

# RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Chinatown

Professors Ien Ang, Donald McNeill, Kay Anderson and Dr Alexandra Wong of the Institute for Culture and Society with Mr Steven Hillier of the City of Sydney Council are examining the role of Sydney's Chinatown as a bridge in supporting economic and cultural links between Australia and Asia. This project is funded by the City of Sydney Council and the Australian Research Council through its Linkage Projects grant scheme.

'Chinatowns are a legacy of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century where they were typically seen as an exotic and foreign enclave in a Western environment', says Professor Ang. 'But the roles and people of Chinatowns are changing. In Sydney many Asian migrants and Australian-born Chinese have now dispersed throughout the metropolitan area notwithstanding several suburban centres developing high concentrations of Asian-owned or focussed businesses. So the boundary of Chinatown is open and there are many possible futures of which two seem most likely: it could become more of a tourist attraction or it could remain a central focus for the expression of Asian-Australian identity and be an important business, social and educational hub.' This project examines the role of Sydney's Chinatown today as a hub of transnational flows of people, investments, goods and services between Australia and Asia and how the changing nature of Chinatown reflects broader changes in Australia-Asia relations.

A multi-method approach will include census analysis, interviews with key informants, media and archival research and participation in Chinatown events, functions and venues. Business sector analysis, urban profiling and mapping will also provide a detailed picture of Sydney's Chinatown today which will be discussed at an international symposium.



In the era of rapid globalisation and rising Asian power, it is important to both preserve and improve the urban character of this historic and vibrant area of Sydney. This project will provide a comprehensive body of knowledge to help reposition Chinatown in its relation to Sydney and Australia so as to enhance social, cultural and economic links between Australia and Asia for multicultural Australia in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**Project Title:** Sydney's Chinatown in the Asian Century: from ethnic enclave to global hub.

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