

APSIG Newsletter

ALIA Asia Pacific Special Interest Group

No. 97, July 2018

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Date for diaries - APSIG Christmas lunch for Canberra members, Wednesday 12 December

A date for your diaries - join APSIG and ALRA colleagues for our annual get-together at the Thai Lemongrass restaurant on 12 December with new and former colleagues in attendance.

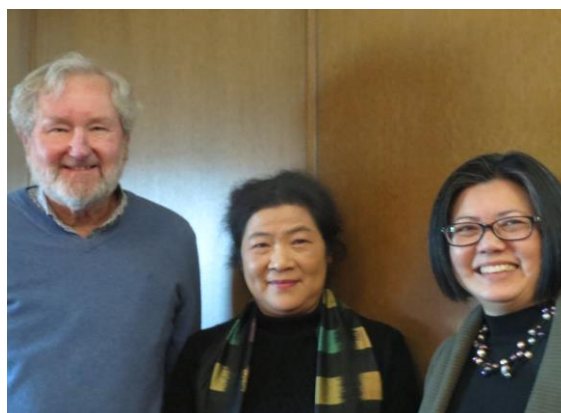
Booking details will be published in the November newsletter and on the ALIA APSIG website closer to the time.

Asian Studies alive and blooming in Sydney

APSIG organised a lunch time meeting on 17 July with our colleagues, the Asian Library Resources of Australia, to hear reports of the Asian Studies Association of Australia held in Sydney earlier in the month.

We were fortunate to have three speakers, George Miller (retd), Di Pin Ouyang (NLA) and Dr Amy Chan (ACTLS, formerly ANU). There was a large turnout to hear the latest news and views from the world of Asian studies

The next issue of the Asian Library Resources of Australia Newsletter will include a number of papers presented at the library panel held as part of the conference <http://alra.org.au>.



L to R George Miller, Di Pin Ouyang, Amy Chan.

Di Pin Ouyang reports:

It was my great privilege to attend the 2018 Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA) Conference, which was the biggest Conference ever, with a gathering of over 1,000 academics working on Asia in the southern hemisphere.

The ASAA conference kicked off with the postgraduate workshop on networking and getting a job in academia. The workshop provided an excellent forum to bring together expertise on Southeast Asia to postgraduate community. Over 70 PhD students attended, who came from a diverse range of institutions, geographical focuses and disciplinary backgrounds. The second part of the workshop was mock interviews that provided the PhD students with an opportunity to practice for an interview in a real world and receive feedback from the academic panel.

My presentation at postgraduate workshop was to raise the awareness of the Asia Study Grants at the National Library of Australia

(<https://www.nla.gov.au/awards-and-grants/fellowships-and-scholarships/japan-and-asia-study-grants>). It was a great interaction and connection. I appreciated the organisers for providing us with an additional slot in the program so we could talk to the PhD students and scholars about the Grants.



The actual conference began with an opening plenary session ‘Why it’s a Great Time to be an Asianist’ chaired by Dr Thushara Dibley of the University of Sydney. The speakers were Dr Jacqui Baker of Murdoch University, Dr Thomas Baudinette of Macquarie University and Dr Tanya Jakimow of UNSW Sydney. The panel were reflecting on some of the unique advantages of being an Asianist in Australia.

Over 200 panels and 800 papers were presented at the Conference. The trend towards integrating knowledge and methods from different disciplines continue: typical research topics are Movies as Resources for Social and Historical Inquiry.

There were many fantastic sessions on offer. I went to a session on ‘Trade Unionism in Southeast Asia’ and learnt about trade unions in Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand from strong, smart, articulate women scholars researching on different Southeast Asian labour movements. The discussion panel explored the drivers and limitations of different forms of labour activism in Southeast Asia and debated the future of trade unionism in the region.

