



THE HUMANITIES IN CRISIS: AN AUDIT OF TAXPAYER-FUNDED ARC GRANTS

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Key Research Findings

Australian universities are in a state of crisis. They are failing students in regards to freedom of speech and academic freedom, both of which are under threat. In the humanities, the leitmotifs of class, race and gender have replaced the essential core subjects which explain the political, intellectual, social and material basis of the history of Western Civilisation. The concepts that should be transmitted to university students, such as respect for the individual, equality of men and women under the law, the abolition of slavery, freedom of speech and religious toleration, are simply not part of the narrative and are not being taught.

This report is an examination of the taxpayer-funded Australian Research Council (ARC) humanities grants which have been awarded to Australian universities since 2002. The results provide further evidence that universities are well and truly wedded to identity politics to the detriment of the teaching of Western Civilisation.

This piece of research is the fourth in a series of papers which systematically review what is being taught and researched in the humanities in Australian universities.

According to the ARC, the purpose of the organisation is 'to grow knowledge and innovation for the benefit of the Australian community' and that 'the outcomes of ARC-funded research deliver cultural, economic, social and environmental benefits to all Australians.' This audit reveals that there is an enormous disconnect between the stated aims of the ARC and the predominance of identity politics in the humanities research proposals which have received government funding since 2002.

- Between 2002 and 2019, the ARC National Competitive Grants Program has administered a total of \$1.34 billion in funding to humanities research projects.
- Between 2002 and 2019, the ARC National Competitive Grants program has administered funding to 616 Historical Studies research projects.
- The total amount of funding for 616 Historical Studies research projects between 2002 and 2019 is \$192 million.

The three most common themes found in 616 Historical Studies research projects are as follows:

1. Identity Politics (class, race and gender) (112)
2. Indigenous History and Studies (99)
3. War and Conflict (82)

The three least common themes found in 616 Historical Studies research projects are as follows:

4. Rule of Law (3)
5. Free Speech (1)
6. Capitalism (1)

1. Context

In theory, the university should be the principal institution through which knowledge is preserved, generated and disseminated. In practice however, Australian universities appear to have rejected this mandate. Instead of exposing students to a vast array of ideas, they have become institutions in which debate is being shut down and freedom of speech muted by academics who have adopted a singular world view. At a time when the universities are insisting on advocating diversity as a fundamental academic value, true diversity of opinion is under threat. To paraphrase the American philosopher Allan Bloom, we are seeing the closing of the Australian mind. Moreover, the universities themselves have become markets without competition as graduating students are leaving with a calamitous combination of enormous debt and worthless degrees. Australian universities are in crisis.

Students are now demanding US-style 'safe spaces' and trigger warnings. Monash University was the first Australian institution of higher learning to implement a policy of 'trigger warnings' by asking academics to review course content before teaching it. Closely tied with the advent of university 'safe spaces' and trigger warnings, is the concept of 'no-platforming' which boycotts either people or organisations from speaking on campus. Although instances have been greater in the UK and the US to date, 'no platforming' is becoming more common on Australian campuses. In September 2018, a riot squad was called for the University of Sydney in response to students attempting to disrupt a speech by journalist and author Bettina Arndt as part of her 'Fake Rape Crisis Tour.' At the University of Western Australia, the university cancelled a talk by US academic Dr Quentin Van Meter on account of his scepticism about sex-reassignment surgery for children, with the UWA Student Guild president commenting that they were relieved that the event was not going ahead, 'especially for the safety and wellbeing of our trans students on campus...'¹ Following pressure from Victoria University's Confucius Institute, the university cancelled a screening of the film *In the Name of Confucius* which criticised the Confucius Institutes. In May 2018, James Cook University dismissed Professor Peter Ridd following his public statements about the state of science in regards to the Great Barrier Reef. In September 2019, Professor Ridd won \$1.2 million in damages for unlawful sacking. The judgement should rightly send shockwaves through Australian universities.

According to the Institute of Public Affairs' *Free Speech on Campus Audit 2018*, free expression at Australian universities is in an extremely unhealthy state. The audit, which analysed over 190 policies and actions in 42 universities, revealed that since the first *Free Speech on Campus Audit 2016*, the total Hostility Score across all institutions, which measures the number of policies and actions that limit free speech, has increased by 82 per cent. University policies prohibit a wide variety of speech, including 'insulting' and 'unwelcome' comments, language which is deemed 'offensive', and in some cases, 'sarcasm.' Sadly, these examples only serve to illustrate the degree to which our universities have become places where free intellectual inquiry is being stifled.

In August 2019, the Institute of Public Affairs commissioned a survey of 500 domestic Australian university students which has confirmed that there is a free speech crisis in Australia's universities. The survey found that 41 per cent of students 'sometimes feel that they are unable to express their opinions on campus,' with 82 per cent agreeing that they should 'be exposed to different views, even if those views were challenging or offensive.' Significantly, 58 per cent felt 'more exposed to new ideas on social media than at university.'² These results confirm that Australian universities are fundamentally failing their students, and that campuses are now places where free speech is in danger of disappearing altogether as intellectual inquiry is being crippled and free exchange of ideas severely limited.

