

LA TROBE ASIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



Namhang river, South Korea (photo: Dr Benjamin Habib)

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Staff	3
Governance	4
Public Events	5
Website.....	6
La Trobe University's 'Asia knowledge broker'	6
Making La Trobe a genuinely Asia-focused institution.....	10
Lead and inform public debate about Asia, in Australia and in the region.....	11
Podcasts	12
Appendix 1	14

LA TROBE ASIA

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

Introduction

La Trobe Asia strengthens and deepens the University's academic engagement with the region by building strong partnerships, supporting research and shaping public debate.

Inaugural Executive Director, Professor Nick Bisley, left La Trobe Asia to become Head of School (Humanities and Social Sciences at La Trobe University) in early 2018. Dr Euan Graham was appointed as the new Executive Director, commencing in November. During this gap period, the La Trobe Asia team maintained a full schedule of events and active program of support for the University's Asia-facing research and engagement.

Staff

Dr Euan Graham, Executive Director (commenced November 2018)

Professor Nick Bisley, Executive Director (finished March 2018)

Diana Heatherich, Senior Project Officer

Matt Smith, Digital Communications Officer

Tom Barber, Administrative Assistant (0.2)

Governance

La Trobe Asia Steering Committee

The work of La Trobe Asia is overseen by its Steering Committee which met five times during 2018. In 2018 the members were:

- Professor Keith Nugent, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Chair
- Professor Robert Pike, Pro Vice-Chancellor, College of Science, Health and Engineering
- Kelly Smith, Pro Vice-Chancellor, International
- Dr Catherine Itsiopoulos, Head of School of Allied Health, College of Science, Health and Engineering
- Professor Helen Lee, Anthropology, Department of Social Inquiry, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, College of Arts, Social Science and Commerce
- Associate Professor Savitri Taylor, Law, La Trobe Law School, College of Arts, Social Science and Commerce

La Trobe Asia Advisory Board

La Trobe Asia's Advisory Board provides advice and guidance to the Vice-Chancellor and the Executive Director 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 also provides external advice on the operations of La Trobe Asia. The first Advisory Board came to the end of their term at the end of 2016. In 2017 a new board was appointed for a two-year term.

The Advisory Board for 2018 is comprised of:

- Professor Meenakshi Gopinath, Founder and Director of WISCOMP (Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace) and Principal Emerita of Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi
- Linda Jakobson, CEO and Founding Director, China Matters
- Emeritus Professor Robin Jeffrey, La Trobe University and National University of Singapore
- Mark Lawrie, Managing Partner at PwC Australia
- Dr Geoff Raby, Chairman and CEO, Geoff Raby & Associates
- Dr Kristin Sadler, Research Director (Strategy and Biosciences) and a member of the Research Strategy and Coordination Group in the President's Office at Nanyang Technological University

It was decided that the Advisory Board would meet when the new Executive Director was appointed and had started in the role. As the recruitment process took most of the year, the Advisory Board will reconvene in 2019.

Public Events

Public lectures, forums, and seminars provide a platform for La Trobe Asia to showcase La Trobe University academic talent, to make interventions in issues of public debate and engage the University community. Events were open to staff and students as well as members of the public.

In summary:

