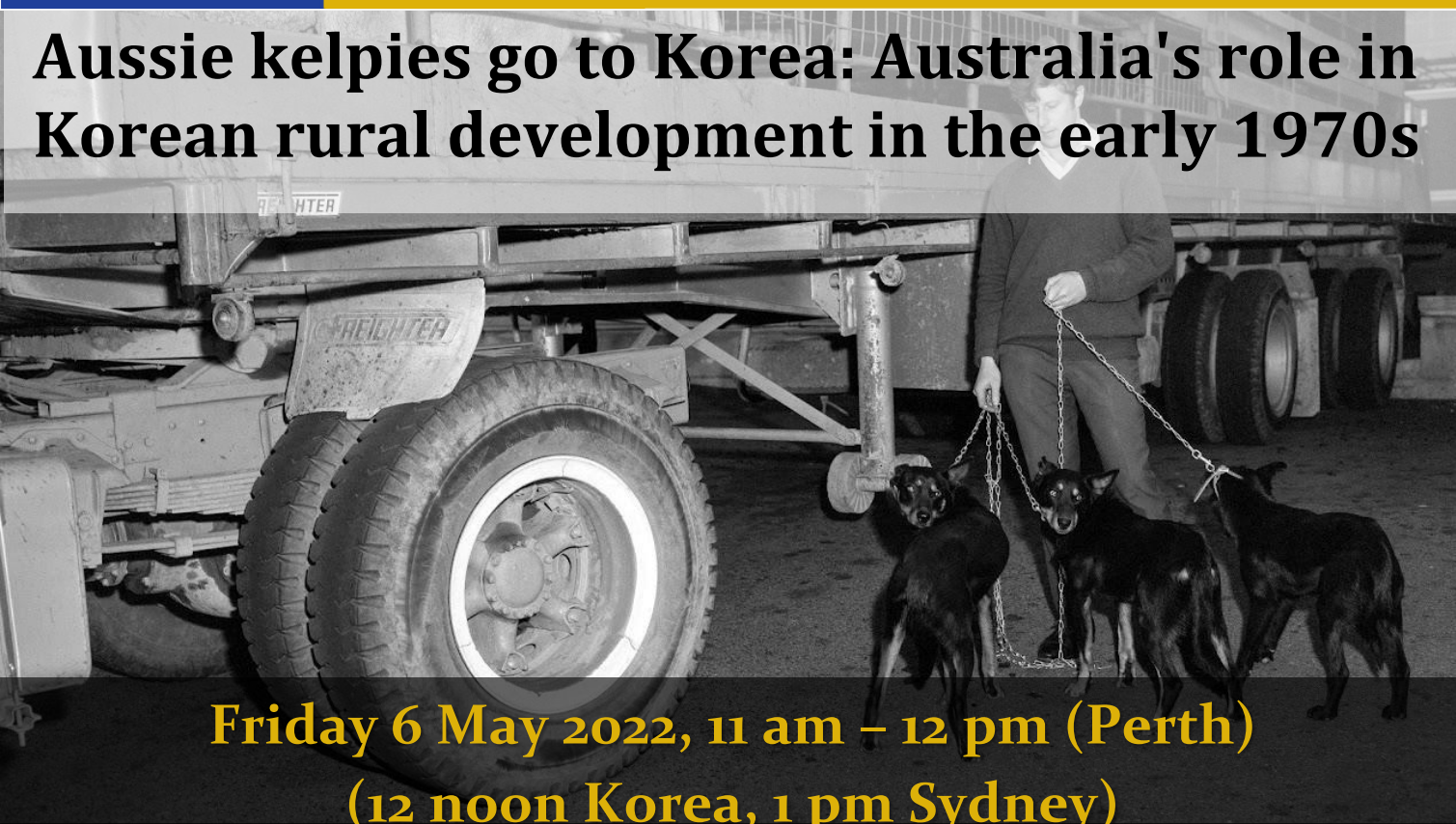


Aussie kelpies go to Korea: Australia's role in Korean rural development in the early 1970s



Friday 6 May 2022, 11 am – 12 pm (Perth)
(12 noon Korea, 1 pm Sydney)

In recent weeks, the role of Australian development assistance as an important tool for diplomacy and defence has been brought to a clear focus. This presentation examines the role and impact of Australia's only overseas development assistance (ODA) project with the Republic of Korea under the Colombo Plan during the 1960s and 1970s. Despite of an often-cited claim that the Australia-ROK relations came to a virtual standstill after the end of the Korean War (1950-53), the development of diplomatic ties continued under the auspices of the Colombo Plan. This project seeks to understand the historical significance of a little-known agricultural collaboration in Unbong in North Jeolla Province and its impact on the development of ROK-Australia relations. The two countries collaborated in the creation of a sheep demonstration farm which saw 2,500 Australian sheep, two lead kelpies and a group of highly skilled Australian agricultural professionals sent to Unbong. The project aimed to introduce the latest Australian livestock farming technologies to local farmers to combat rural poverty. Although the official project only lasted for five years, our preliminary research suggests that the impact of the project on people-to-people relations between ROK and Australia were profound. The findings of this research thus suggest that the role of the Australian development assistance in the development of bilateral diplomatic relations has been underestimated and that the Unbong Sheep Demonstration Farm helps to illustrate the broader diplomatic context of early ROK-Australia relations and suggest that projects such as these played a pivotal role in building Australia's credibility in South Korea.

Speakers

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This seminar will be conducted online with Zoom:

<https://uwa.zoom.us/j/83518150162?pwd=czdqa2owTHA5VFZLY2dpRoVNWk5IUT09>

Password: 036154

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