

# John Corea: the First Korean immigrant in Australia in 1876

**Dr Jay Song**

This seminar introduces the life journey of John Corea who arrived in Australia in 1876 in a tea carrying ship named Lochiel from Foochow, China. He was 17 years old. In 1879, this young Korean man applied for a Mineral Lease application in Silverton (NSW), and waited for 10 years without any news. After becoming a naturalised British subject in 1894, he named himself 'John Corea' and went to Coolgardie WA for a gold mining license. The WA government rejected his application. Corea came back to NSW and finally acquired a mining license in White Cliffs in 1903. In his later years, Corea was hospitalized in Adelaide Hospital (SA). He died in Mildura (VIC) in 1924. The story of Corea illustrates the role of human migration for people-to-people relations between Australia and Korea, far deeper than official state and military relations.



Jay is an Adjunct Associate Professor at the Korea Research and Engagement Centre of Western Australia at Curtin University. Prior to her current title, she was Korea Foundation Associate Professor at the University of Melbourne (2017-2023). In addition to her academic career, Jay has also held various professional positions, including a director of migration at the Lowy Institute (Sydney), Global Ethics Fellow of the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs (New York), Associate Fellow of Chatham House (London), and Consultant for the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Geneva). She holds a PhD in Politics and International Relations from the University of Cambridge, UK. Her research focuses on Asian migration to Australia, and the two Koreas.

**Date:** Thursday, 25 September 2025  
**Time:** 3-4:30pm AWST  
**Location:** Teams Meeting ID: **442 178 705 353 4** | Password: **7n3HH3Q9**  
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This seminar is supported by the Core University Program for Korean Studies through the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and Korean Studies Promotion Service of the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS-2022-OLU-2250005)