



The European Association for Studies of Australia, founded in 1989, seeks to promote the teaching of and research in Australian Studies at European tertiary institutions, as well as to increase an awareness of Australian culture throughout Europe. EASA promotes the study and discussion of a wide variety of aspects of Australian culture: Aboriginality, literature, film, the media, popular culture, history, political discourses, the arts. EASA's area of interest also includes New Zealand Studies.

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR STUDIES OF AUSTRALIA, Ivana Lucica 3, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia.
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Thinking Against the Grain: Australian Studies in Times of Constraint

ONLINE SYMPOSIUM

European Association for Studies of Australia

27-28 November 2026

In May 2025, the late Graeme Turner posted a text titled “Why do they hate us? That’s the question academics in the humanities are asking”. As Turner admits, there is no simple answer to why the government, media and high-level university administrators often target humanities and liberal arts programmes for cuts. One visible tendency, however, is the belief that universities should be run like businesses. In Australia, humanities programmes are downsized through involuntary redundancies and the 2020 “job-ready graduate policy” introduced by then Prime Minister Scott Morrison. In Europe, there is a similar trend to prioritise STEM programmes under the rationale of economic efficiency. Consequently, the humanities, no matter where they are located, are frequently treated as the academy’s “strange bedfellows”.

How can humanists, philologists, historians and other Australian Studies scholars, make sense of their work in a world of profit-driven higher education? If the purpose of our work is to cultivate intellectual growth and critical thinking by engaging with culture beyond mass consumption and social media feeds, how are we to continue to contribute to slow reading, critical thinking, and social changes both inside and beyond our classrooms?

This two-day online symposium is designed to foster cooperative discussions among Australian Studies scholars in Europe, Australia, North America and the Global South. We invite:

1. PAPER PROPOSALS that engage with current Australian stories:

- climate change and environmental justice;
- settler colonialism and multiculturalism;
- geopolitics and transnational relations;
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing.

Speakers are invited to think against the grain in times of economic and critical constraint, reflecting creativity and the enduring relevance of humanities scholarship. We invite proposals for **15-minute papers**. Please send your ca. 300-word abstracts and bio notes (ca. 100 words) to ipolak@m.ffzg.hr by **1 October 2026**.



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2. PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

We also warmly invite scholars who are leading or participating in projects connected directly or indirectly to Australian Studies, including research, archival, creative, or digital projects, whether focused entirely on Australia or including an Australian focus within a broader project, to present their work. Such presentations will also be limited to **15 minutes**. Please send a 300-word proposal containing the project title and a brief description of the project's background and objectives to ipolak@m.ffzg.hr by **1 September 2026**.

3. BOOK PRESENTATIONS

We also welcome proposals for presentation of Australian Studies books published in the second half of 2025 or in 2026. Individual book presentations will also last **15 minutes**. Please send your proposals containing book titles and a short book blurb to ipolak@m.ffzg.hr by **1 September 2026**.

As proposals may come from scholars located in different time zones, our online timetable will be based on Central European Time (CET) but adjusted to accommodate scholars outside of Europe, ensuring that everyone can participate, at least for part of the symposium, in the shared digital space. The conference will be held via the Zoom platform.

We look forward to bringing together scholars working in Australian Studies across different regions and exploring ways to connect Australian scholarship across the globe!

ORGANISERS
EASA Executive Board