WHEN
Friday 8 November
2:15 - 3:45 pm

WHERE
CCANESA Boardroom
Madsen Building
Eastern Avenue
University of Sydney

RSVP
Registration for this event is essential; please RSVP to:
idhr@sydney.edu.au

Professor Pieter Fourie, Stellenbosch University

In this final afternoon session of the Festival, Pieter Fourie will offer a short overview of current events and developments in South Africa. He will explain why, two decades after the dramatic end of apartheid, doubts and anxieties are surfacing within and beyond South Africa about the fate of its democratic revolution. The South Africa chapter of Human Rights Watch’s 2012 World Report reported that the country ‘continues to grapple with corruption, growing social and economic inequalities, and the weakening of state institutions by partisan appointments and one-party dominance.’ It is said that health and education systems are suffering from government neglect. Widespread dysfunction in local governments has prompted public demonstrations, sometimes forcibly dispersed by police violence. South Africa has one of the highest rates of rape and violent crime in the world; the continuing white grip on land ownership remains controversial; and corruption, which is both the agent and beneficiary of the erosion of democracy, threatens the alleviation of serious poverty. These problems have been compounded by allegations of ‘ghost voters’ and vote-buying in elections, waning media freedoms and by the ANC’s policy of ‘deployment’, the practice of selecting candidates for all government jobs according to their perceived loyalty to the ANC, a party machine which President Jacob Zuma is fond of saying will govern ‘until Jesus comes’.

Pieter Fourie will examine these and other trends in order to help the audience make sense of what’s happening in South Africa, and whether counter-trends are keeping alive the spirit and substance of democracy in southern Africa’s most important experiment in self-government. In connection with the Festival’s This is Democracy – Photography Competition, his talk will be introduced by screenings of two short videos produced by the South African collective Photography And Democracy.

Pieter Fourie is Associate Professor of Political Science at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. Actively engaged in the politics of health, and its new prominence in international relations, he is an outspoken champion of a more robust civil society in southern Africa. He recently called on the South African government to support HIV advocacy groups, such as the Treatment Action Campaign, and their international alliance partners, for the purpose of developing a new and more inclusive ‘Aids diplomacy’ backed by transnational justice networks. Pieter Fourie is editor of Politikon (South African Journal of Political Studies) and his most recent publications include The Politics of AIDS Denialism: South Africa’s failure to respond (2010) and Health for Some: The political economy of global health governance (2009).