

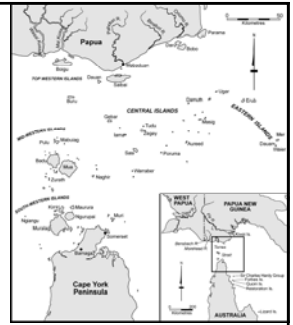
# Applying for Fellowships: Personal Experiences

Liam Brady  
Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies  
Monash University

1

## Research Field

- Position:
  - Faculty of Arts Postdoctoral Fellow
- Archaeologist/Rock-Art Researcher
- Torres Strait, northeastern Queensland
- Doctoral research:
  - rock-art from the islands, exploring interregional interaction between Torres Strait Islanders, Cape York Aboriginal groups, and Papuans from southwestern Papua New Guinea
- International significance:
  - Torres Strait bridges the cultural divide between hunter-gatherer realm of Australia and horticultural realm of Melanesia



2

## My Experience

- 3rd year of candidature
- Lectureship or Fellowship?
- Approached Director of CAIS for advice
- First position:
  - Research Fellow for one year
  - Publish and prepare an ARC Postdoctoral application during that time
- Other avenues:
  - Ask colleagues at other universities/departments
  - Postdoctoral schemes at universities and through organizations
  - Websites for advertisements (e.g. "postdoctoral fellowships 2008 X university")
  - Be part of a team

3

## My Experience

- 1<sup>st</sup> attempt (4-yr):
  - Large ARC Discovery with a Postdoctoral Fellowship
  - Decision to go with another geographic area
  - Joint project with Cambridge University, Monash University, Aboriginal community in NT, and ERA mining
  - Called off just prior to submission
- 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt (successful):
  - Faculty of Arts Postdoctoral Fellowship (2-year)
  - Torres Strait (long-term research interests)
  - Address questions I had put in the 'maybe later' pile during writing-up
  - Chances of success? Knew the area well; building on preliminary research over the years; knew what I was looking for; knew it had int'l significance

4

## My Experience

- 3<sup>rd</sup> attempt (4-yr; under review):
  - Large ARC Discovery with a Postdoctoral Fellowship (no co-investigators)
  - Decision to go on my own:
    - Publication record
    - Conferences (national and international)
    - Track record in obtaining grants
    - My experience in the region
  - Decision not to change universities:
    - Torres Strait experts (senior, junior, and postgraduate students only based at Monash)
    - No need to change institutions – probably detrimental to application

5

## Publishing during PhD

- Strong/competitive position:
  - Fully-referred international journals
    - Single and multi-authored (shows teamwork)
  - Key chapters in edited books in your field
  - Monographs (although difficult at an early stage of your career)
  - My 2008 ARC application: 15 publications (enough?)
  - Awards
  - Consultancies
  - Diversity of research
- Issue I was concerned with:
  - Up against other academics who already had single-authored books, multiple publications etc. prior to completing their doctorate
    - How do I compete/stack up against them as a very early career researcher?

6

## Writing my application

- Like writing any other grant application
  - What makes this project so important?
  - Why is this project better than any other project?
  - International significance?
- References for non-ARC Fellowships:
  - International and national
  - Networking
  - Thesis examiners?
  - Indigenous communities for letters of support
- Your fit within the department
  - Torres Strait research only carried out at GES and CAIS in Australia
- Feedback on Fellowship applications: ARC and non-ARC

7

## Time Required

- 1<sup>st</sup> attempt (ARC):
  - six weeks (team project)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt (Arts Postdoctoral Fellowship):
  - four weeks
- 3<sup>rd</sup> attempt (ARC):
  - two weeks
- Budgets take longer. Ask Deepa for help!
- Actually doing a postdoctoral fellowship:
  - Sit quietly in an office doing your work
  - Or, become part of the department; consider a small teaching load; committees; seminar coordinator etc.

8