AAH Policy

NATIONHOOD, NATIONAL IDENTITY AND DEMOCRACY SEPTEMBER 2019

The Australian Academy of the Humanities (AAH) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Reference Committee *Inquiry into Nationhood, National Identity and Democracy* (the Inquiry).

The Academy is the national body for the humanities in Australia, championing the contribution humanities, arts and culture make to national life. Our work aims to ensure ethical, historical and cultural perspectives inform discussions regarding Australia's future challenges and opportunities.

Our submission chiefly addresses the following Inquiry Terms of Reference (ToR):

> (c) social cohesion and cultural identity in the nation state
>
> (e) contemporary notions of cultural identity, multiculturalism and regionalism.

Below we outline key issues and areas where humanities expertise stands to make a major contribution to conceptualising the problems and working towards solutions associated with these ToR.

We have also attached a list of reports that the Academy has been involved with, and that are relevant to the Inquiry, including through the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA); and a list of expertise areas of select Fellows whose expertise bears directly on the Inquiry ToR.

1. Sustaining democracy: Understanding and addressing declining levels of public trust

To sustain Australia's democratic processes, we need to develop innovative solutions to address declining public trust in core institutions, notably the media, business, Government and NGOs.

With trust in politics and the media representing a key challenge, it is useful to look to sectors and institutions which continue to maintain high levels of public trust. Two of these are knowledge-based sectors: Australia's cultural and collecting institutions; and our university system.

We would urge the Inquiry to consider ways to harness the collective experience and expertise of these sectors in support of strong and democratic communities.

Australia's universities are uniquely placed to contribute to this agenda:

- Our universities literally educate the nation – preparing students for the workforce and for participating in civic life. More than half of Australians between the ages of 25–34 now hold a tertiary qualification, an increase of 9 percent over the ten years to 2018.[1]
- The percentage of the Australian population that hold a degree at a bachelor level or above was 31.4 percent in 2018, up from 24.4 percent in 2008.[2]

3 Liversidge St Acton · GPO Box 93 · Canberra ACT 2601
E enquiries@humanities.org.au · T +61 2 6125 9860 · F +61 2 6125 9142 · www.humanities.org.au
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- Education is Australia's third largest export, and the leading services export.[3]
- A majority of Australia's university students – 61 percent or 606,721 students in total – are educated in the humanities, arts and social sciences (HASS).[4]
- HASS fields generate knowledge and modes of understanding that are especially valuable today: "Responding to today's global, social, cultural and economic challenges requires specialist knowledge of the peoples, societies and cultures that underpin, fuel or react to these challenges. The HASS disciplines are integral to achieving that fine-tuned understanding."[5]
- HASS researchers are working on some of the most pressing contemporary issues: from maximising the benefits of digital technologies for young people,[6] to challenging and countering Islamophobia,[7] to advancing medical ethics for children, families and practitioners. This is research that is making a real difference in people's lives. The work of our researchers and universities is underpinned by principles of integrity, responsibility, respect, fairness, and transparency.
- Our universities play a fundamental role in the social and economic lives of the communities they serve. Regional, rural and remote universities and campuses are "important service providers for their regions. They are significant financial and social institutions in the areas in which they operate, offering their communities educational, research, economic, cultural and social opportunities which otherwise may not be available within close proximity."[8]

Like our universities, Australia's cultural institutions play a central role in preserving and promoting Australia's history, culture and democracy:

- Galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAM) collections document and record Australian life. These are an invaluable resource with relevance to the personal lives of Australians as well as to the story of our nation.
- The 2018 Parliamentary Inquiry into Canberra's National Institutions and associated report *Telling Australia's Story – and why it's important*, recognised the unique role of our national cultural institutions, and the high degrees of public trust and confidence in their collective institutional remit.[9]
- The sector is a leader in Australia's digital access, literacy and inclusion agendas; and are important actors in our region and internationally.
- The Australia Council for the Arts' *Connecting Australians: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey* (2017) contains data on the significant proportion of Australians who believe that arts and culture enhance their understanding of other people and allow them to better connect with others.[10]
- Our cultural institutions have a strong role to play in improving engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other First Nations people. Earlier this year, the Australian Museums and Galleries Association launched *First Peoples: A Roadmap for Enhancing Indigenous Engagement in Museums and Galleries* written by Terri Janke and Company.[11]
- A forthcoming Insight Report from A New Approach examines the international evidence on the connection between arts and cultural engagement and improved health

and wellbeing outcomes, community cohesiveness and shared identities. An earlier Insight Report acknowledged the important role of governments in the cultural life of the nation, including setting an environment of investment confidence through policy and regulatory settings and by leading public acknowledgement of the important role of creativity and culture in the lives of Australians.[12]

2. A socially engaged agenda to make the most of digital transformation for Australia

A large share of the issues canvassed in the Discussion Paper centre on changing modes of communication and political engagement in the face of digital disruption.