When I came back, my colleagues asked me ‘What did you learn at the conference?’ Well, certainly the New Books in Southeast Asian Studies, a channel of the New Books Network. Dr Nick Cheesman hosted a discussion with three authors who reflected on their experiences of researching and writing academic work, and responded to questions about publishing

important books on Southeast Asia’s culture, history and politics. This website features recent academic publications in Southeast Asian Studies, authors’ interview and book reviews <http://newbooksnetwork.com/category/southeast-asian-studies/>

My colleague Heather Walsh gave a presentation at ‘Australia and Indonesia’s Cultural, Literary and Artistic Linkages’ panel session, where she talked about the National Library’s Indonesian Acquisitions Program.

In the same panel, Alexandra who is a senior lecturer of UTS and Luke who is an interdisciplinary artist presented the “‘Hacking’ and ‘Futuring’ Cultural Exchanges between Indonesia and Australia: C2O and Frontyard”. I was touched by their stories, their passion and their commitment to the possible frameworks for understanding the significance of the role of informal exchanges between cultural activists in Indonesia and Australia.

The Library Panel session was on the second day. In a roundtable discussion, we invited researchers and librarians to discuss topic of ‘Beyond Asian Studies and its research material’. I was particularly interested to hear from esteemed Indonesianist Professor Robert Cribb who pointed out the challenges for libraries and librarians on short-term and long-term collection strategies.

At the librarians’ gathering night, I was able to renew old colleague friendships and make a few new ones through the dinner.



There was also a lot of love for the food. “Sichuan eggplant should be a staple at every conference” – quoted from Facebook.

The conference was a positive experience for me. Seeing so many keen peers who are passionate about Asia is very motivating for

librarians seeking to build new bridges with our researchers, explore new formats for knowledge and new approaches to scholarship. So I left the conference feeling inspired and energised. Not only the size of the conference, the environmentally-friendly building, the paper free conference, the quality of the presenting papers, but also the overwhelming evidence that the need for Asian resources is as strong as ever.

From George Miller:

The first thing that can be said about the ASAA conference is that it was BIG and it was DYNAMIC.

There were about 1,000 attendees and over 800 papers. It was held over two floors of the new, immense, Business School building. There were up to 22 parallel sessions with four papers each. I don't want to say that the organisers went for quantity over quality (after all, my paper was one of the 800) – but the large number meant that papers were short, being limited to 15 minutes, so one was left with the feeling on many occasions you only obtained a tantalising glimpse of some very interesting topics. The benefit of this approach however, was that there was a vast range of current issues by a large number of scholars, many of whom were young, from both Australia and overseas. This was very stimulating and contributed to the dynamism of the event.

There was a real buzz about the place. I think this was because the organisers were young, energetic and, I have to say this, largely women! The Conference Convenor was Professor Michele Ford.

This year's ASAA conference was the 22nd. The first was in 1976 and was a very different affair. It was organised by middle-aged men in grey suits.

Furthermore, unlike the atmosphere at the ASAA conference two years ago at the ANU, there was a spirit of optimism at the conference in Sydney. The opening plenary session was a panel discussion on "Why it is a great time to be an Asianist". Three young scholars fielded questions from a young chairwoman, convincingly and enthusiastically.

The theme of the conference was "Asian Studies and beyond" and I think this title explains the

wide diversity and the large number of papers. I haven't done a detailed analysis of the topics covered, but my feeling is that there were far fewer papers on what we might call traditional fields of research within Asian Studies, in comparison with those that could be described as having a broad or partial, scholarly interest in Asia.

For example, there were only a limited number of papers on history, languages, classical texts and literature, in comparison with those on more contemporary issues from the social sciences. There were panels on poverty reduction, development, the role of NGOs, the growth of services for people with a disability, tobacco control, global migration and remittance flows, and there was even a paper on "Second generation Koreans in New Zealand". You can see what I mean by expanding the concept of "Asian Studies" and having a very broad definition of the subject. Gender studies and Queer studies were also quite prominent. The organisers confirmed there was a deliberate attempt to reach out and attract more than the usual "Asian Studies" scholarly community.

