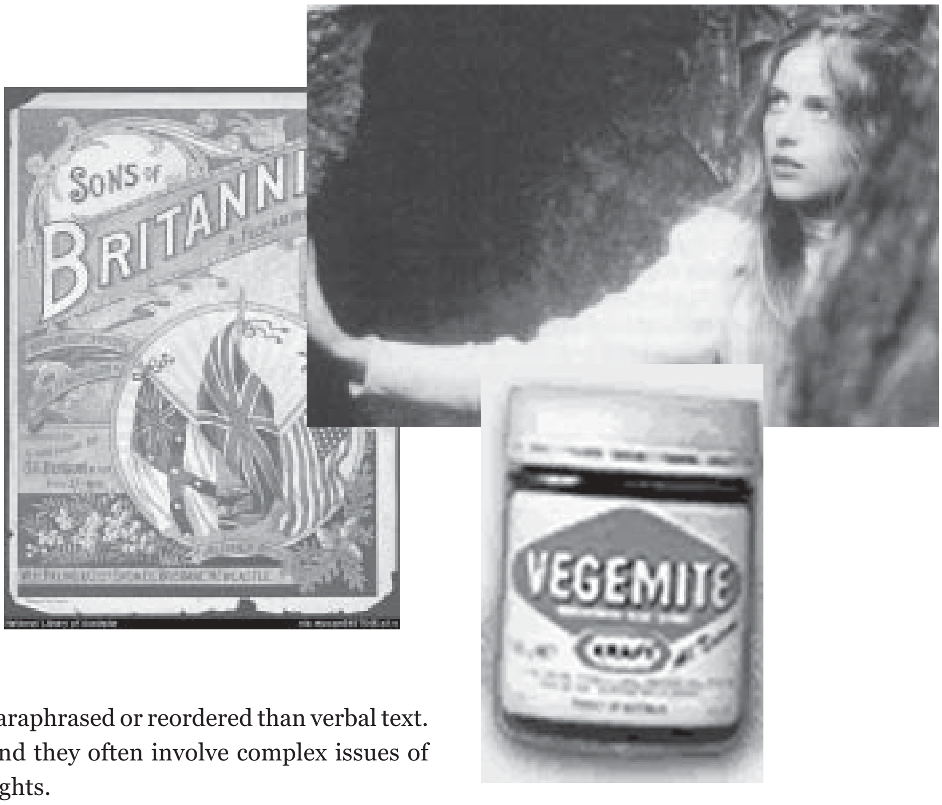
Unique knowledge: song, dance, film etc.

The Chair of the NSCF and immediate past president of the Academy, Professor Malcolm Gillies, argues below that sights and sounds, images and song, make up a large part of Australia's collective 'knowledge'. Like written texts, these vital cultural objects need to be publically accessible.

Do you remember Barry's cadastre? Well, to refresh your memory, it was the national knowledge stocktake that the Labor Party hoped would lay the basis of a national inventory or knowledge bank. That bold mapping exercise of Australia's human and physical resources was intended as the first stage of a "networked Australia". Its emphases were to be on the environment, health, employment, research and education. A year on, we remain cadastre-less.

Even without the stocktake, that networked Australia is emerging, albeit fitfully, through collaborations in scholarly communications. Our cultural institutions are taking a lead here. The National Library of Australia, for instance, explains in its Strategic Directions document that "all Australians, at their place of choice, [should] have direct, seamless access to print and electronic sources of information". The British Library goes a bit further, in its 2001 vision statement expressing the hope of "making accessible the world's intellectual, scientific and cultural heritage. The collections of the British Library and other great collections will be accessible on everyone's virtual bookshelf — at work, at school, at college, at home". These are bold aims, but essential in a world of crumbling institutional walls, and in which research and education are measured more by their impact than by some concept of scholarly purity.

When we talk of "knowledge" most people think of print sources: books, articles, magazines, encyclopedias. Yet, a growing percentage of the knowledge our populations access digitally is in the form of sights and sounds. It took longer for these media to be taken to the digital world because they were less efficient in memory terms than verbal or numerical forms. They are, of course, less susceptible to being meaningfully summarised, paraphrased or reordered than verbal text. And they often involve complex issues of rights.



Australia's sound heritage is, however, a vital part of our knowledge culture. There are the sounds of our natural environment, from the waves to birdsong. There are oral history testimonies, and the sound records of famous events. Think, for instance, of such national treasures as Bob Menzies' radio broadcast of September 1939 bringing Australia into the Second World War, authentic recordings of Dorothea Mackellar reading *My Country*, or Percy Grainger playing his *Country Gardens*. The advent of MP3 has shown just how ideal — for many a recording company altogether *too* ideal — the web now is for the transmission of memory-intensive audio files.

