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Australia's Top 5 young Humanities researchers announced

Five talented young researchers working in the Humanities, Arts and Social Science (HASS) will undertake a two-week media residency at the ABC after being named winners of the inaugural Top 5 Humanities program.

Working in fields ranging from demography and health ethics to Australian identity and politics, the Top 5 were selected from more than 280 applicants from universities across Australia.

They follow in the footsteps of their counterparts in the Top 5 Science program, an initiative now in its fourth successful year. The Top 5 initiative is not only a further affirmation of the ABC's investment in great Australian content, but also shows our dedication to supporting emerging talent.

With support from the University of Sydney, the resident researchers will be immersed in an 'ideas incubator' at the public broadcaster, alongside some of the country's best journalists and broadcasters, to bring their specialist knowledge to a wider audience.

The inaugural Humanities Top 5 are:

- **Dr Ros McDougall** (University of Melbourne), a philosopher whose research centres on the ethical complexities that arise in medical care. Her recent work has focused on the challenge of balancing children's wellbeing and parents' autonomy.
- **Dr Liz Allen** (Australian National University), a demographer who is passionate about countering the misinformation and fear that arise in some of our public debates, whether about data (the marriage postal survey) or population dynamics (immigration and fertility).
- **Dr Gemma Blackwood** (Charles Darwin University) a humanities researcher who tackles big questions about what it means to be Australian. Based in the Northern Territory, she is currently researching the portrayal of Uluru, the city of Darwin and the outback in literature, television and cinema.
- **Dr Ben Moffitt** (Australian Catholic University), a political scientist who studies the zeitgeist of global politics in the twenty-first century – populism. His research shows populist leaders from Trump to Hanson read from a

common script that emphasises bad manners, an appeal against 'the elite' and a cultivation of crisis and threat.

- **Dr Heidi Norman** (University of Technology, Sydney), award-winning researcher and teacher with a focus on Aboriginal people's interests in pursuing land management and cultural aspirations on their land, alongside imperatives to pursue economic development.

Marc Fennell, presenter of ABC RN's *Download This Show*, co-adjudicated the entries alongside Professor Annamarie Jagose, Dean of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Sydney, and philosopher and ethicist Dr Matthew Beard from The Ethics Centre and University of Notre Dame.

He was bowled over by the finalists' pitches to the judges.

"I would like to protest the ABC's, frankly, quite cruel decision to make us poor judges choose from a staggeringly impressive array of academic talent," Fennell quipped. "We were blown away at the passionate candidates from universities across Australia. It's almost enough to make me want to finish off that arts degree I started when I was 18."

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research from the University of Sydney, Professor Duncan Ivison, said the new Top 5 initiative came at an important time.

"Many of the most pressing contemporary concerns, from questions around artificial intelligence to medical ethics and political marginalisation, require answers from the humanities and social sciences. It is vital that our finest HASS scholars have the chance to fine-tune their communication skills and engage with the world.

"This Top 5 will help achieve that, spectacularly so, and at the same time create even more quality specialist content for Australian audiences."

The Top 5 winners will complete their two-week residencies at ABC Sydney in September.

Read more about the ABC Top 5 initiative [here](#)

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