In addition to the regular panels, there were talks and meeting by the separate area Councils. I went to the Indonesia Council meeting. This was a lecture by the Indonesian activist, Anis Hidayah, who has set up an NGO assisting Indonesian women migrant workers who have been exploited while working overseas, in places like Malaysia and Saudi Arabia. Recruiting women to work overseas is big business in Indonesia. The owner of the biggest recruitment firm is a member of the Indonesian Parliament, the owners of other companies are members of political parties. There seems to be a lot of profiteering. Indonesia has not yet adopted an ILO Convention on Overseas Workers. It is difficult for Anis and her colleagues campaigning on these sorts of issues.

Anis said that five Indonesians had been beheaded in Saudi Arabia between 2008 and 2018, and there was a lot of anger about the treatment of their citizens. She said the situation of the workers contrasted with the recent visit of the Saudi King to Indonesia. The delegation consisted of 1500 people, included 10 Ministers and 15 Princesses! Is it any surprise

that a number of migrant workers become radicalised when they are overseas!.

Also, in addition to the regular panels at the Conference, there were a number of “Roundtables” on a variety of topics. I went to one on “Asia’s Heritage Challenges”. This was a wide-ranging discussion on museums and heritage sites. While it was said that it was encouraging that many new museums were being established, for example, in regional areas, particularly in China, in many ways the overall impression was depressing. Many museums and heritage sites suffer a similar fate to our own cultural institutions in Canberra. They don’t seem to have the priority in government thinking they deserve, and their funding is being cut. Others are being exploited by private enterprise. Dr. Marnie Feneley, an expert on Khmer sculpture, said she cannot bear to visit Angkor Wat anymore because of the destructive influence of tourism: the sacred temple site was never meant to have so many people walking over it, and the water table in the area is dropping because of the number of tourist hotels (many foreign owned) and golf courses. Clearly the balance between income generation to alleviate poverty and heritage protection, is difficult to manage.

Totally different, but no less fascinating, was a panel on detention centres in Southeast Asia. The four centres were Atauro Island off Dili in East Timor, the island of Buru in Indonesia, Coco Island between the Andamans and Burma in the Indian Ocean, and Boven Digul in West Papua.

Atauro had been used as a prison by both the Portuguese and the Japanese, as well as by the Indonesians during the latter’s occupation of East Timor.

The paper on Buru focussed on the children of the left-wing families who had been sent there by the Suharto regime. Many kids had not only grown up in the detention centre but had been classified as migrants and been forced to settle on the island. There were clusters who still spoke Javanese.

Coco Island was considered by the British as an isolated place to detain nationalist Burmese fighting for independence, but never used by them. It was used after independence for both political prisoners and common criminals.

Robert Cribb gave a succinct description and analysis of Boven Digul, which was opened by the Dutch in 1927 and was used to isolate nationalists fighting for Indonesian independence until 1948.

A brief comment on Asian Studies in Australia.

You may remember in the midst of gloom and doom at the last conference Howard Dick told people not to despair, that enthusiasm for Asian Studies in Australia waxes and wanes. He told us to wait for the next wave. We were then in the bottom of the trough. I think there *is* a new wave of enthusiasm. It may be a different sort of Asian Studies to what some of us had become accustomed, and the courses and research may be organised in a fashion with which we are not familiar.

George Miller, Canberra

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Pacific Libraries Summit – 1 June 2018 Pacific Harbour, Fiji

In a landmark event for libraries in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific island nations, nearly 100 library practitioners and representatives from NGOs and Governments from 15 countries across the Pacific met in Fiji on 1 June.



Christine Mackenzie, IFLA President-Elect is pictured on the left with Opeta Alefaio, Director National Archives of Fiji and Allison Dobbie, National Library of New Zealand.