Access and affordability are vital pre-requisites for enhanced social connectivity, and by extension greater engagement in public life. The Government has an important role to play in ensuring that a socially-inclusive vision for Australia drives this agenda, developing strong principles-based and ethical approach to governance for the data and digital transformation agenda.

Australia's latest Digital Inclusion Index report provides the most comprehensive account to date of digital inclusion in Australia.[13] While pointing to the complexity of digital inclusion in contemporary Australia, and the scale of the policy challenge, the report makes it clear that problems can be tackled if we recognise that inclusion cannot simply be resolved through the single prism of access to network infrastructure and hardware. Capabilities, skills, and affordability must also be addressed, and our online rights and responsibilities need to be carefully considered. A national strategy framework, involving government, business, community, and our cultural institutions, will be necessary for Australia to improve outcomes in this area.

A recent report published by ACOLA on the development and deployment of artificial intelligence (AI), entitled *The Effective and Ethical Development of Artificial Intelligence: An Opportunity to Improve Our Wellbeing*, finds that "sharing the benefits of growth and equality of opportunity " will be "important factors in ensuring social cohesion", and that "proactive engagement, consultation and ongoing communication with the public about the changes and effects of AI will be essential for building community awareness" and "earning public trust."[14]

3. Australia's diaspora advantage in the region

Efforts to strengthen international cultural relations are today more important than ever. Our region comprises countries with very different historical and cultural backgrounds, and different core values. As globalisation has made transnational connections much more central, it is vital that we understand and work with our international neighbours.

The term diaspora captures a significant and growing population of migrants, Australian-born descendants, those of mixed-parentage, and temporary residents in Australia for work or study. These Australians are uniquely placed to use language skills, cultural understanding and global networks to further Australia's cultural and economic links with the region and beyond.

Around 17 percent of people living and working in Australia identify as being of Asian origin. By the year 2031, Australia's China-born population is projected to increase to 1.3 million, and Australia's India-born population set to increase nearly four-fold to 1.4 million. Recent reports from ACOLA have highlighted opportunities to activate the associated 'diaspora advantage.'

Today, however, Australia's relation with Asia is overwhelmingly characterised by cultural distance. This has resulted in a soft power deficit in Asia, with cultural relations operating at a comparatively thin and transactional level.[15]

There is an opportunity to build more strategic effort and leverage existing activities to 'close the distance' between Australia and the region through long-term and mutually beneficial collaborations and partnerships. In particular, there is a significant opportunity to build on the innovative regional cultural networks and infrastructures that have been established by independent cultural sector and civil society players, including Asian and Pacific diasporas.

4. Humanising Australia's future

In celebrating our 50th anniversary in 2019, the Academy has developed an agenda an 8-point plan to humanise Australia's future, for a human-centred approach to policy-making, which requires all government agendas to be informed by ethical, historical, creative and cultural expertise – from inclusive and diverse workforce strategies to successful global engagements, natural and cultural resources policy that responds to community needs, ethical and inclusive digital transformations, thriving creative and cultural industries, and cohesive, strong communities.[16] This approach is fundamental to promoting a robust and enduring democracy.

One of the key tenets of this plan is a call for more robust mechanisms for incorporating expert advice from evidence-based research into the processes of government. With the Chief Scientist model having proven extremely effective as a mechanism for providing advice on science issues, we believe that the establishment of a similar formal mechanism for providing social and cultural expertise, including Indigenous research and knowledge – in coordination with science-based advice – is necessary. The Chief Scientist mechanism, in its current form, cannot address priority issues for nationhood and democracy raised in this Inquiry. There is no mechanism to coordinate social and cultural expertise into Government.

This year the Academy will host its Annual Symposium in November on the topic of Humanising the Future and would welcome the opportunity to be engaged in further consultation.