- Over 30 different events (seminars, public forums, delegations, symposiums, launches, showcases, networking) were held in 2018 (see Appendix 1).
- La Trobe Asia collaborated with 16 different internal and external groups to present these events, with total attendance of 1,847 people.
- Speakers included La Trobe University academics covering their area of expertise, as well as visiting scholars and guests:
 - Australian Ambassador to ASEAN, HE Jane Duke
 - Associate Professor Nobuhiro Aizawa (Kyushu University)
 - Professor Thomas Klassen (York University, Canada)
 - The Hon Julie Bishop MP (then Foreign Minister of Australia)
 - Allan Gyngell, former director general of the Office of National Assessments
 - Dr Assa Doron (Australian National University)
 - Dr Michael Cohen (Australian National University)
 - Associate Professor Brendan Taylor (Australian National University)
 - HE John Brumby (Australia China Business Council)
 - Ms Makereta Komai (Pacific Islands News Association)
 - Spica A Tutuhaturunewa, Consul General for the Republic of Indonesia in Melbourne
 - Dr Lucy Fraser (University of Queensland)
 - Dr Masafumi Monden (University of Technology, Sydney)
 - Megan Catherine Rose (University of New South Wales)
 - Nury Turkel (Uyghur Human Rights Project)
 - Louisa Greve (Uyghur Human Rights Project)
- Events focused on a wide range of topics and issues in many different countries including the Uyghur situation in Xinjiang, the Australia-Japan defence relationship, Asian geopolitics, Japanese street culture and fashion, Australia-China-Pacific relations and North Korean refugees.
- La Trobe Asia co-hosted roundtables and symposia with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the NZ Asia Foundation, the Australia India Institute and the Pacific Research Community.

Website

The La Trobe Asia website continues to be an important 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, country strategies and research.

The La Trobe Asia website had **12,954 page views** in 2018 (up from 10,513 in 2017), with an average visitor traffic of **35.6 page views per day**. Peak traffic periods coincided with high-profile public events.

La Trobe University's 'Asia knowledge broker'

A key part of La Trobe Asia's role is to support the Asia focused work of La Trobe staff. In 2018 we continued to collaborate with people across the University including: La Trobe International (LTI), La Trobe Abroad, Alumni and Advancement Office (AAO), Schools and Departments from both colleges, individual academics and researchers, student groups.

In 2018 La Trobe Asia had over 350 initial interactions involving a range of activities ranging from information sharing, connecting people both internally and externally, the provision of strategic advice and other forms of assistance. 71% of these interactions were with internal stakeholders.

By the end of December 2018, La Trobe Asia's database of contacts had increased to over 3750. Contacts receive regular newsletters and emails alerting them to events or information with an average 'open' rate of 34.92% and click through rates of 1% - 4% (depending on topic).

Building a knowledge network

- We have continued to work closely to support La Trobe Abroad with New Colombo Plan (NCP) applications and other student mobility opportunities.
- We have continued to maintain the Country Briefs. These were developed in 2017 for each country in Asia (twenty six in total). They are available for all La Trobe University staff to use and are found on the intranet. This resource captures most of the University's engagement in individual countries from transnational education (TNE), research, alumni, marketing, recruitment as well as general information from external sources. They can be customised upon request for internal or external use.

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

La Trobe Asia has had 92 contacts with external bodies in a range of professional relationships, most notably:

- La Trobe Asia collaborated with the Australian Institute of International Affairs Victoria to present a panel discussion on the Uyghur rights in Xinjiang Province, China on 7 December 2018. Around 100 attended this event which examined the issues of human rights, the re-education camps, threats to Uyghur culture, and China's motivation.

The speakers were:

Nury Turkel (Uyghur Human Rights Project)

Associate Professor James Leibold (Politics and Philosophy, La Trobe University)

Louisa Greve (Uyghur Human Rights Project)

The panel was chaired by Dr Euan Graham (Executive Director – La Trobe Asia)



Uyghur Panel – December 2018

(L-R: James Leibold, Nury Turkel, Euan Graham, Louisa Greve)

- La Trobe Asia worked with the Japan Foundation Sydney, the La Trobe Art Institute and La Trobe Library to bring the Tokyo FRUiTS! exhibition to Melbourne. The exhibition was located in Writer's Block Café in the Library at Bundoora and was very well received by students and staff of La Trobe as well as members of the public/visitors to the campus:
 - *Beautiful and inspiring. I already had a great interest in Japan and would love to go!*
 - *It's a fabulous, striking exhibition! Also the associated event is a great tie-in.*

