



Social Justice in Pandemic Times

CONFERENCE
REVIEW

24th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia

Hosted by the Herb Feith Indonesian Engagement Centre

5-8 July 2022

Conference Convenor Message



Welcome to the Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA) conference review.

The Herb Feith Indonesian Engagement Centre, alongside the Faculty of Arts at Monash University, had the honour of hosting the first hybrid ASAA conference. With 636 people registering to attend from 22 countries, we brought together academics, activists, artists, students, practitioners and community members from across disciplines with a shared interest in Asia.

Over 4 days, delegates had a choice of 172 different sessions and could attend online and in-person. We were thrilled to welcome the diversity of inter-country and interdisciplinary research and create opportunities for sharing and creating new knowledge and deepening relationships.

This report captures the breadth and depth of engagement of those involved in the conference and shares key learnings for future conference hosts.

This conference was a success because of the contribution of many institutions and organisations including the University of Sydney, the University of Melbourne, the Australian National University, the Australia-Indonesia Centre, NUS Press, Routledge, Monash Publishing, ISEAS, and in particular ASAA. We are grateful to Catherine Toce, Adinus Kohnesheen, Irasha White, Lauren Trickey, Diarmuid Cooney-O'Donoghue and numerous other academic and student volunteers.

Thank you to everyone for their commitment, tenacity and drive.

Associate Professor Sharyn Graham Davies

Conference Convenor

Director, Herb Feith Indonesian Engagement Centre
School of Language, Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics

“ The Conference was very well organised, the hybrid format worked so well! And food was great too.”

The Program

172 / **4**
sessions / days

A total of **172 sessions** across **4 days**.

636 registrations, **398 participants** checked in **online and in-person** from around the world. Of the 398 participants, **206 attended in-person**, while **192 attended online**.

Up to **24 concurrent sessions**. **400 abstract submissions** across **25 topics**.

7 sessions with simultaneous interpretation from English into Mandarin

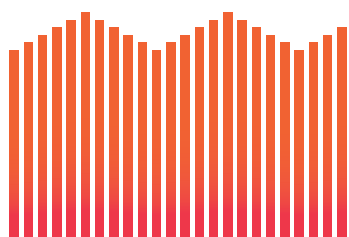
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For online attendees, the **Plenary Keynote session** was the most popular
Below are the **10 most popular sessions** in order of most to least popular:

- 1** **Plenary Session:** Social Justice in Pandemic Times
- 2** **Postgraduate Workshop:** 'Applying for Jobs in Academic' Part I and Part II
- 3** **ASAA Conference:** Opening Night
- 4** **Postgraduate Day:** Commencement
- 5** **Panel Session:** Historians of Southeast Asia
- 6** **Sub-regional Keynote 3 - Indonesian Council (ICOC):** Kate McGregor, Vedi Hadiz, Saiful Mahdi and Rebecca Meckelburg
- 7** **Workshop 2:** Writing a Book on Southeast Asia: Tips, Processes and the Publishing Landscape
- 8** **Keynote Session:** Sabina Puspita, Luthfi Adam and Quinton Temby. Hosted and presented by Monash Indonesia
- 9** **Panel Session:** Rethinking Histories of Colonialism. Indonesia (Part 1)
- 10** **Panel Session:** Politics, policy and society

