

Media Alert

KEVIN RUDD TO LAUNCH PAPER ON AUSTRALIA ASIA CULTURAL RELATIONS

The opportunities for Australia to engage in the dynamic performing arts in Asia are boundless. But are we missing out and at what cost?

On Monday 16 April **The Hon Kevin Rudd MP** will launch ***Finding a Place on the Asian Stage*** a 'Platform Paper' by two of Australia's most authoritative figures in Australia-Asia arts engagement.

Alison Carroll is the former director of Asialink Arts and a pioneer of Australia's cultural product across the region. Carrillo Gantner is the founding chairman of Asialink, a former cultural counsellor of the Australian Embassy in Beijing and the current president of the Melbourne Festival.

Mr Rudd will share the stage with the authors, as well as Melbourne lawyer and Asian art collector Jason Yeap to discuss the way forward for Australia's performing and visual arts engagement in the region.

Carroll and Gantner's paper is sharply critical of what they believe is the Government's declining interest in cultural exchange with Asia. While affirming growing trade and diplomatic ties, they believe Asian languages and culture are not getting the attention they deserve.

"We do not believe that any Australian government of the last two decades has been 'anti-Asia'", they say. "On the contrary, in this period our growing economic dependence on the region has highlighted Asia in Australia's consciousness. It is fair to say, however, that our governments have failed to appreciate the benefits of the wider and deeper engagement that comes from cultural and broad people-to-people links."

"There is pitifully little recognition of the long-term strategic or even financial benefits of building broad-based relationships through culture, education and other value-based programs if an immediate dollar value is not on the table."

Carroll and Gantner argue that comprehensive, long-term partnerships are more productive than trade and diplomacy alone and propose that the diverse government committees that service our relations with Asia be amalgamated into a single Australian International Cultural Agency.

DATE: Monday 16 April

TIME: 6.30pm

VENUE: Yasuko Hiraoka Myer Room
Sidney Myer Asia Centre, University of Melbourne

Registration is essential. To register as media for the event please contact **Will McCallum** at w.mccallum@asialink.unimelb.edu.au or phone +61 420 763 047

The Hon Kevin Rudd MP will not be available for interview at the event.

For further background information, or to request audio, video or photographs from the event, please contact **Will McCallum**.

For information on the authors and Platform Papers contact Katharine Brisbane at kb@currency.com.au or 02 9319 6423.