

Call for speakers

WORK IN PROGRESS _ DRAFT

BRISBANE@WAR: AUSTRALIA, USA, NETHERLANDS, UK

International Symposium – Day One

Commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the End of WWII in the Pacific

Date: 30 August 2025

Venue: Griffith University, Brisbane

Organised by: Camp Columbia Heritage Association

Co-hosted by: Griffith University

Theme: The role of the four Allies in Brisbane during WWII

Objectives

1. Commemorate the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII in the Pacific.
 2. Highlight Brisbane's significant role in supporting Allied forces.
 3. Explore the intertwined histories of Australia, the United States, the Netherlands East Indies, Britain, and Indonesia during and after the war.
 4. Facilitate discussions on post-war legacies, ending colonialisation in the region.
 5. Share personal stories to deepen public understanding of this critical historical period.
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Program Schedule

8.50 – 8.55

Aboriginal Welcome

8.55 – 9.00

Welcome to Griffith University

Professor Charles Sampford (Griffith University)

9.00 – 9.20

Opening Remarks from Allied and Local Government Representatives

9.20 – 10.00

Keynote Address:

10.00 – 10.15

Morning Tea

Session One: The Role of Brisbane During WWII

10.15 – 11.15

- *Paul Budde (Camp Columbia Heritage Association)*
Camp Columbia's role in the Pacific War, support for NEI refugees and POWs, and Dutch recolonisation attempts.
 - *Peter Dunn, OAM*
Brisbane as a strategic hub and Allied Forces HQ.
 - **Cara Downes**
State Manager Queensland
Collection Management Branch, *National Archives of Australia (Brisbane Office)*
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Session Two: The American Presence in Brisbane

11.15 – 12.15

- *Representative from Australian War Memorial (TBC)*
The arrival of American forces in Brisbane and General MacArthur's leadership at Camp Columbia.
 - *[Speaker TBC]*
Highlights of American operations directed from Brisbane. The Defence of Brisbane during WWII - MacArthur-Curtin relationship.
 - *Panel discussion with speakers*
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12.15 – 1.15

Lunch Break

View pop-up banners and WWII artefact displays in the lobby.

Session Three: The Netherlands East Indies Government-in-Exile & British Involvement

1.15 – 2.15

- *Dr Jack Ford*
Allies in a Bind: Australia and the Netherlands East Indies in WWII.
 - *TBA*
NEFIS, NICA, NIGIS, NIWOE operations from Camp Columbia.
 - *TBA*
The British Pacific Fleet and its strategic significance.
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2.15 – 2.30

Afternoon Tea

Session Four: Post-War Legacies and Geopolitical Lessons

2.30 – 3.30

Panel discussion

Are there lessons for today's geopolitical environment?

Panellists drawn from the day's speakers. Audience engagement encouraged.

Symposium Dinner

Venue to be confirmed

BRISBANE@WAR: AUSTRALIA, NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES, INDONESIA

International Symposium – Day Two

WWII's Aftermath: Australia, Netherlands East Indies, Indonesia

Date: 31 August 2025

Venue: Griffith University

Objectives

1. Discuss post-war legacies and the decolonisation of the region. Using Indonesia as an example.
 2. Explore Australia's evolving relationship with Indonesia and the Dutch.
 3. Share research and personal stories to deepen public understanding of this complex period.
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Program Schedule

8.30 – 9.00

Registration

9.00 – 9.05

Aboriginal Welcome

9.05 – 9.10

Welcome to Griffith University

Professor Charles Sampford

9.10 – 9.20

Opening Remarks from Allied and Local Government Representatives

9.20 – 10.00

Keynote Address

Dr Pauljac Verhoeven, Bronbeek Museum, Arnhem, Netherlands.

The legacy of the War in the Pacific – decolonialisation of the region.

Session One: Indonesia: example of the decolonialisation of the region

10.00 – 11.00

Invited, waiting for funding

- *Dr Margaret Leidelmeijer (Indisch Herinneringscentrum, The Hague)*
National Archives holdings on NEI documentation
(Request for funding confirmation pending)
- *Dr Jan Lingard (UNSW)*
Indonesians in Australia during WWII
(Request for interstate funding) or can do online presentation
- <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10357823.2018.1516733> *Professor Joost Cote (Deakin University)*
The Indisch Dutch in post-war Australia

11.00 – 11.15

Morning Tea

Session Two: Panel Discussion – Australia, Netherlands, and Indonesia

11.15 – 12.15

Morning speakers – explore evolving post-war relationships.

12.15 – 1.15

Lunch Break

Exhibition curators to present and discuss their displays.

Session Three: Post-War refugees, POWs and Migration

1.15 – 2.15

- TBA
The repatriation of POWs
- *Professor Nonja Peters*
Dutch “Fairbridgeans”: Children evacuated from Japanese camps and relocated to Western Australia in 1945.

- TBA

Post war migration and the role of the Wacol Migration Centre (former Camp Columbia)

2.15 – 2.30

Afternoon Tea

Session Four: Panel discussion and Storytelling Session

2.30 – 4.00

Speakers to share brief, poignant personal or historical stories.

Audience members (pre-briefed) invited to contribute up to 3 minutes each.

4.00 – Close of Symposium

Formal closing remarks by Professor Charles Sampford and Paul Budde

Discussion of the proposed symposium publication – Professor Nonja Peters to explore publisher options.