There are three things to do when you first get here:

1) **Get on the Local Mailing List**  
   - this is how seminars, reading groups and other events are announced.  
   
   URL: http://philrsss.anu.edu.au/events/pml

2) **Look at Ole’s Events Calendar**  
   - a google calendar of upcoming events  
   
   URL: http://philrsss.anu.edu.au/~ole/calendar

3) **Go to Morning & Afternoon Tea**  
   - at 10:30 and 3:30 at the tea room (usually on balcony outside). Find the philosophers and talk to them. *This is as compulsory as it gets.*

   Di is the contact person regarding offices, equipment, mailing details and other administrative matters. Call Bryan for computer or other IT issues. Their contact details (among others) are on the back cover of this pamphlet.

   Inside: ramblings on less important stuff.

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**Philosophy Program**  
Research School of Social Sciences  
The Australian National University

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Unofficial

A rough guide for visitors & newcomers

carl.brusse@anu.edu.au

version: 090305
ANU Philosophy

The RSSS Philosophy Program is a research program, physically located (for the most part) on the 2nd floor of the sprawling Coombs building – #9 on the official ANU map at: http://campusmap.anu.edu.au/ This is only one of the three department-like entities doing philosophy at ANU. Northwards (in building #14) is the Philosophy Department at the School of Humanities (aka ‘the Faculties’), which teaches undergrad courses and has its own PhD program. Building #22 houses a large contingent of the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics (CAPPE). Adding to the confusion are other groups like Tempo and Mode, the Automated Reasoning Project and the Centre for Law and Philosophy. Social and Political Theory (SPT) used to be a separate program inside the RSSS, but now operates as a cross-program entity.

Events

Each of these philosophy outposts organizes its own seminars, visiting speakers, reading groups etc. Luckily, a single mailing list provides announcements and reminders. You should get onto this immediately (details on the inside flap). The Program website (see contacts) is a good place to browse for more info, look under ‘links’ for the other departments and related info.

Navigation

This is the tricky bit. Even with a map (as above, or get one from the Coombs foyer) you really need to find a group of locals and follow them about. There aren’t many landmarks & the campus is a confusing sprawl. It doesn’t help that the Coombs building looks much the same from any angle (& is bounded by five roads & five 90° intersections). The main library (Chifley) and the university Union (with shops & eating places) are northwards and University House is across Garran road, south-west. During the day there’re okay food places nearby; at the Art School, Catarina’s, the new Headly-Bull café, Uni House & Vanilla Bean. The city centre (‘Civic’) is only 15 minutes walk east, but don’t try to get there by looping south around the central hill (it’s all freeways). Go via the Art School.

This probably sounds overly confusing. But the way Canberra was designed, navigational knowledge—how sticks easier than knowledge—that. Be prepared to ask for advice from the locals, and don’t be surprised if it turns out they’re lost as well. A bike is a big plus.

Getting around ANU is easy compared to navigating the Coombs building itself. It’s 900+ rooms are distributed according to a strange, disorientating floor plan that owes more to organic chemistry than ergonomics. And it’s a 3D experience: the three interlocking hexagons aren’t level with each other, so there’s a warren of half-staircases, 120° junctions and dead-ends. According to folklore, the building’s namesake (a Dr H.C. ‘Nugget’ Coombs) once got lost inside and had to be rescued. Legend also tells of long-lost academics roaming the halls at night searching for their offices, students who live in the rafters and a mysterious ‘Seminar Room G’.

Here’s a map with pointy arrows. To locate us, go in the main entrance then left and up the stairs. That’s the tea room/balcony area. We’re on the floor above that.

If you get lost in the bowels somewhere, the room numbers can be a guide. They all have 4 digits, e.g. 2211. The first digit locates that room in one of the numbered zones on the diagram above. The second digit tells you what floor it’s on: 0 (ground floor), 1 or 2. Our offices are mostly in zone 2 on the 2nd floor, so are mostly ‘22xy’.

Rituals

The most (only?) diligently observed activities here are morning and (especially) afternoon tea. At 10:30 and 3:30 the majority of those on-deck congregate outside in a large group on the tea room balcony – regardless of weather conditions. This is the best time to meet people. Other compulsory gatherings are the seminars on Tuesdays and Thursdays and the obligatory drinks and meal afterward. On Fridays there are also end-of-the-week drinks. These watering usually occur at the closest pub to Coombs at University House, just 100m south and west – called Fellow’s Garden. The alternative venue is typically ‘the Wig’ (see below).

Further afield

10–15 minutes walk north and then east from Coombs gets you into the inner-north town centre, called Civic. On the way, on the block across from the IGA convenience store is the ‘Asian Mekong Delta’ (a regular spot for a cheap, post-philsoc feed) and the Wig & Pen. The Wig has some decent micro-brewed beers and is a common stop for drinkies after seminars. Two blocks further east, across Northborne Av (in the bus terminus area) is another regular haunt, The Phoenix, which is a bit more grotty. Just past the busses you’ll find Garema Place, a pedestrian-only area with some okay restaurants and cafes. Some favourites here are Café Essen, Milk & Honey, and Sammy’s. For a decidedly rougher culinary experience, there used to be a scody little pie-cart called Dolly’s open late into the night in the car park toward the north-east corner of ANU, where they (allegedly) did the best chips in Canberra. It lives on in our memory and our arterial walls.

Beyond civic, you’ll need a bike or some other transport. Canberra’s decentralised layout seems sterile at first, but it does have some good stuff growing tumour-like amongst the over-planned sprawl of suburbs & town centres. Be prepared to explore.

One last suggestion: if you’re here for a length of time consider joining the ANU film group (www.anufg.org.au). This buys entry to around 100 new and classic movies each semester, screened with professional quality gear in the Coombs Lecture Theatre.