1 ABC News, 'UWA cancels talk by transgender sceptic Quentin Van Meter after protests' accessed 15 October 2019, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-17/uwa-cancels-talk-by-controversial-academic-transgender-views/10132400>

2 Renee Gorman, 'New Research Confirms Free Speech Crisis at Australia's Universities' (Institute of Public Affairs) accessed 21 October 2019, <https://ipa.org.au/publications-ipa/in-the-news/new-research-confirms-free-speech-crisis-at-australias-universities>

2. The Humanities

In the 1970s and 1980s, the humanities rejected their original purpose, which had been to make sense of and understand the world through the Western tradition of art, culture and philosophy. During these decades, there appeared a range of new humanities subjects which rejected this tradition and which adopted a range of radical post-structuralism and post-modernist theories. This has resulted in the gradual homogenisation of academic life, where humanities subjects have become increasingly monochrome and repetitive. Whether it be History, English, Anthropology or Social Sciences, everything is now geared towards the intellectual equivalent of a totalitarian state which is governed by one particular orthodoxy: class, race and gender.

In its 2017 report *The Rise of Identity Politics: History in Australian Universities*, the Institute of Public Affairs found that the most frequently employed words in the subject descriptions of all 746 history undergraduate subjects taught at 35 Australian universities were 'race', 'gender', 'identity' and 'sexuality'. Similarly, in the Institute of Public Affairs' 2018 report *Australian History's Last Stand; An Audit of Australian History Teaching at Universities*, findings revealed that nearly three-quarters of all Australian history subjects, that is 102 out of 147, were taught through the lens of identity politics. Numbers of students enrolled in Bachelor of Arts degrees are dwindling as young people are increasingly opting to do commerce or accounting degrees rather than those related to the humanities. Western Civilisation is not being undermined due to a lack of students, but rather because of the particular version of Western Civilisation that they are being offered.

In 2018, former Education Minister Simon Birmingham vetoed a total of eleven humanities ARC grants worth \$4.2 million. This news drew Australians' attention to the type of research being conducted within the humanities departments, and at their expense. Among the prospective research projects which Birmingham included were 'Writing the Struggle for Sioux and US Modernity', 'A History of Australian Men's Dress', 'Beauty and Ugliness as Persuasive Tools in Changing China's Gender Norms' and 'The Music of Nature and the Nature of Music.' Birmingham's decision to veto these projects resulted in significant outrage, with heavy criticism that the Coalition was interfering in academic freedom. Professor Ian Jacobs, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of New South Wales commented that 'the unjustified and unexplained decision to solely deny funding for research that contributes to scholarship in the arts and humanities is deeply troubling.'³ Labor Senator Kim Carr claimed that the contempt of scholarship 'panders to ignorance' while Joy Damousi, President of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, cited 'political interference' that 'undermines confidence and trust' in the peer review system.⁴

An examination of the application process for funding as explained in an infographic on the ARC website entitled 'I have applied for a grant from the ARC. What happens to my application?' reveals that the Education Minister was simply following procedure. The last two stages involved are:

- Recommendations to the minister in which the minister for education determines proposals for funding and the budget for each proposal.
- The minister for education and training determines proposals for funding and the budget for each proposal.

3 Jon Piccini and Dirk Moses, 'Simon Birmingham's intervention in research funding is not unprecedented, but dangerous (The Conversation)', accessed 27 September 2019, <https://theconversation.com/simon-birmingham-intervention-in-research-funding-is-not-unprecedented-but-dangerous-105737>

4 Ibid.

There have been various attempts by the government to intervene over the years. In 2004, the then Liberal Education Minister, Brendan Nelson, vetoed several projects, and appointed outsiders to vet grant applications. In 2013, the Coalition government announced that it would audit and redirect funds which had been allocated under the Labor government from the ARC in an attempt to curb 'waste.' It has also been suggested that grants should be done away with altogether.⁵

In the months leading up to the 2019 Federal Election, the Australian Academy of the Humanities demanded that the government 'return the \$4.2M stripped from ARC research funding to the humanities.'⁶ Academy president Joy Damousi also suggested that a 'chief artist' should be appointed to 'champion the humanities disciplines' in a climate where the humanities are trying to 'identify how vital humanities is for the future...'⁷ Since having been appointed as Education Minister, Dan Tehan has approved three of the projects which had been vetoed by his predecessor. These were 'Masculinity and social change in Australia', by researchers at the Australian Catholic University (ACU); 'Rioting and the literary archive' from University of New South Wales' (UNSW); and 'Art of cultural diplomacy' from Australian National University' (ANU). As yet, Minister Tehan has not vetoed any new projects. However, he has raised the issue in a media release on 31 October 2018, in which he stated that the current application process was in need of strengthening in order to 'improve the public's confidence in taxpayer funded university research' adding that 'academic freedom and free speech do not require grant funding to exist'⁸. Minister Tehan has pledged the introduction of a National Interest Test which would require applicants to explain how their particular field of research would benefit Australia. The test is yet to be implemented.

