

Citation for the 2009 Sir Edward “Weary” Dunlop Asialink Medal  
**Professor Nancy Viviani**

Professor Nancy Viviani has made a profound contribution to the “re-creation” of Australia. From as early as 1973 - the year the White Australia Policy was finally and totally abolished - and continuing today, her work has reflected an aspiration and an optimism that Australia will “beat history” and avoid the racial tensions and conflict endemic in other multi-racial societies.

Ideas are powerful things. A scholar, a teacher, and above all, a mentor, Professor Viviani’s influence extends far beyond the academic sphere, beyond the lecture halls and university courses continuing to incorporate her numerous scholarly works.

She did more than add to a chorus for change in our attitudes to Asia and Asian migration, and to Australia’s view of itself – She, in fact, followed through on the dangerous idea that we could, as Australians, “belong” in the Asian region.

Ever keen to praise and promote the work of others, especially the pressure groups and politicians who contributed through the 1960s and 1970s to the abolition of White Australia, she once said of these people that they created a “new” Australia – “an Australia-in-the-world”. They changed people’s minds.

What she said of them, we can say of her: She made a difference. She made a difference in the quality of her ideas, and most importantly, in how she made these ideas matter in government and in the public debate.

The significance of her work on immigration, especially Vietnamese immigration, still resonates today.

The immigration stakes in the 70s and 80s were much higher than today. The Fraser Government, in response to the humanitarian disaster in Vietnam, allowed refugees on a scale and at a speed not seen before or since. More than 100,000 Indochinese immigrated in the period.

Professor Viviani said of the role of the Government at the time: "For Australians, Vietnamese refugee entry was the first real test of the disestablishment of the White Australia policy and a test successfully passed."

Over the course of 35 years as a teacher, Professor Viviani mentored numerous rising scholars, many of whom now hold this country’s most influential positions in international affairs.

These men and women are now in senior positions in the diplomatic service, in the United Nations, in Universities and in Government, here, and in Asia.

As a scholar and teacher, and as a policy specialist, she was ahead of her time, enriching Australia's understanding of Asia and our place in the world.

Having been taught herself by the influential Australian historian, Manning Clark, and the most celebrated of all Australian internationalists, Hedley Bull, Professor Viviani became fearless, willing to speak her mind, and innovative in her own study and research.

Her students found her classes enormously intellectually stimulating; her lecturing was 'brilliant' and 'inspired'; and her students brimmed with ideas which spawned new approaches to scholarship.

Nancy completed her PhD on Australia - Indonesia relations at ANU in 1973, before becoming an adviser for two years to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. She was appointed a Fellow at Harvard in the later 1970s where she would return twice as Visiting Professor in 1982 and 1989.

On her return to Australia in 1978, she was appointed Director of the Centre for the Study of Australian-Asian Relations at Queensland's Griffith University.

She was later Professor of Political Science at ANU and Professor of International Relations at Griffith University in Queensland, and from 1993 to 1996, she was Dean of the Faculty of Asian Studies at Griffith, then the largest Asian studies faculty in the country.

But it was her work as a developer of policy which made her an important figure not only in academia, but also in government and other circles.

From 1983 to 1985, she was social development chief for the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, in Bangkok. In 1991, she was pivotal in conceptualising and writing a report on the need for studies of Asia in Australian schools, a report which became forerunner to the national Asian languages and studies strategy.

Professor Viviani's policy expertise also found expression and acclaim beyond the Asian studies field: her Tertiary Entry Review for Queensland, known as the Viviani Report, and implemented in the 1990s, is a successful tertiary selection system still in force today.

Nancy's leading edge research and scholarship on East Timor, Vietnam and Indonesia, her contribution to public policy, and in particular to the place of migrants and refugees in Australia, are the foundation on which much of our current thinking rests.

She has provided distinguished service to our understanding of Asia, and has set a new gold standard for teaching and scholarship in international

relations, and for policy development in Australia-Asia relations. For decades, Professor Nancy Viviani has been a centre of wisdom about Australia's place in the world.

I am proud to present her with the **2009 Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop Asialink MEDAL.**