Professor Joy Damousi FAHA FASSA
President

ATTACHMENT A

Academy reports and research of relevance to the Inquiry

The Academy periodically undertakes independent reviews of national capabilities in the humanities and arts with a view to informing strategic planning and investment decisions at the institutional level in the national higher education system. See

- *Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia*
- *Humanities in the Asia Region* (forthcoming)
- Future Humanities Workforce (forthcoming)

In association with the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA), the Academy also contributes to reports on emerging issues for Australian public policy consideration, including:

- *SAF03: Smart Engagement with Asia* and its set of contributing reports
- *SAF 10: Skills and Capabilities of Australian Enterprise Innovation*
- *SAF 11: Australia's Diaspora Advantage*.
- And as part of its Horizon Scanning Series, including most recently the *Effective and Ethical Development of Artificial Intelligence* report.

In addition, the Academy is the lead delivery partner for A New Approach (ANA), an independent think tank championing effective investment and return in Australian arts and culture under a three-year program funded by three philanthropic organisations. A contemporary and diverse creative and cultural life is essential for Australia to thrive in the 21st century.

ANA's ambition is to strengthen bipartisan, business and wider community support for arts and culture through a truly independent and non-partisan approach. To do this ANA is focused on fostering a more robust discussion about cultural policy, one which is based on good data and informed by shared understandings.

The first in a series of Insight reports was released in August.

ATTACHMENT B

Humanities expertise areas

The following list includes a selection of Academy Fellows whose expertise directly relates to the Inquiry Terms of Reference. Please note that the list is not exhaustive.

Professor Warwick Anderson FAHA FASSA FAHMS FRSN

Warwick Anderson is a historian of science, medicine and public health, focusing on Australasia, the Pacific, Southeast Asia and the United States. He works on race, human difference, and citizenship in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Relevant publications include: "American Exceptionalism Subtracted", in Judith Smart and Joy Damousi (Eds.), *Contesting Australian History: Essays in Honour of Marilyn Lake*, (pp. 204-216), Monash University Press, 2019; *The Cultivation of Whiteness: Science, Health and Racial Destiny in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, 2002.
See https://sydney.edu.au/arts/about/our-people/academic-staff/warwick-anderson.html

Professor Ien Ang FAHA

Ien Ang is Distinguished Professor of Cultural Studies at Western Sydney University, where she was the founding Director of the Institute for Culture and Society. She is internationally renowned for her work in transnational, multi-cultural and cross-cultural studies. She has published influential work on globalisation and media audiences, Asians in multicultural Australia and Australia's engagement with Asia, and is frequently engaged as a speaker at both academic and public conferences focused on the challenge of living with difference and diversity in an increasingly globalised world. Relevant publications include *Cultural Diplomacy: Beyond the National Interest* (London: Routledge, 2016), *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living between Asia and the West* (London: Routledge, 2001), and her work on ACOLA project *Smart Engagement with Asia: Leveraging Language, Research and Culture* (Melbourne: ACOLA, 2015).
See: https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ics/people/researchers/ien_ang

Dr Peter Cochrane FAHA

Peter Cochrane's work covers a number of fields within Australian history. He is best known for his book *Colonial Ambition: Foundations of Australian Democracy*, Melbourne University Press, 2006, which was awarded both the Prime Minister's Prize for Australian History and *The Age* Book of the Year in 2007.
See https://www.humanities.org.au/fellows/fellows/?find_contact_id=2918&ffc_page=5

Professor Stuart Cunningham AM FAHA FAcSS FRSA

Stuart Cunningham AM is Distinguished Professor of Media and Communications, QUT. He is internationally recognised for his contributions to media, communication and cultural studies and for exemplifying their relevance to industry practice and government policy. Professor Cunningham has published on arts and cultural policy, media and digital transformations, and skills mixing for the future of work. Relevant publications include: *The Media and Communications in Australia, 4th edition*, Allen and Unwin, 2014
See https://staff.qut.edu.au/staff/s.cunningham

Professor Mark Finnane FAHA FASSA

Mark Finnane works on the history of policing, crime, criminal law, punishment and the social history of mental illness. He leads the Prosecution Project, which aims to digitise and eventually make publicly accessible the records of the criminal courts, documenting not only the names of the accused but of magistrates, judges, lawyers, police and victims and other witnesses. The project is a significant collaboration between university researchers and a large and growing community of volunteers. Relevant publications include: Finnane, M., & Smaal, Y. (2018), "The Prosecution Project: Using crime records to access family and other histories," *Queensland Review* 25:1, pp. 89–101; Kaladelfos, A., & Finnane, M. (2018). "Immigration and Criminality: Australia's Post-War Inquiries," *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 64:1, pp. 48–64.
See https://experts.griffith.edu.au/academic/m.finnane

