

## **2006 Annual Report South Asia Node of APFRN**

The South Asia node of the APFRN has two principal responsibilities,

1. Disbursing the \$10,000 annual nodal money such that it promotes the study of India and brings Indian and Australian academics and practitioners into contact with each other.
2. Administering the AusAID-funded South Asia Research Facility.

### **1. South Asia Node**

The \$10,000 (plus some money carried over from 2005) allocated to the node to promote activities on issues of importance and to facilitate contact between Indian and Australian academics and others were allocated as follows:

\$2,500 to Landscapes of Meaning conference, Oct 18-20, 2006, Transforming Cultures (convened by Dr Heather Goodall, UTS) – report received.

\$2,000 to the ASSA/UNESCO Australia Workshop on Migration Challenges in the Asia-Pacific in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, 28-29 Nov, 2006 (convened by Profs Amarjit Kaur, UNE; Tessa Morris-Suzuki, ANU; Ian Metcalfe, UNE – report received.

\$2,000 to the First Australian National Sanskrit conference, 9-11 June, 2007 (to be convened by Drs McComas Taylor, ANU; Anita Ray, LTU; Jennifer Cover, Sydney Uni.

\$8,750 to special nodal conference on Historiography and the Question of Non-Western Pasts, June 21-22, 2007 (to be convened by Dr Sanjay Seth).

\$1,500 to Democracy, Development and Civil Society in India Conference, Sept 20-21, 2007 (to be convened by Drs Pradeep Taneja and Salim Lakha, MU).

## **2. South Asia Node and the South Asia Research Facility**

In 2005, the ARC-APFRN signed a 5-year contract with AusAID to enhance the effectiveness of AusAID's programs in the South Asia region by enabling them to work on the skills and knowledge of researchers working on South Asia. This project is managed by the South Asia Research Facility (SARF) under the South Asia Node in association with LIISA. Total funding for the project is \$1.55 million.

There are three components to the SARF project:

a) Annual conference updating AusAID on key current issues and including specifically commissioned research on key topics of their nomination.

The first of the contracted annual conferences, entitled "South Asia: Integrating And Looking East?" was convened in Canberra in September 2006. Eighteen experts presented papers at the conference, seven from overseas and eleven drawn from within Australia. An estimated 100 participants from government agencies, universities, embassies, and the media, participated in the conference. At the time of the report, selected papers are being refereed and will be posted on the South Asia Research Facility website:

[http://www.sueztosuva.org.au/south\\_asia/sa\\_research\\_facility.php](http://www.sueztosuva.org.au/south_asia/sa_research_facility.php)

b) PhD scholarship program

In March 2006, an advertisement was placed in the Economic and Political Weekly for six PhD scholarships. In the same month email messages were circulated to Pro Vice-Chancellors/Deputy Vice Chancellors of Research at Australian universities, inviting expression of interest in participating in the scholarship program under which participating universities agreed to waive tuition fees. Ten universities responded.

In response to the advertisement, 290 applications were received, of which 29 were shortlisted and placed before the Steering Committee to choose the final six candidates. Due to the large number of high-calibered candidates, it was agreed that eight scholarships be offered instead of six. The final eight were placed with seven

participating universities, with La Trobe University hosting one of the candidates. Four of the candidates have arrived in Australia to take up their candidature with the remaining to arrive in 2007.

c) Targeted Supplementary Research

In 2006, the Monash Asia Institute was awarded \$20,000 for its research on the Madrasahs in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India.