



2011 SYMPOSIUM CONVENOR'S WELCOME

The 2011 Symposium of the Australian Academy of the Humanities explores the multiple meanings, purposes, issues and challenges of educating the nation. The specific stimulation for our discussions is the historic step taken by the state, territory and Federal governments of Australia to produce a shared national curriculum. A nationally devised curriculum has been proposed many times in the past and on all previous occasions noble aims have collapsed before pragmatic realities, political obstructions or financial constraints.

This time it is different. The Australian Curriculum, as it is to be known, is well advanced, the key learning areas have been described, 'shape papers' have been prepared and extensive public consultations and media debate have occurred. As a result the first phase of Australia's first Australian Curriculum has been approved by the nation's Education Ministers and work is underway to implement it from the first year of schooling to the tenth in English, history, mathematics and science.

This is a momentous change to the way education is conducted, and what values, ideas and ideologies are promulgated. All curricula involve a selection from all that it might be possible to teach, and what motivates the selection is a space of immense importance for humanities scholars.

Often education is discussed in reductive ways, as if the interface between schooling and the labour market is the sole reason for which our society deprives the young of their liberty and compels them to be schooled, a 'privilege' we accord to few other social categories. All curricula, and especially national curricula, help shape the cultural life of a nation; how the nation, both its intra-national cohesion and its extra-national connections, are imagined and fostered.

When the Council of the Academy selected this theme for the Academy's 2011 Symposium we wanted to ensure that it would appeal to many audiences beyond the Fellowship of the Academy, and to all sections of the Academy Fellowship. I believe that the programme lives up to this aspiration and I wish to place on record my gratitude to the hard working Secretariat (Gabriela Cabral, Christina Parolin, Christine Barnicoat, Kylie Brass, Jorge Salavert, and others who have played a role) for helping us achieve these aims. I also want to place on record my gratitude to our host and sponsor, the University of Melbourne, and I am delighted that Vice Chancellor Professor Glyn Davis AC FASSA has agreed to open proceedings. I also want to thank RMIT University, Deakin University, Monash University and La Trobe University for their kind and generous assistance. I am grateful to Professor Barry McGaw, President of ASSA and Chair of ACARA, for kindly agreeing to speak in Session One, and I also express my thanks to all the other speakers who will explore the Australian Curriculum theme from the angles of the disciplines and the cross-curriculum themes.

The programme addresses two of the cross curricula themes directly (Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories

and Cultures) and the disciplines of English, the Arts and History, but all the humanities are implicated in the curriculum and will be discussed and debated.

Through the national curriculum Australia will prepare the humanities scholars of the future and forge the knowledge, cultural capabilities, artistic sensibilities, political dispositions and democratic inclinations of our future citizens and their global interactions. The national curriculum impacts on the Academy and its Fellowship in two main ways, first, through the preparation of the humanities workforce of the future and second, through how the curriculum will shape and foster the Australian sense of nationhood. This latter theme will be discussed comparatively by curriculum specialist Professor Lyn Yates FASSA.

As part of the Symposium I am honoured, both as Convenor of the Symposium and as President of the Academy, to be delivering the Academy Address. In my talk I will reflect on the humanities and their place in Australian education and on what nurturing and sustenance we can expect for the humanities from the Australian Curriculum. I will make particular reference to English, literacy and communication issues, but mostly to languages, and their unique role as both tools and objects of civilisation, and therefore centrally important to schools and the curriculum, as well as to the Academy and the Fellowship.

Joseph Lo Bianco AM FAHA

**EDUCATING THE NATION:
THE HUMANITIES IN THE NEW AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM**

42ND ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM OF THE AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF THE HUMANITIES

PROGRAMME

THURSDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2011

09:00am **Registrations**

09:20am **Welcome**

Welcome to Country

Professor Glyn Davis AC FASSA
Vice-Chancellor, The University of Melbourne

Professor Joseph Lo Bianco AM FAHA
President, Australian Academy of the Humanities

09:45am **Academy Address**

Professor Joseph Lo Bianco AM FAHA
President, Australian Academy of the Humanities