This was the first such meeting ever held in the Pacific. The purpose of the Pacific Libraries Summit was to develop a plan to strengthen the impact of Pacific libraries to better support the

needs of communities through collaboration, networking and advocacy. Connection with those influencers and enablers who were enthusiastic about their support for libraries will be maintained and the influence of Pacific Library Associations will be increased through membership of IFLA.

The Summit developed a Call to Action for public library development in the Pacific and to demonstrate the value of libraries in achieving the United Nations 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The vision for the Summit was to bring together key regional stakeholders, library practitioners and INELI-Oceania innovators to advocate for the role of public libraries and librarians in society and to inspire a vision and agreement for collaborative and sustainable development of public library services in the Pacific.

The Summit produced *The Statement of Intent*, with eight goals and a number of actions for each goal.

A Pacific Libraries Network *Compact* is being developed to capture the discussions and process of the Pacific Libraries Summit and to be a reference document for further discussions. This will be distributed shortly. Funds have been raised for several Pacific library associations to join IFLA.

Key people will be brought together to harness the energy and the commitments from the Summit to develop a Strategic Action Plan to enable sustainable delivery of the Statement of Intent. The existing network will be maintained through the Pacific Libraries Network Facebook page.

Pacific Libraries Summit Statement of Intent

To strengthen the impact of Pacific libraries to better support the needs of Pacific communities through collaborative networking and advocacy.

Context: We are The Pacific

We recognise the complexity of our region and its diverse interests

We recognise the contribution of all countries in the Pacific as equal partners

We recognise the value and contribution of the library field to the achievement of the SDGs It is our time!

Goals

1. Develop legislative and policy frameworks for each country by
 - a. Securing legislative and legal deposit requirements to ensure the documentary heritage of each country
 - b. Ensuring the provision of a Library Act to establish the role of government in the provision of libraries
2. Advocate for the role of libraries by
 - a. Supporting the United Nations 2030 Agenda
 - b. Creating informed and engaged citizenry including marginalised and vulnerable communities
3. Improve literacy rates by
 - a. Providing early childhood programs and support for children and their families
 - b. Providing safe spaces for people developing their literacy skills
 - c. Giving access to a wide range of reading materials including in local languages
 - d. Providing information and digital literacy training
4. Preserve and promote cultural heritage by
 - a. Encouraging the practice and celebration of culture, languages and traditional knowledge systems
 - b. Creating and making available resources in indigenous languages
5. Promote and strengthen collaboration by
 - a. Establishing a platform to share information, knowledge and learning
 - b. Establishing partnerships to support achievement of the SDGs
 - c. Partnering with local organisations to meet the needs of communities
6. Build skills, capacity and recognition of the value of librarians by

- a. Investing in the development of library leadership
 - b. Improving access to library and information education programs across the Pacific
7. Ensure equitable access to information to all by
- a. Reducing the digital divide
 - b. Providing quality digital infrastructure
 - c. Giving access to a wide range of digital resources
8. Develop inclusive programs and services that support awareness and delivery of SDGs, in particular
- a. Resilient communities
 - b. Employment
 - c. Gender equity

CONSAL XVII held in May

The 17th Congress of the Southeast Asian Librarians was held in May. Member countries of CONSAL are: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivered an opening speech at the opening ceremony of the 17th Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians (CONSAL XVII) which was held in Naypyitaw on May 3, 2018.

Their website www.consalxvii.org provides a report of the meeting and other information about the Conference.

News from the Galapagos Islands

APSIG passes on news from Edgardo Civallero, a librarian for the Charles Darwin Foundation in one of the remotest corners of the Pacific – the Galapagos Islands.



Edgardo writes:

“One of the few (if not the only) active libraries in the archipelago and I am to be the director. The library combines the profile of a highly specialized research unit (with its focus in environmental conservation) with the location of an outpost. The Galapagos Islands are an Ecuadorian national park in the Pacific Ocean, 1000 km from the mainland, with a small resident population and strict levels of protection. They are both a UNESCO's World Heritage Site and a biosphere reserve. The CDF's Research Station serves as the operating base for international researchers working in the area, besides being the breeding place for giant tortoises, herbarium and botanical garden, publishing house, etc.