Professor John Fitzgerald FAHA

Immediate Past President of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, John Fitzgerald works on Chinese politics and history; philanthropy and social investment in Australia, USA, China and Asia; and multiculturalism and Chinese diaspora in Australia. Relevant publications include: Fitzgerald, J. (2018). "Overstepping down under," *Journal of Democracy* 29:2, pp. 59–67; Fitzgerald, J. (2017). "Why Values Matter in Australia's Relations with China," *International Relations and Asia's Southern Tier* / Gilbert Rozman and Joseph Chinyong Liow (eds.), pp. 247–260; Fitzgerald, J. (2017). "Human dignity and its enemies," *Inside Story*, 16 August 2017.
See https://www.swinburne.edu.au/business-law/our-people/profile/index.php?id=johnfitzgerald

Professor Bridget Griffen-Foley FAHA

Bridget Griffen-Foley specialises in the history of Australian media. Relevant publications include *The House of Packer* (1999), *Sir Frank Packer* (2000, 2013), *Party Games: Australian Politicians and the Media from War to Dismissal* (2003), and *Changing Stations: The Story of Australian Commercial Radio* (2009). She served as historical consultant to *Power Games: The Packer-Murdoch Story* (2013) and edited the field-defining *A Companion to the Australian Media* (2014).
See https://researchers.mq.edu.au/en/persons/bridget-griffen-foley

Professor Anna Haebich FAHA

Anna Haebich's research expertise includes Indigenous history, Indigenous art, contemporary visual arts, museology and social justice issues. Her career combines university teaching and research with museum curatorship, visual art practice and working with Indigenous organisations. Her multi-award-winning book, *Broken Circles: Fragmenting Indigenous Families 1800-2000* (2000), is Australia's first national history of the Stolen Generations, and *For Their Own Good: Aborigines and Government in the South West of Western Australia* (1992) is a seminal work on the impact of Australia's discriminatory policies and laws.
See https://staffportal.curtin.edu.au/staff/profile/view/A.Haebich/

Professor Marilyn Lake FAHA FASSA

Marilyn Lake's research interests include citizenship and national identity, colonialism and Australian race and gender relations. Her current research and writing focus on the history and theory of citizenship, specifically the international history of Australian democracy, the impact

of Australian innovation overseas and of international human rights in Australia. *Drawing the Global Colour Line* which she co-authored with Henry Reynolds won the Ernest Scott prize, the Queensland Premier's Prize for History and the Prime Minister's Prize for Non-Fiction in 2009. See https://www.findanexpert.unimelb.edu.au/display/person77615

Professor Joseph Lo Bianco AM FAHA

Joseph Lo Bianco is Professor of Language and Literacy Education at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education. He is a past President of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, having served in the role between 2009 and 2011. In 2012, he was appointed Research Director of the UNICEF Language and Peacebuilding initiative in Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand. Professor Lo Bianco wrote Australia's National Policy on Languages – the first multilingual national language policy in an English-speaking country. Adopted in 1987, the National Policy on Languages is a comprehensive national plan to cover all of Australia's language needs and interests, acknowledging the role of languages in building social cohesion and promoting a sense of belonging. Professor Lo Bianca has published extensively on bilingual education, English as a second/additional language, peace building and communication, multiculturalism and intercultural education, Asian studies, Italian language teaching and the revitalisation of indigenous and immigrant community languages. Relevant publications include *Learning from Difference: Comparative Accounts of Multicultural Education* (New York: Springer, 2016) and *Multilingualism in Education: Equity and Social Cohesion* (Athens, TESOL, 2017).
See: https://findanexpert.unimelb.edu.au/display/person4818

Professor Kam Louie FHKAH FAHA

Kam Louie was Dean of the Arts Faculty (2005-13) and MB Lee Professor of Humanities and Medicine at Hong Kong University (HKU), and President of The Hong Kong Academy of the Humanities (2011-13). He has also served as Professor of Chinese at both the University of Queensland and the Australian National University, and is currently an Adjunct Professor within the School of Humanities and Languages at UNSW, and an Honorary Professor within the School of Chinese at HKU. Through the course of his career he has served on a number of committees, such as the Cultural and Educational Advisory Committee of Queensland-China Council and the Australia-China Council. As well as authoring numerous articles and government reports, he has published eighteen books on various aspects of Chinese culture, including *Chinese Masculinities in a Globalising World* (London: Routledge, 2015); *Diasporic Chineseness after the Rise of China* (Vancouver: British Columbia University Press, 2013), and has also been editor for *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Chinese Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). He also co-chaired the ACOLA report *Australia's Diaspora Advantage: Realising the Potential for Building Transnational Business Networks with Asia* (Melbourne: ACOLA, 2016).
See: https://www.humanities.org.au/fellows/fellows/?find_contact_id=2751&ffc_page=17

