

Chapter 1

Introduction

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Fifty-years ago in 1974, prehistory and anthropology was officially formed as a separate Department and moved into the newly built A. D. Hope Building with its laboratories custom designed by John Mulvaney (1925 – 2016). John Mulvaney had been appointed foundation Professor of Prehistory in the then School of General Studies in 1971 but at that time was located within the Department of History. In 1974 Anthony Forge (1929 – 1991) was appointed foundation Professor of Anthropology, and the Department of Prehistory and Anthropology came into being.

The ANU is complex organisationally, both because of its history and because it never seems to completely abolish previous arrangements when new ones are adopted. The ANU, when established in 1946, was a purely research institution with the only teaching involving graduate students. In October 1960 it was amalgamated with the Canberra University College which brought undergraduate teaching to the University. The original part of the University was called the 'Institute of Advanced Studies', and the new undergraduate teaching portion of the University was called the 'School of General Studies' (SGS). It later became The Faculties and eventually disappeared into the College system. The original structure brought with it a duplication of most departments with one in the 'Institute' and the other in SGS, which remained the situation until 2006. From 1974 this dual structure included archaeology, and anthropology.

The ANU was formally established on 1st August 1946, but research staff only started being appointed from 1950. Anthropology was one of the foundation disciplines in the Research School of Pacific Studies (RSPacS). From 1962 it encompassed archaeology, linguistics and briefly sociology as well, until they became separate departments within RSPacS in the late 1960s. Anthropology in RSPacS quite quickly gained a high international profile because of the intensity of its research work in the newly discovered societies and cultures of the New Guinea highlands. This focus attracted a cohort of graduate students, both from within Australia and abroad, a number of whom went on to hold chairs in the United States raising the international profile of anthropology at ANU.

With the realisation that there was a wide public interest in archaeology it was decided to establish the discipline in the SGS in 1971 so it could be taught at undergraduate level. Under the influence of the Vice Chancellor, Sir John Crawford, John Mulvaney had agreed to be a joint department with anthropology, because the Australian University Commission was opposed to a proliferation of separate departments. In 2006 under the Vice Chancellorship of Ian Chubb, the University finally decided to address the structural problems of the dual organisation of disciplines which had been sustained for so long because of the way the ANU was funded for research. Disciplines in the two halves of the University were amalgamated, into colleges which were internally divided into schools, with the exception of those in the RSPacS and Faculty of Arts, meaning that down to the present, anthropology, archaeology, linguistic and

history are represented in two colleges of the University, the College of Asia and the Pacific, which encompassed the former Institute departments, and the College of Arts and Social Sciences encompassing the former SGS (subsequently Faculties until the establishment of the colleges).

The reason for the failure to amalgamate these disciplines was because the University did not want to obscure the commitment to the Asia-Pacific region by incorporating RSPacS into a 'College of Social Sciences and Humanities'. It was believed that this would be seen by government, in particular, as a weakening of its commitment to research in the region for which ANU is so well known internationally, and also because it was argued that it might be a breach of the University's foundational charter which specifically mentioned RSPacS as one of the four pillars of the University. Relations between the two separate locations in both archaeology and anthropology are collegial and collaborative, both disciplines holding joint seminars and collaborating in other activities, although inevitably, formal organisation problems emerge from time to time.

In July 1992 the University Council approved a name change from Department of Prehistory and Anthropology to the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, later becoming a School in line with the nomenclature change with the establishment of colleges. From the beginnings of the Department there has always been a stream of biological anthropology. Later a stream of cultural heritage and museum studies was added for a period from 2010 - 2019. The anthropology of development was never formally established as a separate stream except at the postgraduate level when the Master in Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development was established in 2007, although teaching in development has long been important to the School's enrolments.

From the establishment of the School it provided a home to several academic units. Initially this was to the Human Sciences Program focused on environment and sustainability issues that remained an independently run unit within the School until 1989 when it transferred to the Faculty of Science, along with the Department of Geography, in part because of the higher weighting and funding formula for sciences subjects. The School also provided a home for the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research and its six staff, established in 1991 by Jon Altman and funded by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission until in 1995 it moved out of the School into the Beryl Rawson building.

