College of Asia & the Pacific

PROGRAM

Australian National University

2026 TAIWAN UPDATE

Wellington, 3–4 September 2026
Canberra, 8–9 September 2026

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Contents

01 2026 Taiwan Update

Welcome Message 1

02 Schedules

Wellington 3

Canberra 5

03 Presentation Details

State-Market Tensions and Geopolitical Rivalry in the Global Semiconductor Industry 8

A Young Democracy Threatened from Without and Polarized from Within 9

Taiwan Studies in Australia: Policy Engagement and Moral Purpose in the Shadow of a China-Taiwan War 10

Taiwan's Tumultuous Past and the Conflicted National Self 11

The Sandwich Man《兒子的大玩偶》 12

Welcome Message

The geopolitical environment Taiwan has faced in the last few years — an increasingly assertive China, an unpredictable US — has only become more complex in 2026 with the consequences of the war on Iran prosecuted by the US and Israel. Taiwan is vitally dependent on external energy supplies, many of which need to transit the Hormuz Strait, including direct inputs for Taiwan's crucial semi-conductor industry. The internal political machinations of 2025 have now settled into a permanent gridlock, which has informed commentators increasingly worried. Government action — including in defence — has become bogged down by party polarisation, and political discussion in general has become more fraught.

The 2026 Taiwan Update brings together scholars to address these and other issues vital to understanding where Taiwan stands now. Chun-yi Lee, Director of the Taiwan Research Hub at the University of Nottingham, UK, examines the semi-conductor industry and geopolitics, the subject of her forthcoming monograph. Ching-hsin Yu of the Election Study Center at National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan, looks at how Taiwan's democratisation is threatened by both external threats and internal polarisation. Mark Harrison from the University of Tasmania, and Australia's pre-eminent scholar on Taiwan, discusses the level of knowledge of Taiwan within Australia's national discourse and considers the roles and responsibilities of Taiwan Studies today. Rosemary Haddon from Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa/ Massey University in Aoteroa New Zealand takes us back to the Nationalist (*Kuomintang*) era and post-Martial Law Taiwan to examine the formation of Taiwan's identity.

Pivotal in the cultural expression of a new Taiwanese identity was film. This year we present a restored version of *The Sandwich Man* from 1983, in which three of the major nativist writer Huang Chun-ming's short stories are transferred to the screen. Regarded as foundational in Taiwan's new wave cinema, the story that gives the film its name was directed by the great director Hou Hsiao-hsien. *The Sandwich Man* will be introduced by Andrew Pike OAM, the eminent film historian and director, who also formed Ronin Films, the film distribution company that has introduced many of the most important East Asian films to Australasia, beginning in the 1970s.

We are delighted that the ANU Taiwan Studies program will be partnering again with the Political Science and International Relations programme at Te Herenga Waka — Victoria University of Wellington to bring this important Update to Canberra and Wellington.

Professor Benjamin Penny
Convenor
ANU Taiwan Studies Program

Associate Professor Jason Young
Te Herenga Waka — Victoria University of Wellington

The Taiwan Update is an initiative under the ANU Taiwan Studies Program 2025-28, which is a partnership between the College of Asia and the Pacific at The Australian National University and the Ministry of Education, Republic of China (Taiwan). We especially thank the Political Science and International Relations programme at Te Herenga Waka — Victoria University of Wellington for co-hosting the 2026 Taiwan Update in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand.

Wellington

Thursday 3 September

HMLT002, Hugh Mackenzie Building, Kelburn Campus, Te Herenga Waka — Victoria University of Wellington

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Light Refreshments

4:30pm

HMLT002, Hugh Mackenzie Building, Kelburn Campus, Wellington

Welcome & Introduction

5:30pm

Delivered by

Associate Professor Jason Young, Te Herenga Waka — Victoria University of Wellington

Professor Benjamin Penny, The Australian National University

Professor Averil Coxhead, Dean/Amo Aronui, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Te Herenga Waka — Victoria University of Wellington

Representative Joanne Ou, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in New Zealand

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Keynote Address

5:50pm–7pm

State-Market Tensions and Geopolitical Rivalry in the Global Semiconductor Industry

Associate Professor Chun-Yi Lee
School of Politics and International Relations
University of Nottingham