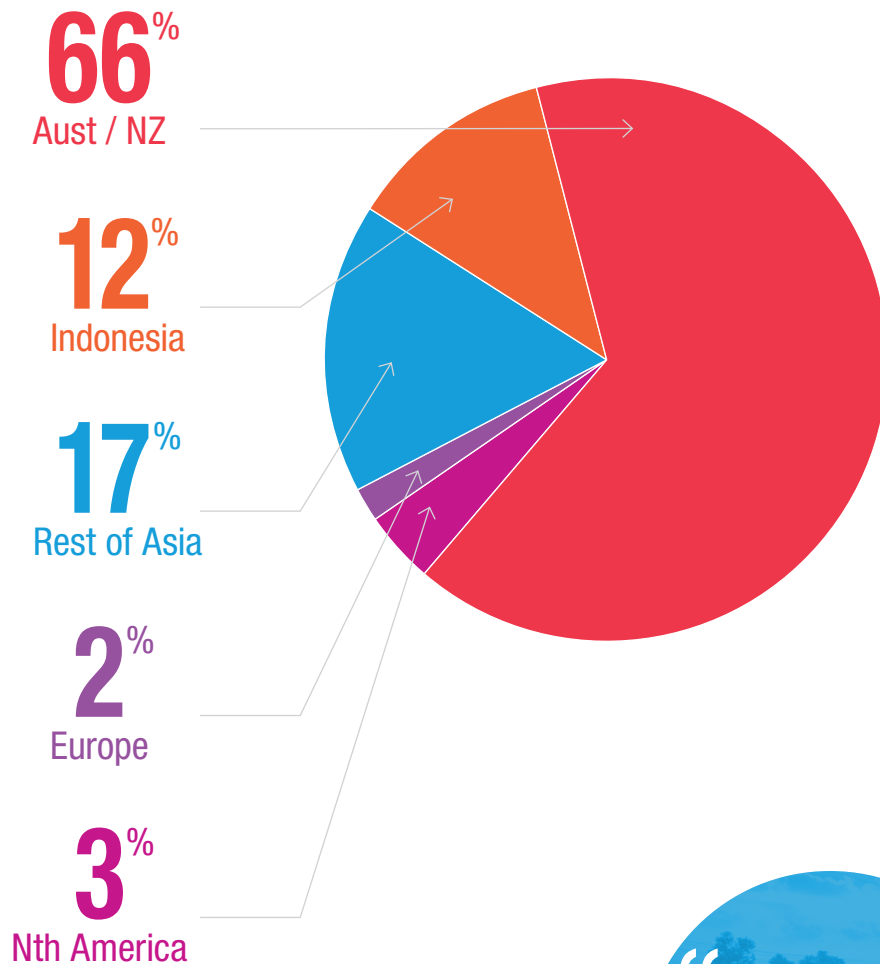
22
countries

Attendee Overview

Attendees registered from 22 countries around the world.

Australia and New Zealand engaged the most online and in-person with a total number of 254 attendees.

Indonesia alone was strong at 12% of all attendees and 17% coming from other parts of Asia.



“The Monash team did an excellent job. Friendly, organised and responsive ... so congratulations to all.”

Attendees by country

Location		
Australia	Japan	Sweden
Canada	Malaysia	Taiwan
China	Netherlands	Thailand
Colombia	New Zealand	Vietnam
Hong Kong	Philippines	United Kingdom
India	Singapore	United States of America
Indonesia	South Korea	
Ireland	Sri Lanka	

Conference Online Platform Engagement

Being the ASAA's first hybrid conference, the digital conference hub was an important means of bringing delegates together from all around the world.

As an indication of the engagement and success of the online platform, the conference website has been viewed 4,157 times in the lead up and during the conference, and the session pages were visited 1,623 times.

Our virtual help desk had 48 visits throughout the week, and over 150 delegates visited the other 6 virtual booths.

4,157
website views

1,623
session page views

“ I really appreciated having the virtual / hybrid option. Please keep it for future conferences.”

Feedback

15% of attendees responded to the feedback survey, representing. Overall feedback was positive with participants finding the conference hybrid format to be engaging and inclusive especially given the Covid-19 pandemic.

88%

of respondents rated the **overall experience** of the conference as either **Excellent** or **Good**.

79%

of respondents rated the **support provided by staff and volunteers** as **Excellent**

52%

of respondents **attended between 4-10 sessions** throughout the conference

The lingering COVID-19 pandemic brought its challenges. The hybrid format, while more complex to deliver, allowed delegates to attend without the need to travel and had the additional benefits of removing visa and financial barriers for those attending virtually.

“ Will definitely apply the best practices experience ... in our institution's upcoming activities.”

Key Learnings

Below is a summary of our key learnings, based on experience and feedback from participants for future conference organisers.

Conference Platform

- The hybrid format enabled many to attend who could not do so otherwise but substantially increased the logistical burden.
- Ensure sufficient technical support for online troubleshooting.

Promotion of the virtual exhibition (website and app)


- Ensure in-person and online attendees are aware that the virtual platform remains active and the recordings of the each session were available for 90 days after the conference
- Provide a runsheet to session Chairs with key information about online facilities and encourage them to share this during the closing remarks. Reiterate these aspects to each person through the in-person check in.
- The digital platform could be accessed via desktop or app, however, the App was not very user-friendly and therefore wasn't as useful as hoped. Recommendation is to test prior signing up with a digital platform provider.
- Plan the online notifications prior to the conference to notify attendees of all the online capabilities.
- Develop 'online' only benefits for logging in (e.g. sponsor discount codes, exclusive book launch)

