



# AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL ASIA PACIFIC FUTURES RESEARCH NETWORK

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## ARC Asia Pacific Futures Research Network

### PROJECT SUMMARIES

#### Second Round 2005

PA20502

**Applicant:** A/Prof Feng Chongyi  
**Affiliation:** Institute for International Studies, University of Technology Sydney  
**Project Title:** "Opportunities, challenges and strategic choices of Democratisation"  
**Awarded:** \$ 8920

This project aimed to set up a network of informed scholars to examine the agents and processes of democratisation in China. It convened an international conference bringing together scholars, postgraduates and commentators (political scientists, sociologists, historians and philosophers) from Australia, China, Singapore, Hong Kong and North America. Together, they scrutinised the challenges and obstacles to democratisation in China using a systematic approach, considering conditions conducive to achieving this aim and examining the available options for political actors such as Chinese local political dissidents at home and abroad, international democratic governments and, most significantly, the democratic force within the Chinese party-state. Participants from Australian government and media agencies were invited to attend and papers presented were to be later published as an edited volume in both Chinese and English. This project forged links with key international researchers in China, Hong Kong and Singapore to provide democratic governments with observations from which sensible long term policies in the region could be devised. It also involved the participation of doctoral students in both the conference and a half day postgraduate research workshop where they could discuss their work with senior academics.

PA20507

**Applicant:** Dr Tim Scrase  
**Affiliation:** Centre for Asia-Pacific Social Transformation Studies  
University of Wollongong  
**Project Title:** "Human security and development in marginal communities"  
**Awarded:** \$ 9975

This project convened a national workshop to analyse the nature and character of long term, community based volunteer abroad programs and assess the role they have in contributing to Australia's regional linkages in the Asia-Pacific region. It responded to three underlying questions: What issues do volunteer agencies, the Australian government and host communities believe will enhance the role of volunteer abroad programs now and into the future? In terms of training, what skills, competencies and knowledge do Australian

volunteers need in order to be prepared for future overseas placements in Asia-Pacific countries? And how do Australian volunteers in Asia-Pacific communities contribute to regional stability through community capacity building? Since 2001 the Australian government has recognised the importance of volunteer abroad programs in the new international environment. However, volunteering in the Asia-Pacific over the past few years has become contentious and complex for host societies, volunteers and volunteer agencies because of associations with various issues from defence and security, gender inequality, religious extremism and the social impact of natural disasters. To enable a theoretical, practical and policy perspective, the workshop brought together academic scholars, development practitioners and government representatives in order to intensively workshop these issues. The list of workshop participants included postgraduate students with fieldwork experience, and in the project's final stages, a workshop report was to be completed and submitted to relevant government agencies, development groups and academic institutions.

PA20508

**Applicant:** Dr Richard Eves  
**Affiliation:** Gender Relations Centre, RSPAS, Australian National University  
**Project Title:** "Changing Pacific Masculinities: Engendering Future Security"  
**Awarded:** \$10,000

This one day workshop for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers was held at ANU before the international conference, "Moving Masculinities: Crossing Regional and Historic Borders". It attracted a wide range of participants working across Asia, the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand and aimed to engage scholarly and policy questions about recent violent crises, crisis in masculinities and prospects for future peace, security and good governance in several Pacific states: Fiji, PNG, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The project worked towards achieving four key objectives: Firstly, to bring together researchers working across several Pacific states on masculinity in relation to public and domestic violence, good governance and prospects for peace and security. Secondly, to create a supportive environment for postgraduates and early career researchers when presenting their research and networking with senior scholars. Thirdly, to offer mentoring for postgraduates and early career researchers in preparing their papers for a co-joint publication. And lastly, to establish networks linking scholars with policy makers and practitioners in government and NGOs. Insufficient attention has been paid to the changing cultures of masculinities over generations and to the way in which past practices and values (in warfare and male cults, for example) have been reconfigured in an era of political turmoil, burgeoning mining and logging industries and the pervasive influence of global electronic media on local images of masculinity. This project thus encouraged comparative and interdisciplinary dialogue on these significant and challenging issues across several Pacific states.

PA20509

**Applicant:** Dr Samina Yasmeen  
**Affiliation:** Centre for Muslim States and Societies, University of Western Australia  
**Project Title:** Islamic Groups: Identities, Worldviews and Issues of Security  
**Awarded:** \$ 10,000

The aim of this project was to develop a typology of Islamic groups operating at the regional and global level with a view to assessing their implications for security in the short and long term. It addressed the following topics and related issues: the origins, worldviews and policy instruments used by Islamic groups operating in the Asia Pacific region, the implications of these worldviews for their operations at national, regional and global levels, and the place that women occupy within these groups in relation to social structures developing as part of

this process and anticipated societal impacts. Since the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, any theoretical analysis of Islamic groups and their role in security have essentially been limited to militant organisations. This approach has had the effect of playing down the gender dimension in the organisation and strategy of Islamic groups and ignores the reality of transnational Islam in today's world. The project therefore drew upon cross-disciplinary expertise in order to deal with such major deficiencies in current understandings of Islamic groups, securing the specific participation of specialists in women's studies and providing postgraduate students with opportunities to network with experts in the field.

PA20512

**Applicant:** Professor Barbara Hatley  
**Affiliation:** University of Tasmania  
**Project Title:** "Art, Culture and Political and Social Change since Suharto"  
**Awarded:** \$ 8000

This workshop identified and analysed significant developments in Indonesian arts and cultural media since the end of the New Order regime. It examined new modes of cultural expression that have emerged since Suharto left office in 1998, and took a close look at vital questions concerning how they are currently being received, how they vary from region to region and what they suggest about the impact of societal changes on the values and sense of identity of the creators and "consumers" of art and popular culture. Key themes addressed by participants included how art forms give expression to local cultural identity across different regions of Indonesia, how such activity engages with global media and technology, how the increased freedom of sexual expression in arts and media relates to gendered experience in society and how cultural forms reflect on issues such as the social and psychological effects of the tsunami. While researchers came together from diverse global regions, they also worked across the various disciplines of art, literature, performance, mass media and anthropology to engage with the complexities of these issues. Opportunities were simultaneously presented for postgraduate students to work closely with experts in the field, and they were also invited to take up responsibilities as auxiliary convenor, and to assist with organisational procedures, the transcription of discussion and a summary of workshop proceedings for online publication.