



1st INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

On

Re-Positioning India and Australia in the Emergent Geo-Politics: Identities, Entanglements, Cultural Diplomacy

03 & 04 March 2023

Organised by:

**CENTRE FOR AUSTRALIAN STUDIES,
BANKURA UNIVERSITY, WB, INDIA**

in collaboration with



**Indian Association for the Study of Australia
(Eastern Region)**

Important Dates:

Submission of Abstracts: 10/02/2023

Intimation of acceptance of Abstracts: 14/02/2023

Submission of Papers: 01/03/2023

For queries, drop a mail: centre_austrianstudies@bankurauniv.ac.in

CALL for PAPERS

Re-positioning India and Australia in the Emergent Geo-Politics: Identities, Entanglements, Cultural Diplomacy

Concept Note:

A hum persists around the potential of Indo-Australian partnerships today, given the escalating tensions between China and the US with Australia wedged in-between and the regained strategic and economic currency of the “Indo-Pacific” horizon for Australia. In an emergent geo-politics shaped by the global climate of emergency and multi-lateral formations, the Quad has had a Renaissance since 2017, with formal summits of Quad leaders from partnering countries India, Australia, Japan and the USA having been held in successive years 2021 and 2022 during the pandemic tense. The hyphen between India and Australia no longer lives the margins. But the formulae for engaging with Indo-Australian connections still tend to focus on deepening economic, diplomatic and military ties. This conference aims to amplify that ambit into the historical, socio-cultural, literary and climatic, among other dimensions. Partnerships between the two countries need not be limited to trade and strategy. Re-mapping the future involves looking back at pre-maps. And a susurrus of narratives from past and present gathers to form the rainbow palette of possibilities for Indo-Australian entanglements across disciplinary boundaries – of area studies, history, socio-cultural studies, diaspora studies, law and international law, national security and strategy, international studies, comparative studies, and the influence India and Australia have had on each other in nationing and essencing, also the re-framing, of national identities since the late nineteenth century.

The conference aims to look at formulae and the non-formulaic of Indo-Australian exchanges in terms of intertwined narratives, histories and policies within and beyond the British empire, and the post-amnesiac perch of retrieving some of the forgotten connections. How did India lurk and surge in Australian narratives since the late nineteenth century? How does it speak to contemporary Antipodean projections of the subcontinent? Has that future arrived where a deeper connect and mutual knowledge is possible for India and Australia? If so, what can we learn from the lacunae and promises of models of entanglement envisioned by former diplomats and policy-makers, from the blueprint of the Indo-Australian relationship provided for instance by Alfred Deakin, thrice premier of Australia in the first decade of federal formation? How do the two nation-spaces currently connect, and had connected, in terms of climate concerns, and environmental visions and failures? How to map the entanglements between India and Australia since the tense when they constituted extra-metropolitan parts of the British empire till date, how to read the continuum in policies and the disjunctions? How would the emergent transnational and interdisciplinary approaches inform research on Australia’s India and India’s Australia in post-amnesiac pasts as palimpsest, and in the emergent times? What could be the role of the Indian

diaspora in that context? Could the less-chartered Indian Ocean connect of Australia be finally highlighted in departure from the normative slant on the Asia Pacific? The first international conference on Australian Studies to be hosted by the Centre for Australian Studies, Bankura University, seeks to address these and proximate research queries from our varied locations.

While the strategic, economic and military shall dye the prism of diplomacy between India and Australia, elusive connections between the past and the post in excess of the imperial rote of tea, cricket or the pioneer-humped, else wilded camels, as curated, interpreted in the literary-cultural-historical could be highlighted as well through the conference. This will contribute to trans-habituating the domain of Indo-Australian connections and seed beginnings unleashed from the disciplinary singulars of political science, strategic studies, policy research embedded in global studies as rendered in Gary Smith's "Indo-Australian Relations Beyond Indifference" (2018), or memoired travel-literature and literary studies, as in *Of Sadhus and Spinners: Australian Encounters with India* (2009) and *Wanderings in India: Australian Perceptions* (2012). It would restore some of the depth and complexity and a much-needed transdisciplinarity to designing the discourse on Indo-Australian connections.