These are the concerns that have motivated an analysis of ARC humanities grants awarded to Australian universities between 2002 and 2019.

5 Miriam Bankovksy, 'Forget publicity protocols and pub-tests: Let's get rid of ministerial veto of ARC grants altogether', *ABC Religion & Ethics*, accessed 23 September 2019, <https://www.abc.net.au/religion/get-rid-of-ministerial-veto-of-arc-grants/10488208>

6 Australian Academy of the Humanities, 'Our 8-Point Plan to Humanise the Future', accessed October 2, <https://www.humanities.org.au/2019/05/01/our-8-point-plan-to-humanise-the-future/>

7 Jill Rowbotham, 'Academy calls for new chief artist job', *The Australian*, accessed October 2 2019, <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/plea-for-advocate-to-plug-the-arts/news-story/cb95e77edadabbcb3984f1074d580744>

8 Minister for the Department of Education, 'Strengthening public confidence in university research funding' Media Release Wednesday 31 October, <https://ministers.education.gov.au/tehan/strengthening-public-confidence-university-research-funding>

3. Methodology

The Australian Research Council (ARC) is one the Australian government's two main agencies which competitively allocates research funding to both academics and researchers who are employed in Australian universities. Commencing as the Australian Research Grants committee, the ARC was established in 2001 as an independent body under the Australian Research Council Act 2001, and it reports to the Australian government. According to the Australian Research Council, 'the outcomes of ARC-funded research deliver cultural, economic, social and environmental benefits to all Australians.'⁹

The ARC administers the National Competitive Grants Program (NCP), which comprises two funding programs, Discovery and Linkage. The Discovery program schemes include Australian Laureate Fellowships; Discovery Early Career Researcher Award; Discovery Indigenous; Discovery Projects; and Future Fellowships. The Linkage schemes are: ARC Centres of Excellence; Industrial Transformation Research Program; Learned Academies Special Projects; Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities; Linkage Projects; and Special Research Initiatives.

The ARC has developed a grants search data portal which contains all humanities ARC funded projects from 2002-2019. The data used in this audit is drawn from the grants search data portal found at <https://dataportal.arc.gov.au/NCGP/Web/Grant/Grants>

The primary fields of research categorised as humanities by the ARC are as follows:

- 1601 Anthropology
- 1602 Criminology
- 1603 Demography
- 1604 Human Geography
- 1606 Political Science
- 1607 Social Work
- 1608 Sociology
- 1901 Art Theory and Criticism
- 1902 Film, Television and Digital Media
- 1903 Journalism and Professional Writing
- 1905 Visual Arts and Crafts
- 2001 Communications and Media Studies
- 2002 Cultural Studies
- 2003 Language Studies
- 2004 Linguistic
- 2005 Literary Studies
- 2101 Archaeology
- 2102 Curatorial and Related Studies
- 2103 Historical Studies
- 2201 Applied Ethics

⁹ <https://www.arc.gov.au/about-arc>

The main focus of this analysis is on Historical Studies (2103). The methodology used in the analysis of Historical Studies is derived from methodology employed in the Foundations of Western Civilisation Program's previous audits, *The End of History...At Australian Universities* (2015)¹⁰, *The Rise of Identity Politics. An Audit of History Teaching at Australian Universities in 2017*¹¹ and *Australian History's Last Stand. An Audit of Australian History Teaching at Universities* (2018).¹²

The focus of this audit is on Historical Studies primarily because the previous three reports have examined the way in which history as an academic discipline is taught in Australian universities. Furthermore, the grounds for teaching a nation's history are strong and practical. Without knowledge of one's own history, it is impossible to set in context the social, economic, cultural and other developments taking place in that particular society.

To determine the number of Historical Studies research projects that treat particular themes, those themes were identified as keywords, and the occurrence of those keys words in the description of the project content. The words used were based on the keywords employed to identify the key themes in *Australian History's Last Stand. An Audit of Australian History Teaching at Universities*.

10 Stephanie Forrest and Chris Berg, *The End of History...in Australian Universities* (Institute of Public Affairs, 2015)

11 Bella d'Abbrera, *The Rise of Identity Politics. An Audit of History Teaching at Australian Universities in 2017* (Institute of Public Affairs, 2017)

12 Bella d'Abbrera, *Australian History's Last Stand. An Audit of Australian History Teaching at Universities* (Institute of Public Affairs, 2018)

4. Key Research Findings

As part of its Foundations of Western Civilisation Program, the Institute of Public Affairs has undertaken a systematic review of ARC humanities grants administered by the National Competitive Grants Program (NCP) from 2002-2019.

4.1 Funding

- Between 2002 and 2019, the ARC National Competitive Grants Program has administered a total of \$1.34 billion in funding to humanities research projects.
- Between 2002 and 2019, the ARC National Competitive Grants Program has administered funding to 616 Historical Studies research projects.
- The total amount of funding for 616 Historical Studies research projects between 2002 and 2019 is \$192 million.

