

LA TROBE ASIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2014



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This report provides a detailed overview of the range of activities undertaken by La Trobe Asia in its inaugural year.

La Trobe Asia's Initial Scoping Statement and Aims

La Trobe Asia is a new strategic initiative of the University that is intended to oversee all aspects of the University's approach to Asia. La Trobe has a long history of expertise in Asia: it is one of two universities in Australia that teach Japanese, Chinese, Indonesian and Hindi, and it pioneered Asian Studies and from its foundation developed substantive links with Asian universities. La Trobe Asia has been established to provide University wide leadership to build on and enhance this tradition to help the University to be able to fulfil its purpose to create and disseminate knowledge in a world increasingly shaped by Asia's states and societies. It is also intended to help our stakeholders in Australia and the region better access the array of our Asia assets.

La Trobe Asia will:

- Ensure that La Trobe students and staff are provided with expertise on Asia's states and societies.
- Be a knowledge broker on all aspects of the University's work on and in Asia.
- Promote the University's Asia vision and activities with the broader community in Australia and the region.
- Make La Trobe a genuinely Asia-focused institution.
- Be a single point of contact for external stakeholders to make best use of the University's Asia assets.
- Lead and inform public debate in Australia about Asia and contribute to public debate in the region.

La Trobe Asia Launch

La Trobe Asia was officially launched on 17 September 2014 in the presence of over 80 guests.

The Hon Andrew Robb AO (Minister for Trade and Investment, La Trobe University alumnus) marked the occasion with an address noting that:

"...the centre is intended to provide the broader community, both in Australia and in the region, with access to La Trobe's deep well of expertise on Asia. It will also further elevate La Trobe's standing as a most authoritative voice in the public debate about Australia's relations with Asia and our role in this the Asian Century.

Building Australia's understanding of Asia and linkages with it is indeed a critical national task.....What you are doing here at La Trobe will provide contemporary insights to assist all of us with a stake in Asia to better understand the geo-politics, the emerging trends and the cultures themselves in this truly dynamic part of the world."

The launch was held in the Sir Redmond Barry Room, in the State Investment Centre, Level 46, 55 Collins Street, Melbourne and was well attended by Melbourne's diplomatic community, business leaders, government officials and leading academics from La Trobe and Melbourne's other universities.



La Trobe Asia Steering Committee

The work of La Trobe Asia is overseen by its Steering Committee. The Steering Committee's Terms of Reference are as follows:

- It is a strategic and advisory group that will support La Trobe Asia and meet bi-monthly.
- It will renew, consider and endorse the annual plan prepared by the Executive Director.
- It will monitor the performance of La Trobe Asia.
- It will provide internal advice on developments of relevance to La Trobe Asia and facilitate the dissemination of information internally as appropriate, in an advocacy role.

The membership of the Steering Committee in 2014 was:

- Professor John Rosenberg, Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor Chair (until June 2014)
- Professor Keith Nugent, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) Chair (from July 2014)
- Professor Jane Long, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)
- Dr Elizabeth Johnson, Acting Executive Dean, Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering
- Liz Stinson, Director, International
- Dr Catherine Itsiopoulos (Associate Dean, International, Faculty of Health Sciences)

La Trobe Asia Advisory Board

La Trobe Asia's Advisory Board provides advice and guidance to the Executive Director and the Vice Chancellor on developments external to the University, in particular into developments in Asia's tertiary sector, opportunities for partnerships with Asian universities in research, teaching and student mobility. It will also provide external advice on the operations of La Trobe Asia. The first meeting was held on 26 March 2015.

- Steven Foo, Head – Asia Business Development, Australia Post
- Peter Frost, CEO, Deputy Auditor-General, Victorian Auditor-General's Office
- Professor Meenakshi Gopinath, former Principal, Lady Sri Ram College
- Allan Gyngell, former Director of the Office of National Assessments
- Linda Jakobson, Director, China Matters Ltd
- Professor Robin Jeffrey, National University of Singapore
- Dr Geoff Raby, Chairman and CEO, Geoff Raby & Associates
- Emeritus Professor John Rosenberg
- Chin Leong Tan, Chairperson, Victorian Multicultural Commission
- Professor Paul Yip, Director, Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention, The University of Hong Kong
- Professor Khatijah Yusoff, Dean, Faculty of Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)

Public Events

Public lectures, forums, and seminars were an important way for La Trobe Asia to engage with the intellectual community in a meaningful way. Events were open to staff and students as well as members of the public, and were held at both the Melbourne Campus and the State Library.