Politics, Poetics and Policy: Humanities and the New Borders

Professor Ian Donaldson FAHA FBA FRSE (Chair)
Immediate Past President, Australian Academy of the Humanities

Discussion

10:30am **Morning Tea**

11:00am **Session One**

History, English, The Arts and the Australian Curriculum

Professor Barry McGaw FASSA FACE FAPSS FIAE
Chair, Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)
Developing an Australian School Curriculum

11:30am Professor Marilyn Lake FAHA FASSA
President, Australian Historical Association

History for the Nation in the 21st Century

- 12:00 noon Professor Susan Wright
The University of Melbourne
Symbol, Narrative and Identity: The Significance of the Arts
- 12:30pm Professor Robert Dixon FAHA
The University of Sydney
English in the Australian Senior School Curriculum
- Emeritus Professor Elizabeth Webby AM FAHA (Chair)
Editor, Australian Academy of the Humanities
- 1:00pm **Lunch**
- 2:00pm **Session Two**
***Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Histories and Cultures***
- Professor Jakelin (Jaky) Troy
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
*Australian Languages Go National: A Future Framework for
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Languages in the Australian
Curriculum*
- Professor Michael Walsh
The University of Sydney
Regaining Australian Languages: A Challenge for the Academy
- Professor Anna Haebich FAHA (Chair)
Vice-President, Australian Academy of the Humanities
- Discussion**
- 2:45pm **Session Three**
Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia
- Professor Robert Cribb FAHA
Australian National University
Parallel Histories and the Meaning of Australasia
- Professor Sandra Wilson
Murdoch University
Normalising Asia
- Emeritus Professor Lesley Johnson AM FAHA (Chair)
Vice-President and International Secretary, Australian Academy of the Humanities
- Discussion**

3:30pm

Afternoon Tea

4:00pm

Session Four
Nation Building Through Schooling

Professor Lyn Yates FASSA
The University of Melbourne

*Anxieties, New Times, Managerialism, Competitive Agendas and
Unintended Effects: The Humanities and Schools Today*

Professor Pamela Sharpe FAHA (Chair)
Treasurer, Australian Academy of the Humanities

Discussion

4:35pm

Closing

Professor Joseph Lo Bianco AM FAHA
President, Australian Academy of the Humanities

5:00pm

Reception

ACADEMY ADDRESS

JOSEPH LO BIANCO

Professor Joseph Lo Bianco AM FAHA is President of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and Chair of Language and Literacy Education in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne.

Professor Lo Bianco is an internationally recognised expert in language and intercultural education and has worked as an advisor on language policy and planning with a long list of nations, including post-apartheid South Africa, Singapore, Canada, the USA, Scotland, Ireland, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Vietnam and Western Samoa, as well as UNESCO and UNICEF. He has published extensively on multiculturalism and diversity in education, literacy development, the continuum between language and cultural education and the wider humanities and social sciences.

Professor Lo Bianco was elected a Fellow of the Academy in 1999, to Council in 2007 and as President in 2009. He is a Fellow of the Australian College of Educators, a Member of the Order of Australia, and in June 1999 was admitted by the President of the Republic of Italy to the title of Commendatore nell'Ordine di Merito della Repubblica Italiana. In 2007 he was awarded the College Medal by the Australian College of Educators and in 2011 the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations awarded him its Outstanding Service Medal.

Politics, Poetics and Policy: Humanities and the New Borders

The humanities are defended, both defensively and assertively, on a regular basis. These acts of promotion and advocacy take the humanities discourse into the arena of public policy making and the territory of politics. However, even the defences of the humanities, in their style and content, reveal key qualities of thinking and perspective that are distinctive to the disciplines of the humanities. In this talk I will discuss several prominent recent defences of the place and role of the humanities in general, with reference also to the special place of languages. From this basis I will discuss English in its global functions of lingua franca and medium of scholarly exchange, addressing dilemmas of position and style for some possible future outlines on the humanities in our universities.

SESSION ONE

*History, English, The Arts
and the Australian Curriculum*

BARRY MCGAW

Professor Barry McGaw AO FASSA is a Vice-Chancellor's Fellow at the University of Melbourne where, from 2006 to 2010, he was a Professorial Fellow. He had previously been Director for Education at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Executive Director of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and Professor of Education at Murdoch University.