Program structure the number of concurrent sessions

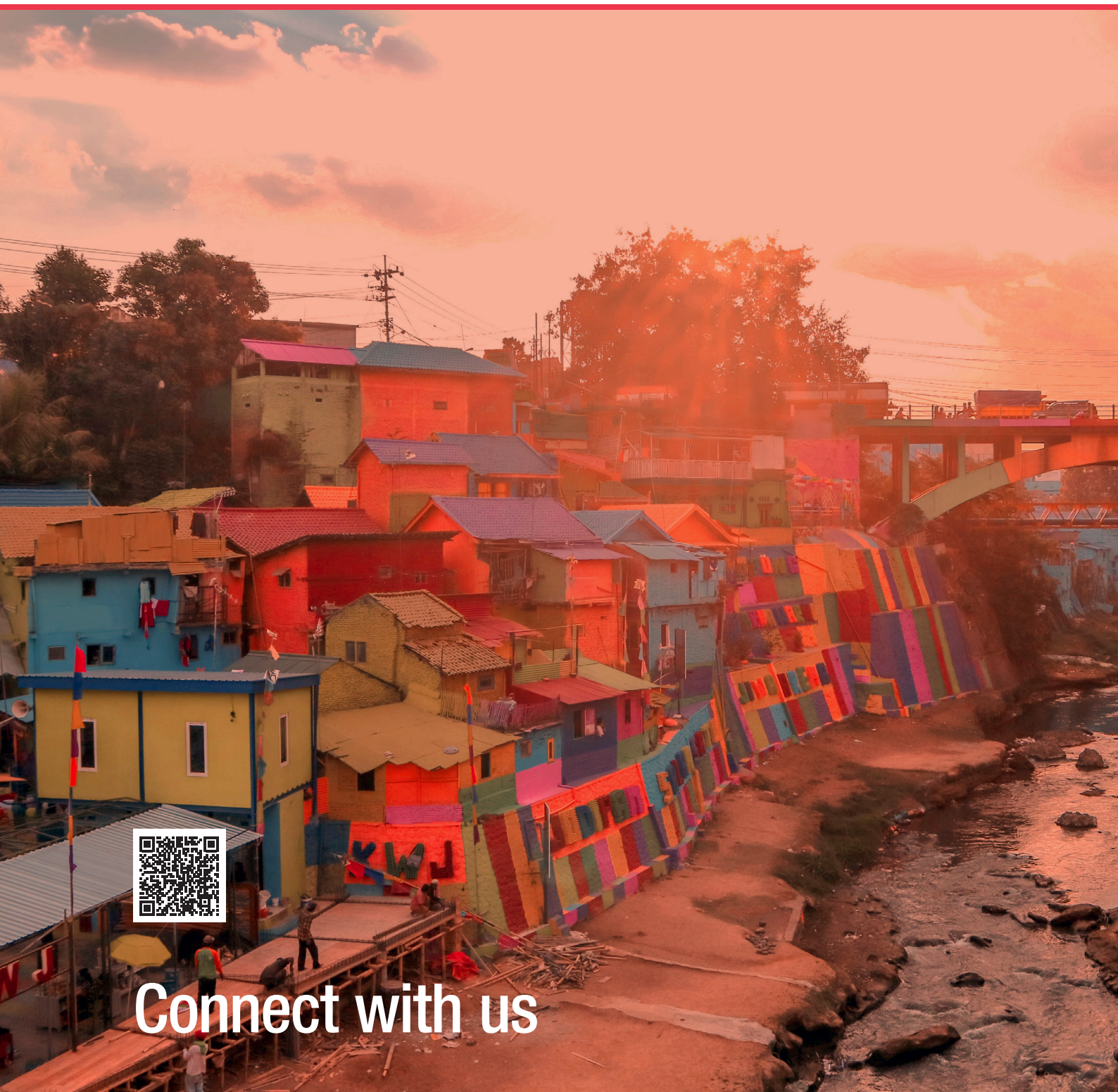
- Delegates reported that there was too much content and it is recommended to reduce the number of sessions
- Ensure that the same topics don't overlap within the same session timeslot
- Dedicate additional time slots and/or breaks to encourage attendees (both online and in-person) to view online exhibitions, poster presentations, SecondLife and other online offerings.

Attendee drop off rate

- Due to unforeseen issues many attendees had to decline in-person attendance due to visa issues or contracting COVID-19.



“ 10/10 experience.
Thank you very much!
Host this conference
again next year,
please!”



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