- 11 public speaking events were held in 2014, with a total attendance of 345.
- Speakers including La Trobe University academics covering their area of expertise, as well as visiting scholars and guests such as Kensuke Yoshida (Embassy of Japan, Canberra), Geoff Raby, Professor Paul Yip (University of Hong Kong) and Professor Jenni Millbank (University of Sydney).
- Topics covered a wide range of Asian countries and aspects of the diaspora, such as elections in Indonesia and China, developments in North Korea, or suicide in Hong Kong.
- *Making Peace in South Asia* seminar was held in collaboration with the Australia India Institute.
- *Power Rivalry and the Transformation of East Asia* public lecture was held in collaboration with the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, La Trobe University.
- *Crossing Boundaries: Reproductive Travel in Asia* was held in collaboration with La Trobe University School of Law.
- Audio from the talks were recorded and published on iTunes U and SoundCloud.



Website

A La Trobe Asia website was developed in collaboration with Digital Marketing and became operational in May 2014. It is designed to be a virtual 'showcase' of La Trobe's Asia work and has many resources including: podcasts, links to recent publications, op-eds, the library's regional resources, news, events, grant information and research.

The La Trobe Asia website had **9,185 page views** in 2014 since launch in May, with an average visitor traffic of **43 page views per day**. Peak traffic periods coincided with high-profile public events.

La Trobe University's 'Asia knowledge broker'

La Trobe Asia has collaborated with people across the University including: La Trobe International (LTI), International Relations Office (IRO), La Trobe Abroad, International Development Managers (IDMS), Alumni and Advancement Office (AAO), Schools and Departments from both colleges, individual academics and researchers, student groups.

La Trobe Asia has 450 initial interactions such as information sharing, connecting people both internally and externally, invitations and requests for information or assistance of some kind. 70% of these interactions were with internal stakeholders.

La Trobe Asia has established a database of 491 contacts by the end of December 2014. Contacts receive notices of relevant news and upcoming events, with a high response rate.

Building a knowledge network

- We have worked closely to support La Trobe Abroad with New Colombo Plan (NCP) applications and other student mobility issues.
- Work has begun on individual Country Briefs for each country in Asia, a resource designed for use within the University and a way to capture all the University's engagement in individual countries from transnational education (TNE), research, alumni, marketing, recruitment as well as general information from external sources such as the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to assist with increasing basic knowledge and understanding of Australia's engagement and cultural etiquette tips.
- Individual country strategies are also being developed for senior management to enhance University engagement to help deliver on the University's strategic plan.
- Development of resources to track Asian activity throughout the University such as Agreements Spreadsheet which form part of the 'Knowledge Hub'.
- Work began on developing a list of experts at La Trobe University, but was placed on hold whilst Funding Future Ready (FFR) was taking place. It is hoped that this information will be easily located on the website as well as forming part of each individual country brief.

Promote the University's Asia vision and activities with the broader community in Australia and the region

La Trobe Asia has had 134 contacts with external bodies in a range of professional relationships, most notably:

- The Executive Director for La Trobe Asia, in collaboration with Professor Michele Ford, head of the Sydney Southeast Asia Centre (SEAC), has established the Asian Centres Directors network in Australia and New Zealand.
- The Executive Director accompanied Vice-Chancellor and the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor on a senior delegation to Singapore and China.
- La Trobe Asia has worked closely with the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in Singapore to co-host the 'Workshop on the East Asia Summit and Regional Security' in August 2014. The policy report and commentary coming from the workshop has been well received by regional governments.
- La Trobe Asia undertook considerable work to support the ASHM Leadership Course held in conjunction with the international AIDS 2014 Conference in Melbourne, July.
- The Executive Director for La Trobe Asia has strengthened relationships with: Asialink, the Australia India Institute (AII), Department of State Development, Business and Innovation (DSDBI) (NB: as of 1 January 2015 the former DSDBI has been incorporated into the new Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources), DFAT, the diplomatic community in Melbourne, East China Normal University (ECNU), China Executive Leadership Academy Pudong (CELAP) and new partnerships have been developed with Foundation for Australian Studies in China (FASIC), Australia China Relations Institute (ACRI), NZ Asia Foundation and ISEAS.
- La Trobe Asia, through its Executive Director, has met with many visiting delegations, (playing a representational role for senior management) when required.
- La Trobe Asia supported the Chinese Association of Professionals and Scholars, Australia (CAPS) 8th Victoria Chinese PhD Students and Young Scholars Research Symposium with logistical and organisational support as well as sponsoring the morning tea.
- La Trobe Asia has had professional enquiries and interactions from a number of external organisations including DFAT, the British High Commission, the U.S. Consulate in Melbourne and the Japanese Embassy in Canberra.
- La Trobe Asia has used its mailing list as an effective tool to publicise the work of researchers and academics at the University. The website has also showcased students and staff with numerous news stories.

Collaborative research project – ACRI Report

La Trobe Asia Executive Director Professor Nick Bisley undertook a high profile collaborative research project with ACRI, headed by former Foreign Minister Bob Carr, and co-authored with Dr Brendan Taylor of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at ANU.

Titled ***Conflict in the East China Sea: Would ANZUS Apply?*** the report discusses examines the implications for Australia of a potential conflict in the East China Sea which could stem from our alliance obligations with the US.

By analysing the circumstances under which conflict could occur and the implications for Australia, it aims to help shape public and policy debate on the issue. The report has been widely cited in the media and has been referred to in several senate committee reports.



Making La Trobe a genuinely Asia-focused institution

- The Research Grant Program was established in 2014. Just under \$60,000 was disbursed to 13 researchers in July and August 2014. To date, one article has been accepted for publication and two others have been submitted to journals. The other researchers are still finalising their data collection with articles due for submission to journals by the end of 2015.
- La Trobe Asia contributed to the review of the Centre for Dialogue (CfD) and a decision made by Senior Management to close the CfD at the end of 2014.
- La Trobe Asia initiated the external review of the Centre for China Studies which was chaired by Professor Kerry Brown (University of Sydney) and, in collaboration with the DVC-R, has developed a plan to implement the recommendations of the review in 2015.
- Developing Asia-focused curriculum began with appointment of Dr Damon Cartledge in May as Academic Director. Due to the FFR program, we opted to keep this focused on back office work until the new University structures were created. Unfortunately, Dr Cartledge was made redundant by the FFR program.

Lead and inform public debate in Australia about Asia and contribute to public debate in the region

La Trobe Asia and Asian related experts and research has had **51 interactions** with the media, including the following highlights

- The Executive Director has written 16 Op-Eds, there have been three other Asia focused Op-Eds from other academics at La Trobe University published in 2014.
- The Executive Director has made numerous media appearances, including ABC Radio, ABC News 24, Monocle 24 and Sky News and has been quoted in The Economist, the South China Morning Post, the Straits Times, the Age and the Australian.
- Eight journal publications and a report were highlighted on the La Trobe Asia website (under Publications) and at least 25 recorded media references related to the Asia-focused of many at La Trobe University has been noted.
- La Trobe Asia established the 'Asia Rising' podcast, discussing news and views on Asia's states and societies. Seven interviews were recorded in 2014, and recordings (including seminars and lectures) had **37,937 downloads**.



★★★★ Rising Star of Asian Analysis

by Old Melburnian from Australia on 14/01/2015

Hats off to Professor Nick Bisley, Director of La Trobe Asia, for the Asia Rising Collection. An insightful exploration into contemporary Asia that addresses the main issues within the region through a balanced mixture of interview and seminar formats.

The audio is clean and crisp (so much so, that in one segment, one can even hear the sound of native fauna that don the Trobian grounds!), while it's varied length provides a reasonable range of analysis that caters to one's interest.

It would be great to see some exploration of countries and issues that do not feature as prominently in what is otherwise great content. Watch this space!