Figure: 1 Total ARC Humanities Research Projects Funding, 2002-2019

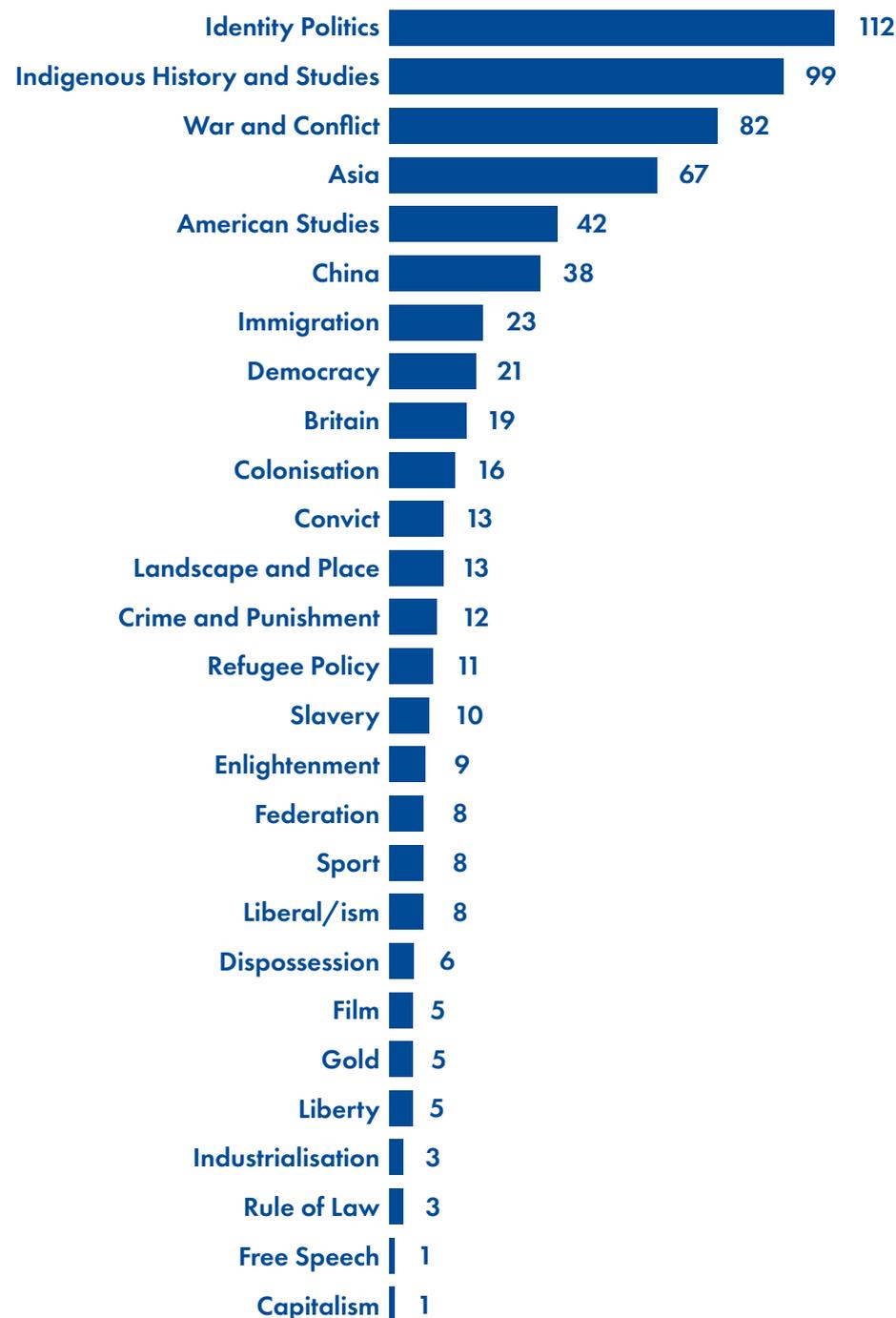
Historical Studies	\$192,260,608.49
Philosophy and Religion	\$116,990,824.14
Anthropology, Criminology, Demography, Human Geography	\$217,281,057.23
Archaeology, Curatorial related studies	\$131,697,201.48
Creative Arts	\$89,655,015.51
Communications & Media Studies, Cultural Studies, Language Studies, Linguistics, Literary Studies	\$300,296,612.02
Social Work, Sociology	\$145,037,788.37
Political Science	\$96,022,920.88
Other Studies in Human Society	\$40,406,493.74
Applied Ethics	\$14,099,581.51
Total	\$1,343,748,103.37

4.2 Themes

To determine what is being researched in Historical Studies, the Institute of Public Affairs undertook a systematic review of 616 ARC- funded Historical Studies research projects between 2002-2019. The data was obtained from the publicly available ARC database grants search portal.

Figure 2: Themes found in 616 Historical Studies Research Projects

The number of ARC research projects which make reference to the following themes;



The three most common themes found in 616 Historical Studies research projects are as follows:

- Identity Politics (class, race and gender) (112)
- Indigenous History and Studies (99)
- War and Conflict (82)

The three least common themes found in 616 Historical Studies research projects are as follows:

- Rule of Law (3)
- Free Speech (1)
- Capitalism (1)

In addition, the themes of Identity Politics (112), 'Indigenous History & Studies' (99) and 'War & Conflict' (82) appear with more frequency than 'Democracy' (21) and 'Enlightenment' (12).