Music has always been an Achilles heel of the information sector. Part of the reason is that its notation is easily separable from its sound source. Matching the scores, often known as *the* music, with the sound source, which actually *is the music*, has been the bane of many a music librarian's or researcher's life. The MusicAustralia project, involving the National Library, Australian Music Centre, ScreenSound and Australia Council, is one recent scheme intended to bring together the visual and aural traces of music and make them available to the wider public.

The PictureAustralia project, drawing togther various State libraries, the Australian War Memorial and the National Library, is a similar scheme connecting the still images of many different archival agencies, "to increase public access to Australia's heritage in pictures". This access is essential to a culture as visual as contemporary Australia, and for an emerging generation in which frequently more students are studying art and design than physics and chemistry.

The NSCF presented its fifteenth round table on 3 October at the National Library in Canberra on the theme of "Sights and Sounds in Scholarly Communication". Speakers addressed the increasing demands of "sensory scholarship": how to access it in hard or soft copy; how to deal with its sometimes fearsome problems of rights; how to further the advances of recent years so that the music, film, visual arts and dance of today are preserved for the benefit of future generations.

For more information about this NSCF Round Table and a Workshop on use of digital sights and sounds visit www.humanities.org.au/nscf/overview.htm.

Malcolm Gillies is Chair of the National Scholarly Communications Forum and Australian National University Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education). A version of this article was published in Campus Review (25 September edition) and presented at NSCF Round Table 15.

Reconfiguring through (re)connection: collaborative research

Professor Ian Donaldson FAHA and President Iain McCalman teamed up for an ANU National Institute of the Humanities event, "Reconfiguring the Humanities", held on 12 September. Below is an edited exerpt of the address given by Professor McCalman, which outlined the idea of bringing Humanities scholarship to non-university users.

Collaborative research and teaching is not the only way forward for the Humanities, but both Ian Donaldson and I are offering it up as one important way of energising and refiguring dimensions of our disciplines that are experiencing a bad time in the current tough climate. To underscore this idea, let me briefly outline one of the proposals that in my capacity as President of the Academy of the Humanities I've just submitted to the Nelson Review of Higher Education.

I should admit from the outset that we had a problem with finding a name for our proposal. Our broad model was the Government's Cooperative Research Centre program that has brought a substantial funding injection for the science, engineering and technology sectors. There are now more than 60 of these academic and industry partnership centres around the country.

But the key rationale of the CRC scheme is commercialisation of science and technology, and while we think this is important, we are also concerned with the issue of social good. We want to try to ensure a broader dissemination of specialist research, as well as to revitalise a sector that has been suffering from decline in research funding allocations and, in some of our disciplines, a sharp decline in enrolment numbers among undergraduates as well.

> *Humanist scholars in collaborative enterprises can engage with social and political issues of large significance both in and outside the university*

So what to call our centres? The first name I came up with was Collaborative Research User Networks, a bit of a mouthful, a bit resonant of academic ponderousness, then I thought of Research User Centres, given that this seemed to go to the heart of our aims. However, this gave us the acronym RUCs, which, my women colleagues pointed out, revealed my blokey South African origins. So I ended up going with Research Innovation Centres, a harmless acronym that encompasses the currently fashionable term innovation.

The core concept of the RICs program is that groups of researchers will join with users of that research, from both the public and the private sectors, to undertake a strategic research and teaching program that would have as its focus long-term outcomes of national significance. The recent development of the concept of a knowledge-based economy has focused

Continued p. 11

Tall poppies get their reward

Continued from p.7

was a subtle *modus operandi*, that the universities should each be asked to nominate a Council member. I expected that several non-publishing academics would be appointed in this way (as they were) but I argued that we should word our letter of invitation carefully so that the universities would only nominate Council members once, so that they would be, in effect, one-off sops to the cut-the-heads-off-the-tall-poppies Brigade.

It was essential to get support from the Federal government, a view in which Trendall concurred enthusiastically. I thought that this support might be more readily forthcoming if we could show that the idea was likely to be backed by the Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation, with whom I had been, highly unofficially, in touch. I was then entrusted with formally negotiating with their representatives. This is a complex story, not without humour, which I propose to include in the *Anecdotes* I am writing.

Mr Menzies agreed to receive a deputation from the interim Council in Canberra: this consisted of Trendall as Chairman, Mitchell as Treasurer and myself as Secretary. We met the Prime Minister in July 1955 and were subsequently given the grant (initially of £4000 p.a.); this meant that we were also to be generously supported by the two foundations.