Professor Ann McGrath FAHA FASSA

Professor Ann McGrath is a historian of deep history, gender, colonialism, Indigenous relations and intermarriage in Australia and North America. Her consultancy and outreach work have included co-ordinating the history project of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, working as an expert witness in the Gunner & Cubillo case and on various Northern Territory land claims. Relevant publications include: McGrath, A (2017), "The Big Question: What legacies of colonialism prevent indigenous peoples from achieving justice?," *World Policy*

Journal 34:2, pp. 3–7.; McGrath, A (2017), "On the Sacred clay of Botany Bay: Landings, National Memorialization, and Multiple Sovereignties," *New Diversitie*s 19:2, pp. 85–102.; McGrath, A (2016), "Secrets of Nation," *Inside Story*, 15 July 2016.
See https://history.cass.anu.edu.au/centres/acih/people/professor-ann-mcgrath

Professor Lyndall Ryan FAHA FASSA

Professor Lyndall Ryan works on historical experiences of Aboriginal people in colonial and post-colonial contexts and on Australian history from a feminist perspective. She is recognised internationally as a leading scholar in massacre studies, particularly of colonial frontier massacre in Australia. Her major works include her ground-breaking book, *Aboriginal Tasmanians* (1981) and a later book based on extensive new research, entitled *Tasmanian Aborigines: A History since 1803* (2012). Ryan is involved with The Centre for 21st Century Humanities' Colonial Frontier Massacres in Central and Eastern Australia 1788-1930 project.
See https://www.newcastle.edu.au/profile/lyndall-ryan

Professor Wanning Sun FAHA

Wanning Sun is Professor of Media and Communication Studies within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at University of Technology Sydney. She is best known for her research on Chinese media and culture; soft power, public diplomacy and political communication in China; rural-to-urban migration and social inequality in China; and transnational and diasporic Chinese media. Relevant publications include *Telemodernities: Television and Transforming Lives in Asia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016) and *Media and Communications in the Chinese Diaspora: Rethinking Transnationalism* (London: Routledge, 2015).
See: https://www.uts.edu.au/staff/wanning.sun

Professor Julian Thomas FAHA

Professor Julian Thomas is the Director of the Technology, Communication and Policy Lab at Digital Ethnography Research Centre and the Director for the Enabling Capability Platform for Social Change at RMIT. He is a researcher in digital media and the internet, including media, communications and information policy and the history of communications technologies. Relevant publications include the *Australian Digital Inclusion Index* (2016), *Internet on the Outstation* (Institute of Network Cultures, 2016), and *The Informal Media Economy* (Polity, 2015).
See https://digital-ethnography.com/team/julian-thomas/

Emeritus Professor Graeme Turner AO FAHA

Emeritus Professor Graeme Turner is one of the founding figures in media and cultural studies in Australia, and a leading figure internationally. A past President of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, his most recent projects have been focused on television and new media, and the formation of national communities. Relevant publications include *Making Culture: commercialisation, transnationalism and the state of 'nationing' in contemporary Australia*. Edited by David Rowe, Graeme Turner and Emma Waterton Abingdon, Oxon United Kingdom: Routledge, 2018; Turner, Graeme *Re-inventing the media*. Abingdon, Oxon, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2016; and Turner, Graeme *Ordinary people and the media: The demotic turn*. Los Angeles, CA, U.S.A.: Sage, 2010.
See https://researchers.uq.edu.au/researcher/7479

Professor Richard Waterhouse FRSN FASSA FAHA

Richard Waterhouse is Emeritus Professor at the School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry at the University of Sydney, where he was Head of School (1999-2006), and Bicentennial Professor of Australian History until his retirement in 2011. He has written extensively on the social, political, and cultural history of Australia and the United States, including on the topics of nationalism and identity. His book, *The Vision Splendid: a social and cultural history of rural Australia* (Fremantle, WA: Curtin University Books, 2005), maps the critical role that rural Australia has played in shaping the Australian economy and social life, and sense of identity. See: https://www.humanities.org.au/fellows/fellows/?find_contact_id=2740

NOTES

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