4.3 Identity Politics

For the purpose of this report, identity politics is taken to mean two things. The first is that the individual is to be defined through either their class, race or gender, and that the process of history, politics and all interactions between individuals and groups can only be understood in terms of group identity and inter-group conflict.

The data reveals that of the 616 Historical Studies research projects, 112 treat the theme of identity politics in that they make specific reference to either class, race or gender.

Examples of these projects are as follows:

Australian Catholic University, 2018, Discovery Project, \$263,158.51

Transgender Australians: the history of an identity. This project aims to trace the emergence of transgender identities in Australia since the early twentieth century. Using oral histories, archives and media, the project intends to analyse shifting medical, legal, cultural and popular discourses about transgenderism, as well as study how evolving societal attitudes have affected the lives of gender diverse people. By revealing transgender people's histories, the project will explore the ways gender diverse Australians have expressed their identities amidst changing social norms. The expected outcomes will inform current debates about transgender rights, healthcare provision and social inclusion.

Macquarie University, 2017, Discovery Project, \$299,012.43

Gender and sexual politics: Changing citizenship in Australia since 1969. This project aims to study the effects and legacies of the feminist and sexual revolutions for citizenship in Australia. Australians have increasingly claimed rights and protections in the intimate languages of sexual and gendered identities. This has reorganised public culture in confounding ways and led to debates about intimate life and identity crowd politics. This project will investigate the relationships between these diverse identities, and provide a critical genealogy of how these claims have opened up and challenged Australian citizenship since 1969. The project hopes to benefit policy makers and stakeholders with a new understanding and framework to navigate this complex landscape.

The Australian National University, 2002, Discovery Project, \$212,628.00

Gender ideology, racial mythology and the cultural politics of child removal in colonial Burma, Cambodia and Western Australia 1886-1947. The project aims to further understanding of colonial policies, missionary practices and public discourses supporting the removal of mixed-race children from Indigenous mothers and milieu. Its significance lies in its comparison of three diverse colonial regimes: British Burma, French Cambodia and Western Australia. Equally significant is its analysis of the transcolonial traffic in ideologies of race and gender and the contingent development and deployment of such universalizing tropes as the "Half-Caste Woman" to rationalize policies of child removal. The final outcome will be a book. Interim outcomes include a graduate workshop, an international conference and journal articles.

4.4 Other Themes

In contrast with the predominance of identity politics, an analysis of the data reveals that the 'rule of law', 'free speech' and 'capitalism' are the least common themes found in 616 Historical Studies research projects. With the exception of the University of Adelaide's 2016 project 'A new history of law in post-revolutionary England (c.1689-1760)', the remaining two projects which treat rule of law, do so in the context of the themes of identity politics and Indigenous history and studies. Moreover, the University of Sydney's 2016 project 'Words and their Consequences' examines free speech in terms of 'racial vilification.' Finally, the single research project which was awarded to Macquarie University entitled 'Cultures of Risk taking in Renaissance Italy' treats the theme of 'capitalism' from a negative point of view, proposing to 'write irrationality into the history of modern capitalism.'

The fact that there are more Historical Studies research projects which focus on identity politics and indigenous studies and history than there are those which examine the rule of law, free speech or capitalism reflects the fact that history as a discipline has become dominated by one particular viewpoint, which is to approach the past through the lens of class, race and gender.

The predominance of identity politics and Indigenous history and studies suggests that researchers are less interested in the values and institutions of Western Civilisation such as the rule of law, and freedom of speech than they are in identity politics and/or Indigenous history and studies. It may also suggest that researchers are aware that there is a higher chance of being awarded a grant by the ARC if they focus on identity politics and/or Indigenous history and studies.

Rule of law (3)

The University of Adelaide, 2016, Discovery Project, \$634,091.44

A new history of law in post-revolutionary England (c.1689-1760). This project seeks to recover and reassess the general history of English law during the seven decades following the Glorious Revolution of 1688, when limited monarchy, parliamentary government and the rule of law became new constitutional norms for an emergent imperial British state (and, eventually, for Australia). It aims to chart the modes of law and governance variously experienced, created and used by lay men and women, husbands, wives and children, as well as by judges, lawyers, legislators and ministers. The results of this conceptual investigation, which aims to re-interpret the history of English law and government in the broadest possible way, is planned to appear as Volume IX in the Oxford History of the Laws of England series.

The University of Melbourne, 2002, Discovery Project, \$45,985.00

The Mission to Civilise: Colonialism, Race and Criminal Codes. This project will consider the historical relationships between ideologies of race and law enforcement, and will chart their social formation and naturalisation. This will be set within the context of colonisation in Australia, where there existed tensions between the equally dominant ideologies of overt racism, and ideals of liberal universalism that justified the Rule of Law. Archival research will scrutinise the way in which the superficially racially-neutral language of criminality was constituted by notions such as property and civil order which became racialised in historically and socially specific ways, revealing underlying consistencies between apparently incompatible ideologies of colonial practices.