From 1996-1999 the School was home to the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research (CCR) established by Nicholas Thomas an ARC QE 2 fellow on the basis of a major ARC grant. Later the CCR joined with the Humanities Research Centre in the Research School of Social Sciences before becoming part of the core of the new Research School of Humanities and the Arts in 2007. Finally in 2010- 2025, the School hosted the Centre for Native Title Anthropology, funded by the Attorney-General's Department to provide professional development for anthropologists working in the area of native title (see Chapter 4).

A big change happened early in 2018. On the 25th February the union court yard, and the Chifley library and A D Hope basements were flooded to a depth of a metre, as Sullivan's creek overflowed following a major storm. This resulted in the School moving from its home in the A D Hope building to the Banks building on the western edge of the campus close to the

residential colleges. This move was much appreciated by the archaeologists as it provided excellent laboratory space but it did move the School away from co-location with the other humanities disciplines in CASS. Originally this was expected to be temporary as there were advanced plans for a new building for the humanities on the grassy area between the A D Hope and the Haydon-Allen building, but then came Covid, and talk of the new building being built any time soon evaporated.

Unsurprisingly, by the time of these fifty-year celebrations no members of the original staff remain on the staff of the School, although several remain attached as emeritus, curiously known as 'persons of interest' in the electronic forms. Not only has the staff changed completely, but it is now a completely different University and broader national environment within which the School works, influencing what is taught, how it is taught and the research agendas.

This document is not a comprehensive account of all the activities and achievements of the School over the first fifty years. Preparing it has revealed the almost complete absence of any systematic record keeping by the School about itself beyond what has been required by the Faculty and University administration. Nowhere is there even a list of all the staff, academic or professional, who have been employed in the School with their dates nor even a listing of all the Litt B., MA, or PhD students who have graduated from the School.

This account provides no detailed account of the enormous range and influence of the research work that has been carried out in the School by individual staff and students, partly because of this lack of documentation but much more importantly because to do that justice would require a major research project. Such has been the research output that even listing all the book publications, in the absence of any institutional documentation of them, was too big a task to accomplish accurately in the time available. It has however, been possible to list all of the PhD theses that have been completed in the School over the 50 years as both a tribute to and an index of the absolutely central part graduate students have played in the intellectual life and reputation of the School, something that is only lightly touched on in this summary history.

No full account is included of the central role played by the wide range of professional staff who have done so much to facilitate the life of staff and students at all levels in the School. Unfortunately, once again there is no record within the School of who all these people were, a number of whom were relatively short term, but I hope that at least the longer term people who have worked in the School are all listed here in approximate chronological order: Doreen Bowdery, Helen Nichols, Debbie McGrath, Graziella Wurmli, Bridget Richards, Alex Hill, Sue Frazer, Anthea Bundock, Halim Gadjim, Christine Huber, Liz Walters, Joyce Noronah-Barrett, Julia Dunn, and Jane Coultas. Initially archaeology and anthropology each had their own administrator who took turns as the senior administrator, as the Headship of the School alternated every two years between John and Anthony, but financial restraints meant that this arrangement changed quite quickly with Alex Hill becoming the first senior administrator for the whole school.

Quite early on the School was privileged to have its own illustrator, Joan Goodrum, who for many years produced wonderful maps and diagrams for many papers, books and lectures for staff and graduate students, across the School. For a while too, the School had its own

photographic laboratory and photographers, first Doug Jervis and then Bob Dowhy who printed up fieldwork photographs, illustrations for publications and made slides for lectures. That was a luxury that the austerity of the 1980s ended. But it did not bring to an end the position officially described as 'laboratory technician' held by Dave McGregor who became absolutely integral to the workings of the School, from the equipping and helping with the organising of field schools, looking after the School vehicles, and organising the projection of films for first year anthropology, to catering to graduate student's needs in the field, and everybody's practical needs around the building. In addition, he was in de facto charge of the School's growing material culture collection. If anybody was stuck for anything, Dave was the first person they turned to for unfailing, unflappable, can-do help. David McGregor was replaced by Franz Schroedl. Most recently the School has had a Collection Manager appointed to curate the Tikopian Collection, Maggie Otto, who has now become the Collections Officer for the whole of the Research School of Humanities and the Arts, but housed in our School. She is bringing the management of all the collections up to professional standards.

Although both John Mulvaney and Anthony Forge are no longer with us there is every reason to suppose that they would be happy and proud of the achievements of the School they founded.