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## INAUGURAL NEWSLETTER

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## ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF AUSTRALIA AASA

### BEGINNINGS

The Asian Association for the Study of Australia (AASA) was formally launched in Colombo, Sri Lanka, during the Tenth Triennial Conference of the ACLALS (Association for Commonwealth Literature & Language Studies) held from Aug. 14-18, 1995. The prime mover was Dr. Cynthia vanden Driesen of Edith Cowan University, Perth, Western Australia who proved to be the creative catalyst in enthusing a number of Asian and Australian academics to meet one evening (17 August 1995) and form this historic association to promote the development of Australian studies in the Asian region.

Dr. vanden Driesen began by calling attention to the development of other Associations worldwide for the promotion of Australian Studies—BASA (the British Association for the Study of Australia ) and EASA (the European Association) and the active Australian Studies Institutes established in China, Korea and Indonesia. Academics from India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Singapore who were present commented on the difficulty of teaching and researching Australian Studies in these regions due to the lack of basic materials such as texts as compared with teaching and researching British, American and Canadian Studies. Because of the special difficulties experienced in the Asian context, there was a real need for Australian academics to become actively involved in promoting the objectives of this Association. These were broadly ratified as:

1. To promote within Asia interest in, and the study of, Australia
2. To facilitate contact between individuals and groups, who have a serious interest in aspects of Australian life such as the arts and sciences, education, industry and commerce and the social life.
3. To develop and improve resources available in Asia for the study of Australia.
4. To promote links with and exchanges between educational institutions in Asia and Australia.

The Asian Association was thereupon launched with the members present unanimously choosing Prof. Bala Kothandaraman (Osmania Univ., Hyderabad) as the President. Office-bearers and Executive Committee members were also elected as follows:

**Message from Asian Patron: Professor C.D. Narasimhalah**

I see in the new Association coming together of Asia and Australia, symbolising a union of the old and the new, of poised antiquity and dynamic modernity. We had forgotten the Aborigine had conquered, in primordial times, 'the tyranny of distance.' And today he has joined hands with the European and the Asian to explore through the medium of English, an Indo-European language, the 'multiple heritage' of the land which they all look upon as theirs by right of vision. For me this is heralded by the birth of the Asian Association for the Study of Australia.

May AASA bring the two giant continents closer in a common endeavour and transform the 'tyranny of distance' into what Patrick White calls the 'omnipotence of distance.'

(2) July 1996

Sd/-  
C.D. Narasimhaiah