The University of Adelaide, 2010, Discovery Project, \$204,810.00

The rule of law in history and memory: Australian and Canadian settler frontiers. This study is inspired by current 'History Wars' debates in Australia and Canada, which in raising questions about 'what happened' in the colonial past have demonstrated that the shape of the nation's historical memory is of vital present day importance. These debates have shown that more detailed historical research is required into how the frontiers of European settlement evolved in practice, and how Indigenous populations were made subject to colonial legal authority. As a project of comparative history, the study is of international as well as national significance. It has the potential to generate improved understanding of current conditions by highlighting differences and similarities between Australian and Canadian experiences.

Free Speech (1)

The University of Sydney, 2016, Discovery Project, \$140,832.25

Words and Their Consequences: Freedom of Expression in Britain, 1960-1979. This project plans to use contests over obscenity and racism as lenses to understand changes in freedom of expression in Britain during the 1960s and 1970s. What was the purpose of free speech? How did the liberty to write and read relate to ideas about personal autonomy? What effects do words have on those who read or hear them? Working with previously untapped archival material on regulating obscene publications and the passage of legislation against racial vilification, the project aims to provide a new history of the theory and practice of freedom of expression in modern Britain.

Capitalism (1)

Macquarie University, 2017, Discovery Project, \$164,836.74

Cultures of risk-taking in Renaissance Italy. This project aims to provide a cultural history of the development and nature of pre-modern capitalism that moves beyond outmoded models of linear, rational progression. The project will look at Renaissance Italy, a node in the development of modern capitalism, and analyse how merchants and gamblers took financial risks. By using risk as a category of analysis to examine the interconnections between rational and irrational decision making in sixteenth-century commerce and gambling, the project aims to understand the development of attitudes and values still prevalent today. The project will write irrationality into the history of modern capitalism.

4.5 Ten Examples of Historical Studies Research Projects funded by the ARC

1. The University of Sydney, 2009, \$301,527.00

The International History of Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism, 1814-1822. We cannot understand our entrapment in nationalism until we unravel the history of its complex inter-relationship with cosmopolitanism. This project excavates an understanding of politics and community that offers alternatives to the current global impasse. The moment in the past I will study was the origin of our present predicament, namely the inescapability of nationalism for the cosmopolitan and of cosmopolitanism for the nationalist. This project will consolidate the significance of Australian scholarship to a field that is critical to understanding our choices and destinies in a global society. It will make Australia the headquarters of a new international history that investigates the relevance of the past to policy-making.

2. The University of New South Wales, Discovery Project, 2017 \$167,936.74

A history of women as consumers, 1902-2010. This project aims to give women their own autonomous history as proactive consumers altering spaces outside the domestic sphere. Using a case study of Filipino elite and migrant women, and women's magazines, migrant archives, interviews and ethnographic mapping, the project will write a history of the influence of women's consumption practices on the economy, business and spaces of consumption in the twentieth century. The project aims to challenge the view of women as peripheral to the Philippines' economic history or having little influence on countries to which they migrated. This could enhance Australia's reputation in the field of women in Asia and foster international collaboration.

3. The University of Melbourne, 2013, Discovery Project, \$154,675.00

Rationality and modernity: a history of fortune telling in modern America. This project will produce the first scholarly history of commercial fortune telling in modern America, told from the point of view of customers as well as practitioners. The history of the persistence of the trade in prophecy well into the twentieth century will shed new light on the relationship of rationality and modernity in United States history.

4. Macquarie University, 2013, Discovery Early Career, \$391,685.00

Sexing scholasticism: gender in medieval thought 1150-1520. This project explores medieval theological debates about why it was necessary that Christ was born as a man. This offers new evidence for understanding the history of gender in the Middle Ages, granting access to ideas about masculinity and femininity held by the elite ruling cultures of western Europe between 1150 and 1520.

5. Australian Catholic University, 2019, Discovery Project, \$367,519.18

Masculinity and social change in Australia. This project aims to produce the first history of men's dress in twentieth-century Australia. Combining fashion and material culture studies with social history, the project aims to advance knowledge about masculinity, changing social relations and consumer practices in Australia's past. Through an exhibition and publications, the project will inform debates about gender, egalitarianism and social roles in Australia.

6. Australian Catholic University 2016, Discovery Project, \$210,587.99

Serving in Silence? Australian LGBTI Military Service since 1945. This project aims to investigate how the Australian armed forces have grappled with changing social attitudes towards lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people from the end of World War Two until the present. The project plans to analyse why in some eras the Australian military has been an international leader in facilitating social change, while at other times it has lagged behind civilian norms. It aims to reveal the untold experiences of LGBTI personnel, the processes of change to policies and practices, and wider cultural shifts around sexuality and gender. The expected project outcomes will inform current debates about Australian Defence Force culture and wider questions about how institutions respond to social change.