At this meeting the Prime Minister told us in confidence of his plan to set up the Murray Commission under Sir Keith Murray, then running the University Grants Committee in the United Kingdom. It was to revolutionise the funding of Australian universities, hitherto tied to the amounts granted by State governments, and allow more federal funding to support them. (Our meeting with Mr Menzies was also not without humour, so it will go into my *Anecdotes* too.) The Council met for the first time in Canberra in November 1956.

I left Adelaide to take up a chair in Leeds in February 1957 and handed over the blueprint – that is, the subjects of the chapters and a list of those who had agreed to write them – of *The Humanities in Australia* to Grenfell Price, who then became the official Editor, setting up various sub-editors and a committee and producing a useful book. A few years ago I lent my copy of it (it had been long out of print) to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, which lost it. I wanted a copy from which I could obtain a photocopy of two chapters from which I needed to quote, and wrote to the Academy to request these. I was surprised to find the Academy either had no copy, or, like the Royal Society of Edinburgh, had lost it. I did manage to get a copy for myself through the internet and I hope the Academy has also obtained one now, for, as Dr Molony has pointed out, the AHRC led to the foundation of the Academy.

Copies of this publication have been unearthed and are now preserved in the Academy Library – thanks to the efforts of Library and Archive Officer Dr Janet Hadley Williams – ED.

Reconfiguring through (re)connection

Continued from p. 10.

almost exclusively on science and technology in order to produce new commerical, social, or economic outcomes. The community at large has been bombarded with announcements, news and opinion related to the need to expand our scientific and technological capabilities. But the requirement to address the broader ethical, social, cultural and intellectual issues has been pushed into the background.

It is vital that the knowledge base of the nation not be impoverished, nor the intellectual integrity of the education system undermined, by an excessive focus on science and technology, important though these areas are. We must recognise the value to any innovative knowledge economy and tolerant democracy of language scholars, historians, authors, anthropologists, poets, playwrights, designers, dancers, composers, musicians, visual artists, and others. Our Academy proposes that Australia adopt a positive structure by which the public can benefit from the innovative research taking place in the humanistic and creative fields.

Our Academy proposes that Australia adopt a positive structure by which the public can benefit from the innovative research taking place in the humanistic and creative field

The core principle embodied in a Research Innovation Centre is that participants can achieve their strategic objectives more successfully by working in collaborative and interdisciplinary environments, or in one-on-one relationships with other research users, than by working alone.

I trust and hope that our Collaborative Research Innovating Centres, if and when we get them, will take a huge variety of forms. I know that they will all demonstrate that Humanist scholars in collaborative enterprises can engage with social and political issues of large significance both in and outside the university. Our experience and skills are relevant to whether or not this will be a decent, fair, humane and civilised country for all its citizens.

2002 Symposium program

Below is an program for the Academy's 2002 Symposium, which can also be found at www.humanities.org.au/Conferences/.

PROOF AND TRUTH:
THE HUMANIST AS EXPERT

November 14-15, 2002
Academy of Science Shine Dome
Canberra

Thursday 14 November
1.30pm: WELCOME
Ann McGrath
Iain McCalman FAHA

1.40 – 3.30pm: Session One
PROVING TRUTH, THE EXPERT & SOCIAL AUTHORITY
Hal Wootten
Graeme Davison FAHA
John Sutton

3.30 – 4.00pm: Afternoon Tea

4.00 – 5.30pm: Session Two
LAW AND LIES
Ken Crispin
Mark Dreyfus

5.30PM: DIALOGICA AWARDS PRESENTATION

For more information about the conference program and to register: www.humanities.org.au/Conferences/Symposium2002.htm or call/e-mail 02 6125 9860 / aah.office@anu.edu.au

Hard copy programs will be provided at registration.

Friday 15 November
9.00 – 10.30am: Session Three
INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND CULTURAL TRUTH
Arthur Ray
Larissa Behrendt

10.30-11.00: Morning Tea

11.00 – 12.30: Annual Lecture
Mark Finnane FAHA

12.30 – 1.30: Lunch

1.30 – 3.00: Session Four
FACTS AND STORIES
Ann Curthoys FAHA & Ann Genovese
Panel Discussion:
Arthur Glass
Tony Connolly

3.00 – 3.30: Afternoon Tea

3.30 – 5.00: Session Five / PUBLIC DEBATE
LAW, SCIENCE AND THE HUMANITIES: ARE WE ALL LIARS?
Panel:
Hal Wootten
John Sutton
Ann McGrath

Judge of the experts

continued from p.1

Another problem is the way expert opinion is interpreted, he said. " It is often a case of evidence proving that something *may* have occurred, but it is then taken as evidence that something *did* occur." Experts needed to be aware of the underlying presuppositions and paradigms of their own forms of knowledge, Justice Crispin said.