Friday 4 September

AM106, Alan MacDiarmid Building, Kelburn Campus, Te Herenga Waka — Victoria University of Wellington

Session 1

12:30pm–1:30pm

Taiwan Studies in Australia: Policy Engagement and Moral Purpose in the Shadow of a China-Taiwan War

Dr Mark Harrison
School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Tasmania

Break

1:30pm

Session 2

1:45pm–2:45pm

A Young Democracy Threatened from Without and Polarized from Within

Professor Ching-hsin Yu
Election Study Center, National Chengchi University

Afternoon Tea

2:45pm

Session 3

3:15pm–4:15pm

Taiwan's Tumultuous Past and the Conflicted National Self

Dr Rosemary Haddon
Independent Scholar
Formerly Chinese Studies, Massey University

Film Screening

5pm–7pm

The Sandwich Man《兒子的大玩偶》

HMLT104, Hugh McKenzie Building, 28 Kelburn Parade, Wellington

Film inroduction written by Dr Andrew Pike OAM

Canberra

Tuesday 8 September

Auditorium, Research School of Social Science, 146 Ellery Crescent, ANU

Drinks Reception

5:00pm

RSSS Auditorium, 146 Ellery Crescent, ANU

Welcome & Introduction

5:30pm

Delivered by

Professor Benjamin Penny, School of Culture, History and Language, ANU College of Asia and the Pacific

Paul Girrawah House, Ngambri-Ngunnawal custodian of the Canberra region / Senior Community Engagement Officer, First Nations Portfolio, The Australian National University

Professor Matt Tomlinson, A/g Dean, ANU College of Asia and the Pacific

A/g Representative Regine Huey-jen Chen, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Australia

Keynote Address

5:55pm–7:15pm

State-Market Tensions and Geopolitical Rivalry in the Global Semiconductor Industry

Associate Professor Chun-Yi Lee
School of Politics and International Relations
University of Nottingham

Wednesday 9 September

Seminar Room, China in the World Building, Fellows Lane, ANU

Lunch

12:15pm–12:55pm

Tea House, China in the World Building

Session 1

1:00pm–2:00pm

A Young Democracy Threatened from Without and Polarized from Within

Professor Ching-hsin Yu
Election Study Center, National Chengchi University

Break

2:00pm

Session 2

2:15pm–3:15pm

Taiwan Studies in Australia: Policy Engagement and Moral Purpose in the Shadow of a China-Taiwan War

Dr Mark Harrison
School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Tasmania

Afternoon Tea

3:15pm

Session 3

3:45pm–4:45pm

Taiwan's Tumultuous Past and the Conflicted National Self

Dr Rosemary Haddon
Independent Scholar
Previously Chinese Studies, Massey University

Film Screening

6:30pm–8:30pm

The Sandwich Man《兒子的大玩偶》

RSSS Auditorium, 146 Ellery Crescent, ANU

Introduction by Dr Andrew Pike OAM

Notes

Keynote Address

State-Market Tensions and Geopolitical Rivalry in the Global Semiconductor Industry

Using the global semiconductor industry as a case study, this lecture explores 'decoupling' amidst the complex web of state-market relations. Most studies of decoupling focus on the United States and China. By contrast, I focus on the relationship between the United States and the full range of key semiconductor producers (Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, and China). I ask when, and how, states intervene in semiconductor markets and propose that while the main actors in the semiconductor supply chain are not hegemonic powers, their high production capacities mean that their power is 'pivotal'. I argue that while technology production chains reflect the conflicting interests of states, because production chains also embody key shared interests, states cannot completely 'decouple' from one another. Meanwhile, key stakeholders are not always states, but also private companies and skilled workers. These actors have their own interests as well, meaning that production chains become further intertwined, rendering true decoupling impossible. Their resistance to decoupling means that this 'stickiness' will be a feature of any state-led attempt to forge supply chain independence.

