

# 10<sup>th</sup> Biennial EASA Conference

## Dis/solutions: the future of the past in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific

22-25 September 2009

University of the Balearic Islands, Spain

### FIRST CIRCULAR

In his momentous Sorry speech of February 13, 2008, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd confidently announced Australia's firm resolution to *turn a new page in history by writing the wrongs of the past* and find solutions for the future. The overwhelming task at hand for Australians in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is none but to *close the gap that lies between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples and shape the next chapter* of their history by redefining the terms of the country's foundational myths and (his)stories. Certainly, to quote from Henry Lawson, the country has come a long way since "it began to boomerang". But in order *to take heart for the future* and for its peoples *to become fully reconciled to their past* they need to revisit and reassess whole chapters of their history until old lies, myths and stereotypes dissolve and clear the ground for new solutions, aimed at reconciliation but addressing also possible ways of articulating a multicultural Australia.

Across the Tasman they have been clearing the ground for a considerably longer while; nonetheless there are still pending gaps to be bridged, not only between Maori and Pakeha, but with other ethnic and social minorities, in relation to their position and partaking in the diverse national debates in which New Zealand is currently engaged. As the general election approaches in late 2008, this might be a good moment both to discuss possible solutions for old and new problems and to consider the revision, if not the dissolution, of some of the country's narratives and myths.

As for the wider Pacific region, the challenges faced by its peoples in the 21<sup>st</sup> century continue to be determined by uninterrupted currents of change. Migration movements, political and economic instabilities and global flows of transcultural exchange have altered the profile of the region, resulting both in the dissolution of local allegiances and traditional values and in the creation of new transnational bonds and interinsular networks, which will inevitably determine the future of the region and the ways in which we choose to undertake any discussion of its past.

Under the same sun, but from the opposite hemisphere, with this conference we propose to light a homely fire, put another billy on and invite boiling academic discussion over the issue of national and cultural (dis)solutions in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. Our aim will be to explore to what extent the future of these nations and the region at large will depend on the disintegration of the allegiances and narratives of the past, whether those *old approaches* that have failed so far can really be superseded by new political solutions, new cultural (re)constructions and narrative formulas, and which aspects are involved in the process of (dis)solving the past and the present *to go forward with confidence*.

We particularly welcome submissions that are concerned with (but not limited to):

- The dissolution, reconstruction, faking and performance of cultural, national and ethnic identities.
- The dissolution of History in favour of histories, herstories, stories.
- Dissolutions and new configurations of landscapes, seascapes and cityscapes.
- Dissolutions of gender, racial, social, ethnic and indigenous conflicts.
- Dis/solving multicultural, migration, refugee issues.
- Dis/solving historical mysteries, silences, traumas.
- Dissolving and resolving political and cultural dilemmas of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Dis/solving memories. Re/membering stories.
- Dis/solutions and dis/illusions.
- Diasporic, global and local dis/solutions.

Our Association's inter- and multidisciplinary approach to studies on Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific can host presentations from a wide range of disciplines and subject areas such as

Anthropology  
Cultural Studies  
Ethnic Studies  
Gender Studies

History  
Linguistics  
Literature  
Media and Film Studies

Political Science  
Sociology  
Visual and performing arts  
etc.

We encourage a liberal and creative approach to the topic.

#### **Accompanying event:**

One day preceding the conference will be devoted to a **Postgraduate Seminar**, where postgraduate/advanced students will be able to discuss their work with experts in their field in a lecture + workshop format.

#### **Timetable:**

**1 April, 2009.** Please e-mail your 250-word abstracts, marking its subject "10<sup>th</sup> EASA Conference", to: [paloma.fresno@uib.es](mailto:paloma.fresno@uib.es)

Acceptance of papers will be communicated by **1<sup>st</sup> May 2009**

**1 June, 2009** Registrations (at early bird fee)

**15 July, 2009** Deadline for full registration

#### **Organising Committee:**

Paloma Fresno, Aurora García, Alejandra Moreno, Eva Pérez, Cristina Suárez, Lucía Loureiro, Marta Fernández, J. Igor Prieto, Marian Amengual, Juana M<sup>a</sup> Seguí and Caty Ribas.

Members of the research group "Cultural Diversity in English-Speaking Countries" (University of the Balearic Islands)