

ACHRC

Australasian Consortium of Humanities Research Centres

Newsletter of the ACHRC

September 2019

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the September 2019 issue of the ACHRC Newsletter.

2019 has been a busy and fruitful year for the ACHRC. In May, our annual Humanities in the Regions symposium was held at the University of Newcastle, hosted by the Centre for 21st Century Humanities and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences in the university's central NewSpace. This highly successful event (special thanks to the University of Newcastle, the Dean of Arts, Cathy Coleborne, and the different heads and centre directors), featured keynotes from Rosalind Smith and Anna Johnston, panels on research evaluation, grant planning, and working with GLAM, and a rich and various tapestry of different UoN research and public humanities initiatives and activities. Individually and collectively these various activities offered all of us, regional and metropolitan centres alike, paradigms of reciprocal engagement.

I recently attended the Annual Meeting of the international Consortium of Humanities Research Centres (CHCI), held in Dublin, in my capacity as both the Director of the ACHRC and Head of the Humanities Research Centre at the ANU. For my full report on this characteristically wide-ranging and informative conference, focussing this year on 'Cultural Interventions', please see below.

I am delighted to report that over the past few months, the ACHRC has welcomed new personnel to its operations and its Advisory Board, as well as several new members:

Personnel:

- Victoria Kuttainen (James Cook University - ACHRC Advisory Board)
- Katie Cox (Australian National University - ACHRC Research Manager)

Centres & Research Units:

- Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation (Monash University)
- Enlightenment, Romanticism and Contemporary Culture (University of Melbourne)
- Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry (Australian Catholic University)
- LabX Environmental Arts & Humanities (Southern Cross University)
- News and Media Research Centre (University of Canberra)

Please join me in welcoming these new members of the ACHRC. I look forward to greeting them personally, and to reconnecting with the whole consortium, at the 2019 Annual Meeting in Wellington, 2-3 December.

Given the ACHRC's interest in regional humanities (and I note that the Minister for Education's new HE program singles out rural and regional universities) and in public humanities, we recently submitted an application for a grant from the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) in the UK to get financial support for an investigation into the motivation behind regional students' choosing to study the humanities as a university degree, and to try and determine the impact of public humanities events and programs on this choice. We plan to start by looking specifically at enrolment choices at James Cook University, using the University of Queensland as a control, but it is my hope that we can build on this to develop a larger study involving more of our members. Watch this space.

The ACHRC has also engaged in ongoing advocacy efforts this year, including a submission to the ARC's review of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification that stressed the need for codes to reflect the diversity and breadth of contemporary humanities research, especially with regards to inter/multidisciplinary research. We await

the results of this review keenly, and in the meantime we are maintaining an ongoing relationship with the ARC through panels and information sessions for members at our annual events.

Finally, I am pleased to report that the ACHRC Humanities Visitors' Database is progressing. The Database is designed to allow ACHRC members to map the activities of humanities scholars visiting Australia and New Zealand from overseas, and to facilitate a slow auction enabling us to share the costs of supporting international scholars to visit two or more member institutions. We are currently testing the Database's core functions and hope to have questions and a further update for you soon.

As always, please let me know of any ideas you may have for new ACHRC events, activities or initiatives.

Kind regards,

Will Christie
Director, Australasian Consortium of Humanities
Research Centres

Upcoming ACHRC events:

ANNUAL MEETING 2019: 'The Humanities and Well Being' (Wellington, 2-3 Dec 2019):

The 2019 ACHRC Annual Meeting returns to New Zealand, this time heading to Wellington, for two days of discussion about the practicalities of Humanities, Creative Arts and Social Sciences research in a world on fire. To acknowledge this and the role we as humanities researchers can play in responding to current conditions, we meet with the theme of 'The Humanities and Well Being'. Panels and speakers will address questions such as: how has academic life changed over the last few decades; what is the connection between the value of the humanities and the public good; and what does a 'wellbeing budget', as released by the New Zealand

government in 2019, do for the place of arts, culture and humanities in the world?

Participants will have the opportunity to hear from representatives of key peak bodies from both Australia and New Zealand, and to discuss current best practice, strategy and innovations in today's humanities research environment. Confirmed speakers will include Grant Robertson, the New Zealand Minister for Finance and Associate Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage; Christina Parolin (Academy of the Humanities); Joanne Tompkins (Australian Research Council); Shino Konishi (University of Western Australia); Krushi Watene (Massey University); Paul Spoonley (Massey University) and Meihani Durie (Massey University).

We are still inviting panel proposals for sessions on topics ranging from medical humanities to the revitalisation of indigenous languages, or any other topic related to well being. If you are interested in participating, either as an individual or as a panel organiser, please contact us at info@achrc.net with your proposal.

HOSTED BY:

[Associate Professor Kerry Taylor](#), Massey University's [W.H. Oliver Research Academy](#)

REGISTER HERE:

[Annual Meeting 2019 Registration Page](#)

HUMANITIES IN THE REGIONS

The ACHRC's 2019 Humanities in the Regions Symposium took place from 30-31 May, hosted by the Centre for 21st Century Humanities at the University of Newcastle. 50 scholars and postgraduate students from humanities centres around Australia attended the symposium, themed 'Renewal - Regional humanities research in the 21st Century'. Attendees discussed new strategies and developments in humanities research and public

outreach in a regional context, ranging from sessions on the practicalities of securing funding to a showcase of the vibrant and experimental work undertaken in regional humanities centres both in Newcastle and elsewhere. The symposium also featured visits to Newcastle Library and Newcastle Museum, to discuss collaboration with the GLAM sector, and culminated in a field trip to Mulla Villa on the final day.

For more information on the symposium, please see UoN's [press release](#).

CHCI ANNUAL MEETING 2019

The 2019 Annual Meeting of the international Consortium of Humanities Centres and Institutes took place in Dublin, from June 19-22, with the theme of 'Cultural Interventions'. This was a fascinating and wide-ranging conference addressing the significance of culture (and the role played by humanities research centres) in a global context. Highlights included a sustained focus on Public Humanities, themed panels on cultural interventions from a variety of critical perspectives, and reflections on the specific cultural history of the conference's setting in Ireland. Will's full report on the CHCI Annual Meeting can be found [here](#).

A NEW APPROACH: FIRST REPORT RELEASED

On September 10th, the Academy of the Humanities' think tank A New Approach released its first Insight Report, titled 'The Big Picture: Public Expenditure on Artistic, Cultural and Creative Activity in Australia'. The report examines trends in public funding of arts and culture in Australia between 2007-2018 - notably finding that Australian public expenditure on arts and culture as a percentage of GDP is below the OECD average, and that the federal government's share of funding has declined significantly over the past decade - and provides a number of recommendations going forward. For the full report, see [here](#).

If you have news items of relevance to the Australasian Humanities sector that you would like to see included in this eNewsletter, please forward them to Katie Cox at katherine.cox@anu.edu.au.