7. La Trobe University 2017, Discovery Project, \$291,352, 30

Breaking Down Tradition: Women in male-dominated work, 1840-2000. Using historical analysis, this project aims to illuminate the endurance of sex-segregated work over more than 150 years. It plans to focus on particular occupations in Britain and Australia to identify the processes and agents of change and document the experiences of women. The project aims to trace the origins of workplace cultures which excluded women, and the circulation of ideas about occupations subsequently designated as 'non-traditional' for them. Expected outcomes are new insights into the history of women's experience of work and the factors that shape contemporary pay inequities, which may recast current understandings of gender in the workplace.

8. University of Melbourne, 2003, Discovery Project, \$102,539.00

Fashionable Times: An Inquiry into the History of China's Modernity. Fashion, once regarded as a purely Western phenomenon and equated with thoroughly modern life, has recently made an improbable appearance in histories both of urban life in late imperial China and of twentieth-century Chinese nationalism. To speak of Chinese fashion is effectively to raise a question about the origins and course of China's modernity. The project aims to respond to this question through a study of the culture of clothing from Ming to Mao, the expected outcome being an illustrated monograph of interest to scholars and general readers in the fields of fashion theory, material culture, and Chinese history.

9. University of Technology Sydney, 2005, Linkage Project, \$146,732.00

Parklands, culture and communities: strategic research for building social, cultural and environmental capital in urban parklands. Parklands, Culture and Communities is an innovative collaboration between park managers and academic researchers. It will result in deeper knowledge about how cultural and ethnic diversity affects the way communities use urban parks and how they interact with each other in those parks. The project focuses initially on four groups on the Georges River in suburban Sydney: the Indigenous, Anglo, Vietnamese and Arabic-speaking communities. A study of their use of parklands will then be the basis for developing best-practice research, planning and interpretation resources to assist park managers in other locations to collaborate more effectively with their changing local users, thus enhancing positive cross-cultural relations in urban parks.

10. The University of Queensland, 2002, Discovery Project, \$200,241.00

Inventing perfect Australian womanhood: The Miss Australia quest and the role of disability in postwar Australia. The Miss Australia Quest articulated the concept of perfect white womanhood in the postwar era. Sponsored by a major charity, the Spastics League, the Quest sought to locate representatives of conventional womanhood yet who had exemplary appearance, poise and moral virtue. Bodily and moral perfection ran counter to the sponsoring organisation which dealt with the severely disabled. With competitions held throughout the Commonwealth, the finalists were designated by their state of origin. Hence both regions and then states competed alongside individuals. The broadcast of the Quest was a major television event until 1986. An analysis of the Quest allows interrogation of the role of fundraising for charity, the construction of celebrity, the nature of idealised young womanhood and interstate rivalries. Scholarly articles and a book alongside a projected exhibition at the new National Museum of Australia are anticipated.

Conclusion

An analysis of ARC grants administered by the National Competitive Grants Program to the Humanities, with particular focus on the field of Historical Studies, confirms the findings of the Institute of Public Affairs' previous reports which analyse of the teaching of history in Australian universities¹³. That is, that history as an academic discipline is dominated by identity politics. Of the 616 grants which have been awarded since 2002, some 112 approach their subjects through the lens of class, race and gender.

Unfortunately, this is exactly the type of thing that we have come to expect from the current intellectual climate of Australian universities, which is dominated by a monoculture of identity politics. The favouring of identity politics in the Historical Studies research projects over other themes suggests that the individuals writing the research proposals adhere to the world view that sees history as a zero sum contest for power between the privileged and the oppressed. This is not to mean that there is no place in research for projects which take this approach. However, it does result in significantly fewer projects which treat the themes of 'rule of law', 'freedom of speech' and 'capitalism.'

The findings reflect the fact that Australia's universities are no longer interested in the history of the values and institutions of Western Civilisation that are essential to understanding our present and to shaping our future.

There is no doubt that the ARC needs to exercise greater rigour in its evaluation of projects and introduce an element of accountability at the end of each project so as to instil confidence in the tax payer. In this respect, the National Interest Test proposed by the Minister for Education Dan Tehan, would be of great value. Another solution could come in the form of self-funded research such as exists in Britain and Canada. If academics were forced to make a salary sacrifice or take a loan to pay for their research, then this would certainly focus their minds on what is critical to the nation and what is not.

¹³ *The Rise of Identity Politics. An Audit of History Teaching at Australian Universities in 2017 and Australian History's Last Stand. An Audit of Australian History Teaching at Universities* (2018)

Appendix

ARC Funding in other Fields of the Humanities, 2002-2019

2002 Cultural Studies

The University of New South Wales, 2011, \$116,091.00

Decolonising the human: towards a postcolonial ecology. Do you think you're human? This project interrogates how the notion of mind has come to shape western attitudes about what it means to be human. Focusing on the notorious head-measuring practices of colonial times, it provokes a rethinking of our cherished claim of being privileged among other life-forms.

