

Call for Papers

The Greater Second World War and Modern Global Geopolitics

UNSW Canberra, City Campus, Canberra, Australia

8–9 February 2027

Keynotes: Emerita Professor Joan Beaumont (*Australian National University*), Professor Angela Wanhalla (*Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka University of Otago*), and Assistant Professor John Lee Candelaria (*Hiroshima University*)

In 2025, the world marked the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, but for millions across the Asia-Pacific, Allied victory in 1945 did not bring peace. Numerous wars ravaged the region in the years that followed, decolonisation created dozens of new states, and millions of people died, migrated, or were otherwise displaced by conflict. The longer-term effects of the conflict have shaped, and continue to influence, the development of nations, their relationships, and the societal, environmental, and geopolitical challenges the region faces today. In this context, there has been much renewed discussion about reconciliation (or the lack thereof), reconstruction, and the preciousness of long-term peace, both in the Asia-Pacific and globally.

In recognising the continued influence of the Second World War on the Asia-Pacific today, the War Studies Research Group (UNSW Canberra) and the Second World War Research Group (King's College London) will be hosting an international conference that addresses the aftermath of the war, and its longer-term impacts on the region. The conference seeks to act as a nexus through which to bring together researchers from across the Asia-Pacific and beyond, to bridge international and scholarly boundaries, and foster connections beyond the conference.

Themes

Proceedings on the first day will tackle the “ragged endings” of the Second World War in the Asia-Pacific. Themes with which proposals may engage could include, but should not be limited to:

Geopolitical change – Decolonisation – Environmental consequences
Nuclear testing – Diplomatic relations – Memory and commemoration
Economics – Mobilisation – Race – Political, economic and social change
Legal elements and war crimes trials – Humanitarian factors – Urbanisation
Occupation and independence – Migration and displacement – Trade and development – Representations of war – Post-war agreements and unresolved conflicts – Unexploded ordnance and contamination – Periodisation

The second day will focus on the effects of the conflict in the 21st Century. Papers should identify and assess the long-term effects of the conflict, and how they shaped or contributed to the global challenges the world grapples with today. Papers can focus on direct links between the Second World War and present challenges, or they may take an applied history approach that highlights lessons from the conflict that still resonate in the contemporary context. Themes with which proposals may engage could include, but should not be limited to:

Contested memories – Ideology – Nuclear testing and contamination
War crimes and international law – Diplomatic relations – Reconciliation
Unrecovered war casualties – War cemeteries and commemoration – Identity
Military basing – Humanitarian effects – Migration and displacement
Urbanisation Trade and development – Cultural heritage – Legacies of conflict
Representations of war – Post-war agreements and unresolved conflicts

For both days, papers may deal with conflicts other than the Second World War, where there are links to the earlier global conflict. This may include but is not necessarily limited to the First Indochina War, the Korean War, the Partition of India, the Indonesian National Revolution, the Chinese Civil War, and the Malayan Emergency.

Submissions

Paper proposals should include an abstract of no more than 300 words and a short biographical statement (no more than 150 words). Panel proposals for groups of three speakers are also welcomed. These should, in addition to individual paper abstracts and CVs, include a brief description of the overall panel theme (no more than 500 words – also as an attachment).

We welcome contributions from researchers working on the Second World War, its aftermath, and its legacies today, both within and beyond the discipline of history. We also welcome submissions from researchers whose work crosses disciplinary boundaries. We especially welcome contributions from scholars and practitioners based within the Asia-Pacific region.

The conference will be held in-person, with hybrid facilities available for those who cannot present or attend in person. The option of pre-recording your presentation may also be available, based on individual circumstances for international researchers.

Opportunities for publishing a collection of papers from the conference will be explored. If you would like to have your paper considered for inclusion in such a collection, please let us know when you submit your paper proposal.

The deadline for proposal submissions is **Sunday, 2 August 2026**. Submissions, queries, and expressions of interest should be addressed to Dr Nicole Townsend: n.townsend@unsw.edu.au