Professor McGaw is a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, the Australian Psychological Society, the Australian College of Educators and the International Academy of Education. He is currently President of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia.

Developing an Australian School Curriculum

The broad shape of the Australian Curriculum is set out in the 'Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians' adopted by education ministers in December 2008. The successive remits from ministers to the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority gave priority to English and history and then the arts, but the Authority now has responsibility for developing curricula for the rest of the humanities to be studied at school level. The presentation will outline the view of the whole and consider the role of the humanities in the development of foundational literacy skills, disciplinary competence, the development of students' general capabilities and the advancement of the three cross-curriculum priorities (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia, and Sustainability).

MARILYN LAKE

Marilyn Lake FAHA FASSA is Charles La Trobe Professor in History in the School of Historical and European Studies at La Trobe University. She is also President of the Australian Historical Association. Her recent books include *Connected Worlds: History in Transnational Perspective*, co-edited with Ann Curthoys (ANU E Press, 2005), and *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality*, co-authored with Henry Reynolds (Cambridge University Press/Melbourne University Press, 2008), which won a number of awards including the Prime Minister's Prize for Non-Fiction in 2010.

In 2011 she takes up an ARC Australian Professorial Fellowship to research the international history of Australian democracy.

History for the Nation in the 21st Century

The 'rationale' provided for History in the new Australian Curriculum states that the curriculum takes 'a world history approach' within which the history of Australia will be taught, because its authors believe that an understanding of world history enhances students' appreciation of Australian history. I agree, but how should we do this?

With a focus on the curriculum proposed for year levels 9 – The Making of the Modern World – and 10 – The Modern World and Australia – my paper will enquire into the challenges posed by, and historical insight to be gained from, this approach and its particular emphasis on the related histories of Asian and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. I also point to the conceptual and methodological implications of a world history approach for teaching and research in Australian history and Australian Studies more broadly at the university level.

The curriculum proposes that the concepts of continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives, empathy and significance provide the key to understanding the past. I suggest that we might add the concepts of 'historical agency' and 'transnational connection' as we thus seek to locate Australia historically in the modern world.

SUSAN WRIGHT

Professor Susan Wright is Chair of Arts Education at the University of Melbourne. Previously, she was Head of Early Childhood and Special Needs Education at the National Institute of Education in Singapore (2006–2009) and Director of the Centre for Applied Studies in Early Childhood at the Queensland University of Technology (1999–2003).

Her teaching and research focuses on young children's meaning-making and communication using artistic symbol systems and multi-modal forms of expression (i.e. visual, spatial, musical and bodily-kinaesthetic) and emphasises the significance of creative and somatic forms of learning and development. She has been an active researcher and publisher in arts education. Her most recent books are *Children, Meaning-Making and the Arts* (2nd edition 2012, Pearson Australia), *Understanding Creativity in Early Childhood* (2010, SAGE, UK), *Special Education: Perspectives and Practices* (2008, Pearson, Singapore), and *The Arts, Young Children and Learning* (2003, Allyn and Bacon, NY).

Symbol, Narrative and Identity: The Significance of the Arts

The National Cultural Policy Discussion Paper (2011) highlights that 'the arts and creative industries are fundamental to Australia's identity as a society and nation, and increasingly to our success as a national economy' (p. 4). One of its goals is to increase and strengthen the capacity of the arts and to bring the arts and the creative industries into the mainstream, because 'an education rich in the arts fuels children's curiosity and critical capacity; it prepares children for better academic achievement and for creative flexible thinking' (p. 17).

The new national curriculum will ensure that young Australians have access to learning in the creative arts. There is evidence to support the principle that fostering creativity at a young age will build the foundations of a strong resilient population, armed with capacities for critical inquiry, lateral thinking, innovative solutions and powerful communication. These are the skills that will drive Australia into the future (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2010).

The arts are the paramount symbolic language through which shifting meanings and feelings are presented, often metaphorically – they are the creative imagination at work. The artefacts and processes that emerge reveal narrative and agency to be significant components of meaning-making and communication through participation in the arts (Wright, 2010). The techniques of the arts 'are the aspects of human behaviour that social scientists have identified as being the source and manifestation of creativity and innovation – the essential elements for the survival of the species' (Hawkes, 2001, p. 24).