- *This exhibition was an amazing way to see Japanese culture! I loved it!*
- *Great exhibition – opened my eyes to a side of Japan I was unaware of.*
- *This exhibition is just incredible! It is so interesting to see the different styles of fashion experimented with over 20 years. Oh and did I see Kyary Pamyu Pamyu???*
- *It was lovely to see the photos - I remember going to specific stores when I was a teenager to look at copies of Fruits magazine... and ended up living in Japan for a year in my 20s! I still go back now to exhibit my own artwork and designs when I have the chance.*
- *Very colourful, vibrant and interesting to see fashion over the decades in Japan.*

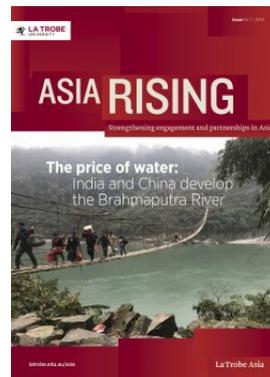


- La Trobe Asia has continued to develop existing University partnerships including: the Australia India Institute (AII), Kyushu University, Beijing Foreign Studies University and China Matters as well as providing support to academics developing new partnerships in India, Indonesia and Vietnam.
- La Trobe Asia launched four books in 2018.
 - *Waste of a Nation: Garbage and Growth in India*, Assa Doron and Robin Jeffrey, Harvard University Press
 - *When Proliferation causes Peace: The Psychology of Nuclear Crises*, Michael Cohen, Georgetown University Press
 - *The Four Flashpoints: How Asia Goes to War*, Brendan Taylor, La Trobe University Press
 - *Figuring Victims in International Criminal Justice: The case of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal'*, Maria Elander, Routledge

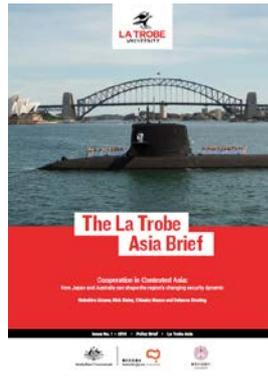


Book Launch – August 2018
 Professor Gerry Simpson
 with Maria Elander

- La Trobe Asia published its sixth and seventh issues of the print publication *Asia Rising*, a 16-page print publication focussing on Asia related research. The publication is intended to showcase the work of La Trobe academics to improve knowledge of this work both internally and externally.



- In 2018, La Trobe Asia published its first issue of the print publication *The La Trobe Asia Brief*. The series provides a platform for commentary, research and analysis of policy issues that are of key importance in the Asian region. Each La Trobe Asia Brief will be written for an informed audience and will ordinarily be 3000-4000 words in length and authors will be invited by La Trobe Asia to contribute to this new series.



The inaugural brief *Cooperation in Contested Asia: How Japan and Australia can shape the region's changing security dynamic* was authored by Professor Nick Bisley (Head of School of Humanities and Social Sciences, La Trobe University), Dr Rebecca Strating (Lecturer in Politics, La Trobe University), Associate Professor Nobuhiro Aizawa (Kyushu University) and Associate Professor Chisako Masuo (Kyushu University).

It was launched on 7 September 2018 at La Trobe's City Collins Campus with a discussion hosted by Daniel Flitton (Managing Editor, The Interpreter - Lowy Institute).

Making La Trobe a genuinely Asia-focused institution

La Trobe Asia Research Grant Program

The Research Grant Program was established in 2014 to provide funding to researchers working on topics relevant to Asia or in collaboration with Asian institutions.

- **2014** – Around \$60,000 was disbursed to 13 researchers in July and August. To date, ten articles have been published and three others have been submitted to journals.
- **2015** – Over \$60,000 was disbursed to a further 14 researchers in May. Eleven publications have resulted from these grants with a further four submitted and another six research projects reporting as work in progress.
- **2016** – Around \$30,000 was disbursed to a further six researchers in April. Three publications have resulted from these grants with a further one submitted and another three research projects reporting as work in progress.
- **2017** – Around \$20,000 was disbursed to four researchers. One publication has already resulted with another submitted for publication. Three of these researchers are continuing to finalise their projects.