Chun-Yi Lee

Associate Professor, University of Nottingham

Chun-Yi Lee is Associate Professor at the School of Politics and International Relations, University of Nottingham. She is also the Director of the Taiwan Research Hub at Nottingham. Her current research project concerns semiconductor supply chains and geopolitics; prior to this, she completed research projects on the influence of different foreign investors on Chinese workers and labour rights. Chun-Yi's first book, *Taiwanese Business or Chinese Security Asset*, was published by Routledge in 2011. Since 2022, Chun-yi has been working her second monograph on the topic of 'Sticky Decoupling: Geopolitics and Semiconductor supply chains', presently under contract with Cambridge University Press. She is the editor-in-chief of *Taiwan Insight*.

Plenary Sessions

A Young Democracy Threatened from Without and Polarized from Within

As one of the model cases of third wave democratization, Taiwan's progress toward democratic consolidation has attracted broad attention. Nevertheless, the development of democracy in Taiwan has not been without difficulties. Both external and internal challenges continue to test this emerging democracy. Externally, the security threat posed by neighbouring China, together with the complexities of contemporary international geopolitics, has led Taiwan to be widely regarded as a global flashpoint for potential conflict. These circumstances have compelled Taiwan's political leadership to seriously consider how to strengthen national security and enhance societal resilience in order to respond effectively to potential external shocks and crises. Internally, increasing political polarization has made it difficult to achieve broad consensus on many critical policy issues. Furthermore, the existence of a divided government has contributed to persistent gridlock between the executive and legislative branches. Thus, long-standing political cleavages, deeply entrenched socioeconomic challenges, and increasing national security concerns have become intertwined and highly politicized. The interaction among these issues poses significant challenges not only for the government but also for Taiwanese society as a whole. This presentation examines these contemporary challenges facing Taiwan's democracy. Drawing upon relevant academic research and public opinion survey data, it explores the political consequences of these developments and analyzes citizens' attitudes toward the key issues confronting Taiwan today.

Ching-hsin Yu

Professor, National Chengchi University, Taiwan

Ching-hsin Yu is a Research Fellow at the Election Study Center as well as a joint professor in the Graduate Institute of Development Studies, National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan. He is also currently a Commissioner of the Central Election Commission, R.O.C. He earned his Ph. D. in political science from Pennsylvania State University in the United States in 1995. In addition to services to the academic community, he has devoted himself to the study of party politics, public opinion, electoral systems and elections. His recent studies address political accountability, identity politics and issues related to Taiwan's democratic transition and Cross-Strait relations.

Taiwan Studies in Australia: Policy Engagement and Moral Purpose in the Shadow of a China-Taiwan War

Australia's institutionalised understanding of Taiwan exists in the context of an increasingly belligerent PRC escalating its threats against the Taiwanese. Knowledge of Taiwan is therefore a concern of Australian policy-making, yet in national discourse it remains constrained by questions of defence capabilities and alliance politics. Preparedness requires deeper Taiwan knowledge, able to recognise a crisis, define its thresholds, and understand what is at stake and for whom. This gives Taiwan Studies a distinctive contemporary purpose as a form of critical national infrastructure.

The talk assesses these themes through a 2025 study of Australian public and institutional responses to Taiwan Strait crises, conducted with John Fitzgerald, Kuo Mei-fen, Nathan Attrill and Marc Ablong, which found Australian understandings of Taiwan to be fragmented, event-driven and reactive, with Taiwanese-Australian communities distinctively marginalised.

I then move beyond this instrumental purpose to pose a moral problem the field cannot defer. When the threat to Taiwanese society, to friends and colleagues, is material rather than notional, supplying knowledge and practising critique are not the only responsibility of Taiwan scholarship. I examine what it means for Taiwan Studies to take on a moral purpose, as the discipline through which Australia comes to know Taiwan and answers whether it is willing to defend its existence as uniquely Taiwanese.

Mark Harrison

Senior Lecturer, University of Tasmania

Mark Harrison is Senior Lecturer in Chinese Studies in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and a Senior Advisor on security at the University of Tasmania. He is also an Expert Associate of the National Security College and a Founding Fellow of the Australian Centre on China in the World at the Australian National University. He is co-editor of the Taiwan Studies series by Brill and is also active in Taiwan policy at the federal level in Australia. With Catherine Chou, he is co-author of *Revolutionary Taiwan: making nationhood in a changing world order* (Cambria, 2024) and co-author with Mei-fen Kuo, John Fitzgerald, Marc Ablong and Nathan Attrill of the research report *Australian Public and Institutional Responses to Taiwan Strait Crises*, Dept. of Defence SPSG / ASPI (2025).