ROBERT DIXON

Robert Dixon FAHA is Professor of Australian Literature at the University of Sydney. He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities (from 2004), a judge of the Miles Franklin Literary Award (2004–2009), Chair of the Kibble Literary Award (from 2009), a member of the ARC College of Experts (2008–2010), and a consultant to ACARA on the Australian National Curriculum (English). His most recent books are *Photography, Early Cinema and Colonial Modernity: Frank Hurley's Synchronized Lecture Entertainments* (Anthem, 2011), *The Diaries of Frank Hurley 1912–1941* (Anthem, 2011), and (forthcoming) *The Novels of Alex Miller: An Introduction* (Allen & Unwin, 2012).

English in the Australian Senior School Curriculum

In 2009, when a Professor of Education was appointed as lead writer of the framing paper for the English curriculum, there were objections that the job should have gone to a Professor of English. Since that time, the development of the English curriculum has confirmed just how far apart academic and school 'English' have grown in the last 25 years. While both have changed to a degree, senior school English is now an extremely diverse field, of which academic English remains a subset, albeit a very important subset, perhaps most easily recognised as 'Literature'. This paper will offer an account of the development of the curriculum which examines some of the ways in which 'English' in our schools and universities both is and is not quite the same thing.

SESSION TWO

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

JAKELIN TROY

Dr Jakelin (Jaky) Troy is a Ngarigu woman of the Snowy Mountains, Monaro district in Southern NSW. Her PhD is in Australian linguistics. Over the past decade Jaky has worked with school systems to develop curricula for teaching Australian languages in schools. Jaky is now Director of Research, Indigenous Social and Cultural Wellbeing at the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in Canberra.

Australian Languages Go National: A Future Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Languages in the Australian Curriculum

The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) paper ‘Shape of the curriculum – languages’ (http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/_resources/Draft+Shape+of+the+Australian+Curriculum+++Languages+++FINAL.pdf) is now close to finalisation and we are heading into a whole new era for the teaching of Australian languages that has never before been envisaged. With the mandating of the place of our languages with all other languages taught in Australian schools, all 250 or more of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages could potentially find a place in the curriculum. But how will we do this? In this paper I will explore some of the key considerations being canvassed as ACARA plans for the development of a framework for Australian languages that will follow in the curriculum writing phase after the ‘Shape’ paper is finalised. For example, the varying ecologies of our languages – some sleeping, others being re-awoken and a few still spoken everyday by communities – is one of the most important considerations. For this reason a range of programme types will need to be developed. I will explore programmes and possibilities for the framework in this paper.

MICHAEL WALSH

Since 1972 Michael Walsh has carried out fieldwork in the Top End of the Northern Territory, mainly in the Darwin–Daly region. This has been a mixture of academic endeavours as well as consultancies since 1979, mainly relating to Aboriginal land issues. From 1999 he has been involved in the revitalisation of Aboriginal languages in NSW. From 1982 until the end of 2005 he was part of the teaching staff of the Department of Linguistics, University of Sydney. Since ‘retiring’, he has continued his research interests especially through a large ARC grant involving a team of linguists and musicologists running from 2004 to 2010 (<http://azoulay.arts.usyd.edu.au/mpsong/>). This project aims to document the song traditions of the Murriny Patha people and was triggered by community concern to preserve these traditions for future generations. Most recently he has been advising on Australian languages as part of the evolving National Curriculum for Languages.

Regaining Australian Languages: A Challenge for the Academy

In 1788 Australia had some 250 distinct languages. The *National Indigenous Languages Survey Report 2005* reported that just 18 of these could be considered ‘strong’ in the sense that they were still being learnt by people of all ages. Particularly in the last 20 years efforts have been directed towards the revitalisation of languages that have fallen out of use. Such initiatives have been shown to yield considerable benefits for Aboriginal communities because the regaining of ancestral languages also leads to the regaining of identity and the improvement of community wellbeing. If these activities are to be successful, they need injections of technical expertise. However, the current university system does not encourage these crucial inputs of expertise. As will be shown, the academy at present does more to hinder than help the revitalisation process. Given that the regaining of Australian Languages has not just academic value but substantial benefits for the wider community, there is a challenge for the academy to assist rather than punish such efforts.