Those islands, a natural laboratory in the Southern Seas, will become for me a limited, self-contained laboratory of applied, field LIS. In that library, and with the resources at hand (not always abundant), I will have to digitize heritage collections, preserve threatened documents and protect/repair the damaged ones, catalog and classify the entire fund, collaborate in the documentation of natural/biological collections, train local library staff, create a digital library using free software, lay the foundations of a solid system of scientific information, link the library with Galapagos society, build networks of local and regional collaboration, achieve visibility... and much more: in fact, all the tasks listed in our career's plan, plus some others that are not there (yet).

If I have any time left, I'll try to develop library-related activities from a critical, social, activist

and environmental perspective (turning the library into a transmitter of knowledge, especially the one related to nature conservation); to work with the Salasaca people, an indigenous Quechua-speaking society with strong migrant communities in the islands; to go on with my professional/research activity (research data curation, data information literacy, data management, ontology building, metadata, semantic web, bioinformatics, biology curation); to explore the new roles of librarianship (especially the support for e-research / e-science).



Far from "idealizing" the place and the work ahead of me, I believe that living and working there will be a real challenge. In every possible sense.

On the other hand, being back in South America (I'm an Argentina-born, Spain-based librarian) will allow me to participate in regional professional conferences (already scheduled for the national meetings in Colombia and Peru this year), teach courses and workshops, work as a visiting professor in Latin American universities, collaborate with regional organizations related to books, information, culture and intangible heritage, work with indigenous communities (both in the islands and mainland) and, above all, continue with my "Observatory of Indigenous Libraries" project from a closer location.

On all this (my professional and personal experiences, my materials and bibliographical sources, what I am learning and discovering, my ideas and doubts and errors ...) I will write in my blog "[A librarian in the Galapagos](#)" I will share the posts through my social networks... along with not a few requests for help and advice, I'm sure. I'll keep publishing my notes, columns and articles, which I'll also share in the blog.

So, I'll be here... Kindest regards!"

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<http://es.linkedin.com/in/edcivallero>

ANU Library digitises PNG resources

Rosanne Missingham has passed on news about ANU's digitisation activity.

Mendi Photographs by D'Arcy Ryan
https://anulib.anu.edu.au/files/styles/anu_full_920_518/public/Mendi.jpg?itok=Yy6As4n3

The Mendi Photographs collection contains 565 cards, captured and compiled by D'Arcy Ryan in the Mendi Valley, Papua New Guinea. The collection is held in three albums, with 316 records, and covers the years 1954–1964. The albums contain prints affixed to index cards, arranged by subject and title, including Mendi artefacts, buildings, people and activities.

D'Arcy Ryan travelled to New Guinea in 1954 as a representative of the University of Sydney where he conducted early contact research on the Mendi Valley in the Southern Highlands.

Colonial Sugar Refining Company
 83 images displayed across three photograph albums showcasing images of cane cultivation and the Colonial Sugar Refining Company Limited (1855-1973) in Fiji.

https://anulib.anu.edu.au/files/styles/anu_full_920_518/public/paragraph/British-Empire-exhibition.jpg?itok=Oyh4Tu5Q

ANU Theses

Always of interest to researchers, our major digitisation project is ANU Theses – we have reached our 5,000th thesis and hope to have all theses digitised by mid-2019.

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APSIG Newsletter

Published three times a year : March, July and November. Address : PO Box 5051, Lyneham, A.C.T. 2602, Australia. ISSN 1327 1024

Copy deadline for the November 2018 issue is Friday 12 October 2018. Contributions very welcome especially from the Asia/Pacific region.

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Issues mounted on the APSIG homepage at :
<https://www.alia.org.au/groups/alia-asia-pacific-special-interest-group>