The University of Sydney, 2012, \$403,639.00

A modern profession: the Australian air hostess/flight attendant 1936 - 1984. This project describes the emergence of a new profession in Australia: the air hostess/flight attendant. It documents and analyses the recruitment and working experience of flight attendants with the aim of acknowledging their contribution to the industry, and analysing how their life at work helped forge a modern image of Australia and Australian women.

The University of Sydney, 2011, \$735,141.00

Reconceiving the queer public sphere: an interdisciplinary analysis of same-sex couple domesticity. Using literary, biographical and photographic sources, this project will produce a ground-breaking history of same-sex domestic environments across the twentieth century. Critically analysing queer home life, this project will transform current understandings of the relation between homosexuality, private life and the public sphere.

The University of Melbourne, 2003, \$100,229.00

Consuming Celebrity: Female stardom and gay subcultural reception. This project explores the function of celebrity in modern culture through a detailed case study of gay subcultural receptions of female stardom. The female star or 'diva' has been an influential figure in gay subcultures since the nineteenth century where it has inspired significant and enduring productions of gay selfhood. The project explores the histories of gay or 'diva worship' to analyse the role and uses of stardom in formations of cultural identity. Through scholarly publications, the study will make major contributions to our understanding of not only gay culture and history, but the significance of celebrity in modern cultural life.

The University of Melbourne, 2011, \$324,547.00

Outside-Domestication: towards an anthropology of the spaces of negotiated being. All institutions today encourage innovation. Yet the word is not mentioned anywhere in the world when it comes to ethnic relations policy. This project looks at spaces of social relations that fall outside state rule. Rather than seeing them as a threat we examine if they offer material for a much-needed innovative inter-cultural politics.

2001 Communication and Media Studies

The University of Queensland, 2011, \$284,420.00

Locating television: an international study of the changing socio-cultural functions of television. This project investigates the socio-cultural function of television in nation-states so far largely ignored by media studies: Mexico, Cuba and the Philippines. Combining cultural studies and anthropology, it uses publications and symposia to provide a more detailed global account of television's continuing influence in the post-broadcast era.

University of Tasmania, 2014, \$401,964.87

The New Politics of Food and the Australian Media. The provenance of food and the ethics of food production and consumption are increasingly a focus of mainstream media, including television cooking shows, cookbooks, advertising, news and online media. This is the result of alliances between the media and the food industries, alliances that are reinvesting food and food politics with new meaning and significance. This project investigates the complex dynamics of interaction between these two important Australian industries by examining their texts, economies and practices. It will reveal their significant effects on corporate decision-making, consumer behaviours, public debate and national policy.

2004 Linguistics

James Cook University, 2012, \$2,694,880.76

How gender shapes the world: a linguistic perspective. This project will seek to understand and explain gender roles in Australian society, and in nearby nations. Emphasis is placed on training researchers with an immigrant or minority background, working towards the empowerment of women researchers. This will enhance our nation's capacity to interpret and manage gender roles in multicultural contexts.

University of Technology Sydney, 2003, \$113,589.00

Postoccidental Englishes and Rap. This project examines the conjunction between new Englishes and rap music. Applied linguistic research on world Englishes has focused predominantly on newly emergent standardized national varieties, and thus has tended to overlook the changing oral codes in domains such as popular music. By looking at the global spread of rap in relationship to the global spread of English, this project has great significance for 1. Expanding our knowledge about the implications and processes of this spread; 2. Developing a model of postoccidental Englishes that goes beyond current frameworks; and 3. Creating educational materials that can engage with student interests and desires.

2005 Literary Studies

The University of Sydney, 2012 \$400,902.00

Imagining diversity: race and ethnicity in popular fantasy. How do fantasy worlds represent and reconstruct real world approaches to racial and cultural difference? This project examines the ways reader and writers of popular culture think and talk about race and ethnicity, offering insight into contemporary discourses of diversity and an essential window into Australia's multicultural society.

The University of Sydney, 2012, \$536,730.00

The new medical body in contemporary Chinese imaginaries. Advances in organ transplant, blood transfusion, and related practices not only affect understandings of the human body in medical and scientific communities, but in society at large. This project will analyse contemporary Chinese literature, cinema, art, and popular media to better understand the impact of medical innovations on Chinese culture.

About the Institute of Public Affairs

The Institute of Public Affairs is an independent, non-profit public policy think tank, dedicated to preserving and strengthening the foundations of economic and political freedom.

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About the Foundations of Western Civilisation Program

In 2010, the Institute of Public Affairs established the Foundations of Western Civilisation Program as one of its major research programs. Its purpose is to encourage Australians to understand and appreciate the heritage of Western Civilisation.

About the author

Dr Bella d'Abbrera is the Director of the *Foundations of Western Civilisation Program* at the Institute of Public Affairs. She has a BA in History and Spanish from Monash University, an MA in Spanish from the University of St Andrews and a PhD in History from the University of Cambridge.

She is the author of a number of academic works and scholarly articles and specialises in education and skills, faith and society and culture, ideas and liberty and Western Civilisation. She appears frequently in the media and is a regular contributor to *The Australian*, the *Daily Telegraph*, *The Herald Sun* and the *Spectator Australia*.



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