SESSION THREE

Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia

ROBERT CRIBB

Robert Cribb FAHA is Professor of Asian History at the Australian National University. His research has focused mainly on Indonesia but has recently expanded to include Northeast Asia. His writing has analysed issues of crime and mass violence in Indonesian history, including the 1965–66 genocide of communists, but also includes national identity, historical geography and environmental history. He recently completed a *Digital Atlas of Indonesian History* and is currently completing (with two colleagues) a cultural history of the orangutan.

Parallel Histories and the Meaning of Australasia

The Indonesia–Australia relationship is often described in terms of an impressive (or not so impressive) encounter between two very different societies forced into each other's company by geographical proximity. But we can also see Australia and Indonesia as surprisingly similar societies, brought into being by European colonialism, inspired by modern social-democratic ideals but struggling with the implications of ethnic diversity that is linked with class difference, repeatedly riding high on resource booms, riven internally by Cold War antagonisms and chronically full of doubt about the meaning of national identity. What might happen if we taught the history of these two societies in parallel rather than in contrast?

SANDRA WILSON

Sandra Wilson is Professor of Japanese Studies and a Fellow of the Asia Research Centre at Murdoch University. She has written on Japanese society and politics in the 1930s, and now researches Japanese nationalism from the late 18th century to the present. She is also engaged with several colleagues on a project about the repatriation of convicted Japanese war criminals from Southeast Asia to Japan after the Second World War.

Normalising Asia

Australia's connections with Asia are many and diverse. In politics, the military and business, the ties are almost taken for granted. Yet teaching students about Asia is often seen as an optional add-on, or as too hard, as something to be left to a few people with specialist knowledge. It used to be the same with teaching about gender – anything to do with women or gender was a special topic, and was given a wide berth by many teachers. Now, gender is a mainstream issue and it is hard to imagine a curriculum that does not include gender perspectives as a matter of course. What would it take for teaching about Asia to become as normal as teaching about gender now is?

SESSION FOUR

Nation Building Through Schooling

LYN YATES

Lyn Yates is Foundation Professor of Curriculum at the University of Melbourne, where she is also Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research). Her initial degrees were in 16th century history, and later in sociology and philosophy of curriculum, and she has written extensively on gender, inequalities, and education policy. Her books include *The Education of Girls* (1993); *What Does Good Education Research Look Like?* (2004); *Making Modern Lives: Subjectivity, Schooling and Social Change* (2006, with Julie McLeod); *Australia's Curriculum Dilemmas* (MUP 2011); and *Curriculum in Today's World* (Routledge World Yearbook of Education 2011).

Anxieties, New Times, Managerialism, Competitive Agendas and Unintended Effects: The Humanities and Schools Today

The humanities today are both unintended casualties and important vehicles of government agendas in relation to school curriculum. This paper draws on a recent ARC-funded project to show changing forms of curriculum thinking and curriculum management in Australia since the 1970s, and some ways the humanities is positioned within these. It discusses three developments. One is the rise of measurement, testing, 'evidence-based' discourse and accountability mechanisms as the means by which curriculum is managed and represented to the public. This development reconstructs what gets to count within schools and within curricula, and in some important ways works against the space traditionally occupied by the humanities. Secondly, some core understandings about knowledge are under challenge in the rapidly changing 21st century, within disciplines as well as outside them. Questions about what range and what types of learning are appropriate in school are not easily resolved either by looking to the past or to the future or to experts or to popular opinion, and it is likely that those working in and advocating for the humanities similarly do not speak with any kind of consensus on this matter. Thirdly, globally felt anxieties about immigration, terrorism, economic survival have led to much national rebuilding of curricula in many countries, a development echoed in Australia under both political parties. Here the humanities (though not the humanities alone) *are* called on. They are called on to carry a particular story of who we are and how we want the next generation to see themselves, each other, and the world.