- **2018** – Over \$33,000 was disbursed to eleven researchers. All have reported that their work is still in progress and on target for publication in 2019.

La Trobe Asia Visiting Fellows Grant Program

The LaTrobe Asia Visiting Fellows Grant Program was established in 2016 to provide funding to bring Asia-based academics to La Trobe University to collaborate on research.

- **2016** – Four Fellows who visited La Trobe University to undertake new research collaborations and which have resulted in seven publications with another one submitted.
- **2017** – Four new Fellows visited La Trobe University. Their collaborations with La Trobe researchers are progressing and it is expected that publications from their work will start to appear in 2019-2020.
- **2018** – Three Fellows visited La Trobe University. One additional Fellow postponed his visit, arriving in early 2019. It is expected that publications from their work will start to appear in 2019-2020.

Lead and inform public debate about Asia, in Australia and in the region

La Trobe Asia and La Trobe's Asia-focused experts has had **152 interactions** with the media, including the following highlights:

- There have been 38 Asia focused Op-Eds from La Trobe academics published in 2018.
- Twelve journal publications, one external policy brief and two books were published in 2018 and highlighted on the La Trobe Asia website (under [Resources/Publications](#)).

Podcasts

Asia Rising is a podcast series launched by La Trobe Asia in March 2014. The podcast is interview format, with news views and general happenings on Asian states and societies presented with La Trobe University academics or guests.

In 2018, **27 episodes** of *Asia Rising* were released. Additionally there were **11 recordings of public events**.

The *Asia Rising* podcast is published via RSS feed in the Apple podcast store (where most other podcast applications draw their catalogue from) and SoundCloud (used for social media distribution and website embedding).

Downloads: 239,944

Average audience: 5,700+ per episode

Downloads cumulative: 800,823

Top 10 downloads of 2018

1. North Korea's Vulnerable Ecology (Ben Habib, Robert Winstanley-Chesters) – 16,034
2. Protest and Dissent in Hong Kong (Antony Daparin) – 11,243
3. China Ascendant (Kevin Rudd) – 10,527
4. Pollution and Priorities in India (Amita Baviskar) – 9,607
5. Cooperation in Contested Asia (Nick Bisley, Rebecca Strating) – 6,903
6. China Under Surveillance (Bill Birtles) – 6,067
7. Ageing Asia (Thomas Klassen) – 6,054
8. Chinese Philosophy (John Makeham) – 5,876
9. Will China Have an Economic Slowdown? (Michael Pettis) – 5,769
10. Jakarta is Sinking (Dirk Tomsa) – 5,398

- Download number includes *Asia Rising* interviews and lecture recordings, but **in 2018 lecture recordings were split into their own dedicated RSS feed**. This reduced the overall number of downloads across the calendar year, despite there being **a greater average audience per episode (by approximately 1,700)**.
- Largest audiences were in Australia, United States, Canada and China.
- Episode downloads varied widely, showing selective listenership based on topic interest.
- Top 10 downloads are heavily weighted towards those podcasts published at the beginning of the year.
- Two podcasts in the top 10 were recorded on a trip to China in late 2017.
- Three podcasts in the top 10 were part of a miniseries on Asia and the Environment.

Feedback:



★★★★★ **Keep up the good work!**

by twolf20c from United States on 11 Jan 2018

A very informative podcast....Well worth your time!



★★★★★ **The world through their eyes**

by ClarkDN from United States on 13 Sep 2018

Asia can be enigmatic for those in the west like myself. This podcasts brings in experts on various topics and really makes the complicated understandable. Very nice production! La Trobe is an Australian university, which gives them a unique perspective and voice.



