



ACADEMY OF
THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
IN AUSTRALIA



PAUL BOURKE LECTURE 2015

EVENT DETAILS

Date: Thursday, 23 April 2015

Time:

4.00pm - Paul Bourke Lecture

5.15pm - Book Launch by
Associate Professor Tess Lea,
University of Sydney



Emma Kowal
**Trapped
in the Gap**
Doing good in indigenous Australia

Refreshments will follow.

Venue: Deakin University
Melbourne City Centre,
3rd Floor, 550 Bourke St
Melbourne

FREE admission.
Bookings essential.

RSVP: Friday, 17 April 2015

Registration:

Online: www.assa.edu.au

E: secretariat@assa.edu.au

T: 02 6249 1788

The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, in conjunction with the Deakin University is pleased to present its Paul Bourke Lecture 2015:

TRAPPED IN THE GAP: DOING GOOD IN INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA

by Associate Professor Emma Kowal, Deakin University

Since the early 1970s, thousands of white, middle-class, progressive professionals have been moved by the plight of Indigenous communities and sought out work in Indigenous affairs. Emma Kowal became one of them when she moved from Melbourne to work as a junior doctor at the Royal Darwin Hospital in 2001. A few years later, she began using anthropological methods to study this 'tribe' who seek to improve the lives of Indigenous people without harming them. The group she calls 'White anti-racists' find themselves trapped by endless ambiguities, contradictions, and double binds — a microcosm of the broader dilemmas of postcolonial societies. These dilemmas are fueled by tension between the twin desires of equality and difference: to make Indigenous people statistically the same as non-Indigenous people (to 'close the gap') while simultaneously maintaining their 'cultural' distinctiveness and avoiding the assimilationist mistakes of the past. In this lecture Associate Professor Emma Kowal explains why doing good in Indigenous Australia is so hard, and how it might be done differently.

Associate Professor Emma Kowal

Emma Kowal is a cultural and medical anthropologist. Drawing on her background in medicine and public health, her research contributes to the anthropology of race and indigeneity in Australia, and to science and technology studies. Awarded an NHMRC Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in 2007, and an ARC Discovery Early Career Researcher Award in 2012, she left the University of Melbourne to join Deakin University in 2014 as Associate Professor of Anthropology and Principal Research Fellow in the Alfred Deakin Research Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation. She has held visiting positions at leading institutions in the U.S., Germany, China and Brazil, and will hold a visiting professorship at Yale University in 2015. She edits the journal *Postcolonial Studies* and is Deputy Director of the National Centre for Indigenous Genomics at the Australian National University.



The Paul Bourke Lecture is named in honour of the late Paul Francis Bourke (1938–99), President of the Academy from 1993–1997. The lecture is presented each year by the recipient of the previous year's Paul Bourke Award for Early Career Research.