



# Australian Cultural Fields: National and Transnational Dynamics

Australian Research Council  
Discovery Project (DP140101970) –  
2014-2016

**Australian Cultural Fields** examines the forces changing contemporary Australian culture. Focusing on **art, literature, media, sport, music and heritage**, it assesses the influence of transnationalism, digitalisation, migration and multiculturalism, and the distinctive presence of Indigenous culture, on the relations between culture, class, gender, ethnicity and nation.

The concept of 'cultural field' is taken from the work of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who applied it to investigate how the production and consumption of culture are affected by the relations between cultural institutions, policy agencies and cultural markets. Australian Cultural Fields develops this perspective in a number of ways. It is the first study to examine the relations between transnational forces, new information technologies, and migrant and Indigenous cultures in the contemporary Australian context. Internationally, it is the first large-scale study to interrogate the relations between the fields of cultural production and consumption.

## METHODOLOGY

The project uses a multi-method approach to collect and analyse archival, statistical, survey and interview data. It includes:

- **Archival research** within relevant government, industry, arts and cultural policy agencies.
- **Statistical analysis** drawing on government and industry resources relating to cultural production and distribution, and changing demographic patterns of cultural consumption.
- **A national survey** of cultural participation, taste and knowledge.
- **Interviews** with a selection of survey respondents and their partners, and with political and cultural elites.
- **Interviews** with key government, cultural industry and agency personnel.

This multi-method approach bridges humanities and social science research cultures, enhancing the relevance of the project's findings for the development of future research agendas in Australia and internationally.

## LINES OF INQUIRY

In engaging with the dynamics of the art, literary, media, sport, music and heritage fields, the project is guided by the following seven lines of inquiry:

- How has the development of transnational markets changed the patterns, forms and relations of cultural production and consumption in Australia?
- What has been the impact of digital technologies on the relations between national and transnational forms of cultural production and consumption?
- What role do State and local agencies play in relation to international and Federal agencies in shaping Australian cultural fields?
- How has the significance accorded Indigenous Australian culture as vital to the maintenance of Indigenous identities and to a wider Australian identity reshaped contemporary cultural practices?
- How have migration and the growth of diasporic communities shaped changing cultural practices?
- To what extent have these changing dynamics of Australian cultural fields broadened access to the arts and culture in Australia or entrenched cultural hierarchies and inequalities?
- How are the increasingly transnational characteristics of Australian cultural fields connected to relations of class, gender and ethnicity?

## RESEARCH TEAM

The research team, led by Professor Tony Bennett, consists of Distinguished Professor Ien Ang, Professors Greg Noble, David Rowe, Tim Rowe and Deborah Stevenson, Associate Professor Emma Waterton, and Drs Ben Dibley (Research Fellow) and Anna Pertierra from the **Institute for Culture and Society** at Western Sydney University; Emeritus Professor Graeme Turner from the **Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities** and Professor David Carter from the **School of Communication and Arts**, the University of Queensland; Professor Modesto Gayo from the **Escuela de Sociología** at Universidad Diego Portales; and Professor Fred Myers from the **Department of Anthropology**, New York University.

## PROJECT WEBSITE

[westernsydney.edu.au/ACF](http://westernsydney.edu.au/ACF)

## CONTACTS

**Dr Michelle Kelly**  
Project Manager and  
Senior Research Officer  
+61 2 9685 9493  
[mi.kelly@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:mi.kelly@westernsydney.edu.au)

**Professor Tony Bennett**  
Project Director  
+61 2 9685 9596  
[t.bennett@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:t.bennett@westernsydney.edu.au)