"Science, as much as the Humanities, has elements of intepretation.... With DNA, it is very often a question of how [the material] is interpreted, so there is no reason to take anything at face value."

Justice Crispin – who has a PhD in ethics – says if he had his way, philosophy would be mandatory for all law students, it being the discipline of relentless questioning and perpetual scepticism. Part of the role of the judge, and perhaps the contemporary scholar, was to "try and inculcate a climate of perpetual scepticism", Justice Crispin sad.

PROFILE

Professor Tim Rowse

Tim Rowse FAHA is a senior fellow in the History Program, Research School of Social Sciences, ANU, and will soon be heading to the USA for a stint as the Professor of Australian Studies at Harvard University. Below he tells Academy editor Bruce Bennett about his research interests and is latest book, *Nugget Coombs: A Reforming Life*.

Your research and publications have often emphasised a nexus between Humanities interests and public policy. Why is this?

One of the main concerns of the contemporary Humanities (and in particular, of Cultural Studies) is "representation". Public policy is a phenomenon of the public sphere, and the public sphere is made up of representations and of the means for producing representations. To describe what governments do is to produce a representation. To offer a version of "the public interest" or to advance a particular interest is to produce representations. So public policy is made up of representations, and the public sphere is an exchange of representations. So if the Humanities is good at studying the work of representation then the Humanities has much to offer the study of the political process and that includes public policy.

Of course, the "habitus" of the Humanities scholar is often defined by a cheerful disdain for the mundane, and politics is mundane. And that "habitus" is complemented by another – the policy intellectual who is too "practical" to be reflective about the languages which constitute the public policy process. Combine those two styles of intellectual subjectivity and you have a pernicious division of intellectual labour. Politics is too important to leave to intellectuals who are not curious about representation.

Much of your recent work (Obliged to be difficult, Nugget Coombs: a reforming life and Indigenous futures) *has been about social science and in particular intellectuals trained in Economics. What interests you about economists and Economics?*

I should first point out that I have no formal training in Economics, and I am certainly not competent in technical aspects of the discipline. I am fascinated by the authority that "the economic" has acquired. Donald Horne was one of the first to point this out in Australia, in his book *Money Made Us*. Horne tended to conflate two themes: the 'materialistic' motivation that he discerned in Australians, and the ascendancy of the discourse of the economy in public life. I am not concerned with the first theme, as I find speculation about mass motivation difficult to get a handle on. But I am very interested in the reification of social process through the invocation of that knowledge-object "the economy". This morning's *Sydney Morning Herald* headline has a beautiful example: "Drought rips $4bn hole in economy". My interest in the economic as an idiom of public value was awakened by the Industries Assistance Commission's report on the Performing Arts in Australia, and by the subsequent efforts of arts policy intellectuals to reframe the value of the subsidised arts in 'economic' terms. I wrote about that in *Arguing the Arts* (1985). It was helpful to my thinking that Glenn Withers and David Throsby – two world leaders in the "economisation" of arts advocacy – did their work in and on Australia.

Much of my recent work, as you mentioned, has been about Coombs. He makes an exemplary study because he thought aloud about the political utility of Economics as a disciplined approach to government. Through a biographical narrative, I've been able to show the contingent bases of his embrace of this or that theoretical agenda in Economics – first his Keynesianism (the war economy), later his search for an ecological economy (his retirement from the Reserve Bank and his response to ecological projections of the human future). I wrote *Indigenous Futures* at the invitation (accompanied by a year's salary) of an economist, Jon Altman, the Director of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR). One of my arguments is that when CAEPR reads the Indigenous predicament through the policy-relevant lens of labour market economics, it tends not to see another policy-relevant development: the rise of the Indigenous Sector as a political phenomenon.

Was Nugget Coombs the last of the "true" public servants in Australia?

Your question is interesting because of the difficulty of the word "true". One could argue that public servants' primary duty is not to declare any truth as a singularity but to offer Ministers options: various scenarios for relating the means and the ends of the government of the day. A public servant who does that well may not be speaking "true to their own heart". In *Obliged to be difficult*, I described "sincerity" in a public servant as "tactically superfluous". I would say the same of sincerity in a democratic politician. This is not intended to be cynical. My view is that in a democracy both politicians and public

Continued on p.4