The other contribution of the conference could be in tracing the trans-factors pivotal to the nationing project in an Indo-Australian canvas. Transnational, international entanglements print the nationing project, as traced in the Antipodean context by historian David Walker in the seminal *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia 1850-1939* (1999) and *Stranded Nation: White Australia in an Asian Region* (2019). In his limn of Australia's Asia, Walker had foregrounded China and Japan. Questions around exploring the Indo-Australian entanglements across tenses could morph into debates on national identities and the nationing project as a churn of competing imaginaries, the play of -ness and trans-factors for both territories. Could India be termed a formative influence in the make of Australianness and its translational context? Caught between history and geography, the battle of the races, colonised and the coloniser, empire and the post-imperial, Asia and Europe, belonging and exile, Australia as a settler nation has had liminal locations. Does Australia's India begin to loom as an ideological hazard, or the en/gaging neighbour which could unsettle, engage and provoke possibilities of re-imagining the Australian nation as a space unfinished and always in the making, moistened in labour of engagement with diverse others? Diplomacy gains a cultural, nay transdisciplinary multiverse in such a matrix. And Australian Studies prised through the India connect and context opens doors to the fumble of possibilities in India Studies, highlighted and hidden.

We at the Centre for Australian Studies, Bankura University invite papers of around 2500-3000 words focussing on any of the various possibilities of Indo-Australian conversations and interconnections, national identities, translations and the role of cultural diplomacy through cultivating Australian Studies in India and India in Australia, from a comparative, interdisciplinary or translational perspective.

This conference will address, though not strictly limited to, the following theme(s):

- Histories and literary histories of Indo-Australian connections
- Re-positioning India and Australia: the cultural studies angle
- Cross-cultural encounters and cultural diplomacy
- Transcultural Exchange and the Role of justice
- Australian and Indian Poetry and Fiction: the Interdisciplinary Dynamics
- Diaspora Studies and the Australian Indian Diaspora
- Eco-literatures, environmental visions and the Indo-Pacific
- Environment and Ethics
- Environment and Security
- Trans-nation and the nationing project in Australia and/or India
- Australia's India, India's Australia: narratives/readings dominant and elusive
- The empire and beyond in Indo-Australian entanglements
- Mapping the Indo-Australian bilateral: through prisms of law, security, strategy, policy and the pandemic
- Economic Paradigms in Bilateral Relations
- Value, Ethics, Culture and Justice
- Law and Socio-cultural Dynamics
- Governance, Power and the Rule of Law
- Judicial Activism
- Re-positioning India and Australia: the comparative perch
- India and Australia in Translation
- Reading/Teaching Asia and/or India in Australia
- Reading/Teaching Australian Studies in India

Important Dates and Deadlines:

Abstracts of not more than 300-400 words with a short bio note of 70-100 words may be emailed to centre_australianstudies@bankurauniv.ac by **10th February 2023.**

Selected abstracts will be intimated by **14th February 2023,** and paper-presenters would be required to submit their papers to be read (2500-3000 words) by **1st March, 2023.**

Registration Fees: 1500 INR (Indian delegates)

750 INR (students)

50 USD (International delegates)

Publication: Selected papers will be published as Conference proceedings by a reputed publisher.

Please drop a mail at centre_australianstudies@bankurauniv.ac.in by **20th February 2023**, if you have any query regarding accommodation at Bankura during the conference.

Our Chief Adviser Professor Deb Narayan Bandyopadhyay, Vice Chancellor, *Bankura University* will kindly grace the conference with his presence.

Convenors:

Professor Sarbojit Biswas, Department of English, *Bankura University*

Dr Ipsita Sengupta, Department of English, *Bankura University*.

For queries, please write to us at centre_australianstudies@bankurauniv.ac.in

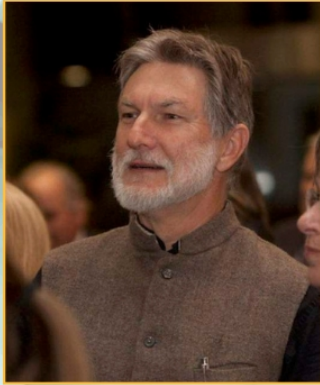
Organising committee:

Prof. Sarbojit Biswas, Joint Co-ordinator, Centre for Australian Studies and Professor, Department of English, *Bankura University*

Dr Ipsita Sengupta, Joint Co-ordinator, Centre for Australian Studies, and Associate Professor and Head, Department of English, *Bankura University*

See you at the conference!

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Key Note Address:

Dr Paul Sharrad
Fellow of the University of Wollongong, Australia



Plenary Speech I:

Dr Michael Griffiths
Senior Lecturer, Faculty of the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities,
School of the Arts, English and Media,
University of Wollongong, Australia



Plenary Speech II:

Dr Eileen Chanin
Australian Studies Institute,
Australian National University, Australia