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# Global Humanities Institute on Inclusive Collaboration comes to ANU



Left to right: Manuel Xool Koh, Samuel Joualt, Bianet Castellanos, Susannah Smith, Carolina Maranon-Cobos, Kylie Message-Jones, Juliet Burba, and Alejandro Montañez Giustinianovic. Photograph by Maggie Otto.

18 February, 2025

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San Diego, the University of Arizona, and Co'ab Mayab were last year awarded funding from the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes with support from the Mellon Foundation to run a "Global Humanities Institute".

The grant was awarded for our group's ability to model inclusive collaboration and its capacity to deliver a two-stage co-created process that would (in this case) include a development event in Canberra in 2025 and a full Institute to be held in the Yucatán Peninsula in 2026.

The group's intention was to explore how Indigenous communities participate in tourism economies as well as how they respond to the impacts of mega-development projects that often create a neglect of local needs, dispossession and displacement, destruction of local ecosystems, and other consequences. The full title of the project is "Indigenous Mobilities, Tourism, and Racial Capitalism".

The first stage of the process was proudly coordinated last week by the Humanities Research Centre. We hosted participants from Mexico and the United States to work with local collaborators including Paul Girrawah House, Professor Valerie Cooms and Dr Yujie Zhu from the ANU as well as experts from the National Museum of Australia, the Australian War Memorial, Regional Arts Australia, and Canberra Ornithologists Group. We also enjoyed tours of exhibitions at the ANU Classics Museum and School of Art and Design Gallery.

The Canberra event introduced participants to each other with the aim of building long term relationships. We worked with continuous trilingual translation (English, Spanish, Mayan) as well as with Ngunnawal language for specific sessions. Looking back at the documentary record of photographs and videos taken throughout the event you can see how we worked to overcome gaps in knowledge and language by communicating through maps

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hosts the nation's political heart as well as some of its prime tourist experiences.

The group considered how this city has sought to achieve a balance between its national political remits, its local political and cultural obligations, Australia's extremely diverse and continually changing first nations and multicultural communities, histories and futures – as well a tourism industry that draws international and interstate visitors to the national capital.

In one especially powerful field trip to the Australian War Memorial, Ngunnawal man Michael Bell revealed all the ways that First Nations history and culture is included throughout the site. One of his sayings about the memorial reverberated with our group: "Everything included here is intentional".

The Canberra event successfully delivered the difficult mix of being a "tourist" experience, providing pathways to build firsthand experiences with transcontinental Indigenous peoples, and an intellectual engagement with the politics of tourism in the ACT.

A key take-away was the difference between what cultural institutions in Canberra do from what is occurring in relation to tourist development in the Yucatan. This will be the focus of next year's event as the [Maya Train](#) development project gains steam. Our shared experience of reflecting on tourism in Australia's national capital will be a key point of reference.

For more information contact [Kylie.Message-Jones@anu.edu.au](mailto:Kylie.Message-Jones@anu.edu.au)

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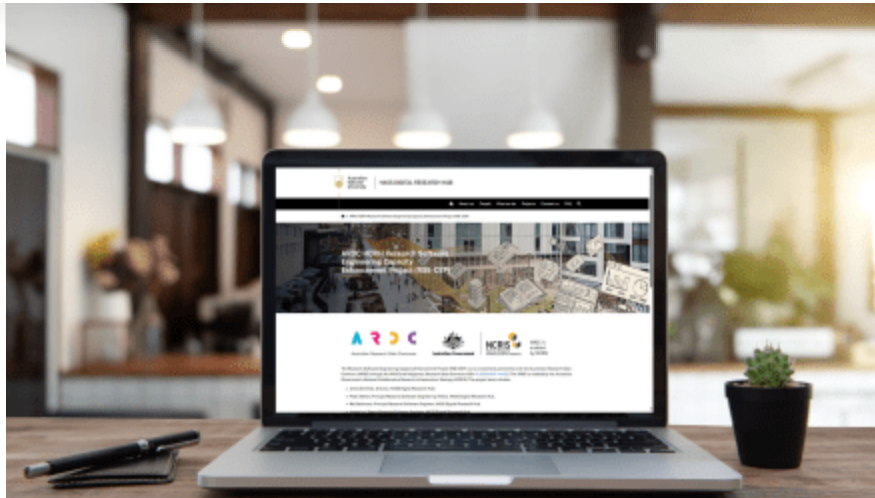
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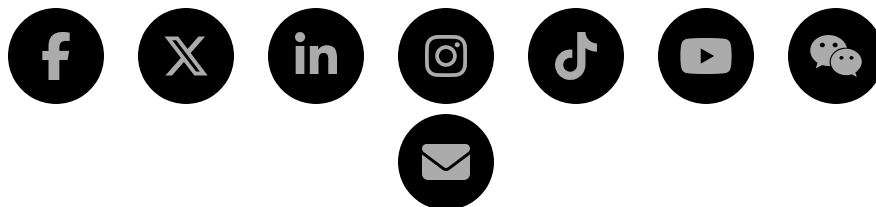
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## Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian National University acknowledges, celebrates and pays our respects to the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people of the Canberra region and to all First Nations Australians on whose traditional lands we meet and work, and whose cultures are among the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

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