Taiwan's Tumultuous Past and the Conflicted National Self

The Taiwan issue is a multi-faceted Gordian knot compounded by contested ethnic and political interests, Cross-Strait relations with China, and unresolved legacies bequeathed from the historical past. Solutions to the issue seem more elusive than ever. All the while, domestic arguments rage and tensions soar. This talk shifts the focus away from contemporary politics to the tumultuous past and the legacy termed the "conflicted national self". Its theme is Taiwan's identity formation during the Nationalist (*Kuomintang*) era and post-Martial Law Taiwan. Stories and novels from *xiangtu wenxue* (native soil literature) and *bentu* or pro-Taiwan literature illustrate the way the identity evolved. Further concepts include hegemony, becoming (Japanese, Chinese, Taiwanese), Orientalism, 228 (*Ererba*) and the White Terror (*Baikong*), and unification versus independence. The speaker draws on her experience living in Taiwan during the Nationalist era and her recent publication *Taiwan's Modern Identity Reimagined: Becoming Taiwanese* (Routledge, 2026).

Rosemary Haddon

Independent Scholar

Former Lecturer, Massey University

Rosemary Haddon is a retired lecturer in Chinese at Massey University, New Zealand. Her recent publication, *Taiwan's Modern Identity Reimagined – Becoming Taiwanese* (2026), was published by Routledge. Rosemary's Ph.D. (UBC, 1992) introduced nativist literature (*xiangtu wenxue*) to the Anglophone western world. The thesis bridges China and Taiwan. In 1993, she took up a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Australian National University before moving to New Zealand, where she lectured in Chinese at Massey University. Her academic interests extend to China and Taiwan as well as colonialism, gender, identity and art. Rosemary witnessed first-hand the human right abuses during the Martial Law period (1949-1987) in Taiwan.

Film Screening

The Sandwich Man《兒子的大玩偶》

Directors | Hou Hsiao-hsien侯孝賢 Wan Jen萬仁 Tseng Chuang-hsiang 曾壯祥
1983 | 105 mins | Mandarin, Taiwanese | Chinese + English subtitles

Adapted from three of Huang Chun-ming's short stories, this episodic film portrays the struggles of marginalised individuals during challenging times. It skilfully blends moments of self-doubt with dignity, humour with sorrow, and hope with despair, capturing the emotional turmoil and innocence of people confronting the intrusion of foreign influences in a developing nation. Widely regarded as foundational in Taiwan's New Cinema, this film reflects the social realities of the era with deep empathy and sharp satire.

The Sandwich Man won Best Supporting Actor, Child Actor, and Original Song Nominations at the 1983 Golden Horse Awards.

We are delighted to have **Andrew Pike OAM** to introduce *The Sandwich Man* at the Canberra screening!

Andrew Pike OAM

Andrew Pike OAM is a film distributor, film historian and documentary film-maker. With Ross Cooper, he co-authored *Australian Film 1900-1977*. His company, Ronin Films, was formed in 1974 and has distributed over 500 Australian films including *Strictly Ballroom* and *Shine*. In addition, Ronin imported many cutting-edge East-Asian films for general release in Australia, including key films by Hou Hsiao-Hsien. He operated the Electric Shadows Twin Cinema in Canberra for 27 years, 1979 to 2006, showing an eclectic range of world cinema to large audiences of enthusiasts. In 2007, he received an Order of Australia Medal and an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Canberra for services to the film industry and to the community. For ten years until 2012, he served on various iterations of the Board of the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia. As a documentary director, his films include *Angels of War*, *Emily in Japan*, and most recently *Japarta -A Journey to the Gurindji Way*. He was the Director of the Canberra International Film Festival (2017-2024), and from 2010 to 2024 chaired the MPA APSA Academy Film Fund (a program of the Asia Pacific Screen Academy), to provide development grants to film-makers across the Asia-Pacific region.

Contact us

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Event websites
Wellington
https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/2026-taiwan-update-4860135

Canberra
https://ciw.anu.edu.au/event/2026-anu-taiwan-update

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