ASIA RISING



Appendix 1

Name of event	Date of Event	Type of Event	Partner	Country	Number attended
Networking Morning Tea	22-Feb-18	Morning Tea/Networking	La Trobe Asia	Asia	36
Japan's Approach to a Changing World	28-Mar-18	Public Forum	Consulate General of Japan in Melbourne	Japan	104
Recalibrating Japan-Southeast Asian Relationship	1-Mar-18	Seminar	La Trobe Asia	Japan	19
Ageing Asia: Trends, Implications and Policy Directions	21-Mar-17	Seminar	John Richards Centre	Asia	40
Australian Foreign Policy in a contested Indo-Pacific Region	11-Apr-18	Public Forum	Ideas and Society	Asia	~400
Is Australia's China narrative sensationalist and short-sighted? China Matters Young Professionals Debate	11-Apr-18	Public Forum	China Matters	China	51
Networking Morning Tea	16-Apr-18	Morning Tea/Networking	La Trobe Asia	Asia	22
Australian Journalists' experience working in or on Myanmar	30-Apr-18	Seminar	Australia Myanmar Institute	Myanmar	63
Superbugs and slow violence in India	31-May-18	Seminar	La Trobe Asia	India	17

Waste of a Nation: Garbage and Growth in India Book Launch	31-May-18	Launch	Australia India Institute	India	132
Networking Morning Tea	5-Jun-18	Morning Tea/Networking	La Trobe Asia	Asia	25
Fallout: North Korea, nuclear weapons and Indo-Pacific Security Book Launch	20-Jun-18	Launch	La Trobe Asia	North Korea	45
Roundtable with Australia's Ambassador to ASEAN	22-Jun-18	Roundtable	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	ASEAN	8
Himalaya Research Day – Research Symposium	20-Jul-18	Symposium	La Trobe Asia	Asia	33
Constrained Connectivity: Geopolitics, culture and Migration in Xinjiang and beyond under the Belt and Road Initiative Research Symposium	3-Aug-18	Symposium	La Trobe Asia	China	17
Networking Morning Tea	6-Aug-18	Morning Tea/Networking	La Trobe Asia	Asia	35
Refugee Crisis: Human rights and North Korea	8-Aug-18	Public Forum	Bendigo Writer's Festival	North Korea	92
The Four Flashpoints: How Asia Goes to War Book Launch	22-Aug-18	Launch	La Trobe Asia	Asia	84
Roundtable with Michael Sainsbury	28-Aug-18	Roundtable	La Trobe Asia	Asia	7

Figuring Victims in International Criminal Justice: The case of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal Book Launch	29-Aug-18	Launch	La Trobe Asia	Cambodia	48
Roundtable with the NZ Asia Foundation	4-Sep-18	Roundtable	NZ Asia Foundation	Asia	7
Cooperation in Contested Asia Policy Brief Launch	7-Sep-18	Launch	La Trobe Asia	Japan	53
Australia and China in the Pacific Research Colloquium	20-Sep-18	Symposium	Pacific Research Community	Asia	13
Australia and China in the Pacific	20-Sep-18	Public Forum	Pacific Research Community	Asia	65
Networking Morning Tea	25-Sep-18	Morning Tea/Networking	La Trobe Asia	Asia	17
World Social Sciences Forum 2018	25-28-Sep-18	Conference	International Social Science Council Kyushu University	World	-
Australia-Indonesia Disability Research and Advocacy Network (AIDRAN) – Australian Launch	11-Oct-18	Launch	La Trobe Law School	Indonesia	61
Tokyo FRUiTS! Exhibition Opening	16-Oct-18	Launch	Japan Foundation Sydney La Trobe Art Institute	Japan	45
Next Generation Network Retreat	31-Oct-18	Research Symposium	Australia India Institute	India	15
Travelling Chai	31-Oct-18	Afternoon Tea/Networking	Australia India Institute	India	~100
How Kawaii invaded downtown Tokyo	1-Nov-18	Public Forum	La Trobe Asia	Japan	73

Networking Morning Tea	21-Nov-18	Morning Tea/Networking	La Trobe Asia	Asia	21
What's Happening to the Uyghurs in China?	7-Dec-18	Public Forum	Australian Institute of International Affairs Victoria	China	99
Total number of events	33		Total number of partners 16	Total attendees	1847