Welcome

Welcome to the latest newsletter of the School of Geography, Population and Environmental Management – the first to move to our new publishing dates of September and March each year. As the country enters full Federal election mode all the major political parties are recognising (at long last, one is tempted to add in some cases) the importance of environmental issues. Challenges such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, responding to climate change, protecting biodiversity, managing the Murray-Darling system more effectively and encouraging more environmentally sustainable urban development are central to the School’s teaching and research activities. As political debate hots up we hope these issues continue to receive the attention they deserve, together with other questions we have an active interest in such as housing affordability, the impacts of global economic restructuring on Australia’s cities and regions, and demographic issues such as ageing and immigration. This newsletter clearly shows the breadth and relevance of our range of activities. I hope you find it interesting.

If you would like to find out more about any of our activities check out our website at http://www.ssn.flinders.edu.au/geog/, and to keep an eye on our program of seminars and future events, bookmark http://www.ssn.flinders.edu.au/geog/happenings.php.

Associate Professor Clive Forster
Head of School

20th Anniversary of Teaching Population Studies at Flinders

On 5 July 2007, Dr Gour Dasvarma and Dr Udoy Saikia organised an alumni reunion dinner to celebrate 20 years of postgraduate teaching in population studies at Flinders University. The dinner was held at Hotel Mulia, Senayan, South Jakarta, and was attended by 33 people comprising mostly population studies alumni of Flinders University and other invited guests such as Professor Kartomo Wirosuhardjo, who in 1986, as the Assistant Minister for Population in the then Ministry of Population and Environment requested Flinders University to start teaching population studies at the postgraduate level. Other guests included Dr Imam Haryadi, Deputy for Training and Development BKKBN, Dr Eddy Hasmi, Head of the International Training Program BKKBN, Professor Sri Moertningsih Adioetomo, Director of the Master of Population and Manpower Studies at the University of Indonesia and Dr Rozy Munir, formerly Head of the National Population Agency and now Ambassador designate to Qatar. This was an informal occasion with a welcome and greetings to all by Gour Dasvarma, followed by brief addresses given by Professor Kartomo Wirosuhardjo, Dr Imam Haryadi, representing the BKKBN and Dr Malyono Mawar, a population studies alumnus and Chairperson of the Flinders University Alumni Association, Jakarta chapter. Dra. Sri Winartiningsih, a population studies alumnus now working at BKKBN, provided her time, and the most crucial assistance with contacting the invitees, organising the dinner venue and providing other logistical support.

Vice-Regal Visit to the School of Geography, Population and Environmental Management

The Governor of South Australia, His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce, inspected a display of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) research projects being carried out in the School during his visit to the Flinders campus on 25 September. The projects comprised a restoration planning methodology in the Mount Lofty Ranges for revegetation prioritisation using the decision support tool OPRAH, a satellite radio
tracking study of feral camels that will be used to create a cost-benefit optimal harvest/removal model, a Population Viability Analysis (PVA) of the endangered yellow-footed rock-wallaby, and a GIS study of the effects of climate change on dominant plant species in the Mount Lofty Ranges.

The display, in the School’s Spatial Information Systems Laboratory, was organised by lead researcher Dr Mark Lethbridge and presented by PhD student Megan Harper, Honours students Nicki Anderson, Michael Stead and Erin Parham, and third year student Andrew Murray. The Governor was accompanied by the University Chancellor, Sir Eric Neal, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Anne Edwards, and the Deputy Vice Chancellors (Research) Professor Chris Martin, (International) Professor Dean Forbes, and (Academic) Professor Andrew Parkin.

School Welcomes New Population Studies Students

Dr Gour Dasvarma has recently negotiated an agreement with the BKKBN which will see 28 Indonesian students visit Flinders University over the next 3 years to undertake the Master of Applied Population Studies. A special welcome was extended to the first cohort of BKKBN students at a morning tea held by the School on 27 July.

The morning tea was also attended by honoured guests Mr. Imam Haryadi, Deputy for Training and Development, BKKBN and Mr. Eddy Hasmi, Director, International Training Program, BKKBN (Indonesian Family Planning Association) Staff and postgraduate students of the School, members of the International Student Unit and the DVC (International) Professor Dean Forbes.

Geography Teachers Professional Development Evening

The School held a Geography Teachers Professional Development evening on 4 September. The “Population, Resources and Development” theme addressed the core component of the new SACE Geography curriculum. Tom Jenkin who is now with the Native Title Unit reported on research undertaken in the School addressing water in Aboriginal communities. The issues of water quality, quantity and infrastructure were compared and contrasted across a number of Aboriginal communities in rural and remote South Australia. Dr Jonathon Sobels reported on a recent consultancy addressing community responses to drought in the Lower Lakes and Murray River region of South Australia. A focus on community effects and responses to drought made for a lively question time. As part of the evening teachers were provided with a resource disc containing the power point presentations and background reading resources. About 40 people attended the evening. The event was held jointly with the Geography Teachers Association of South Australia.

If anyone is interested in receiving a copy of the resource disc and wish to get an audio recording of the presentations please contact the geography office by email geography@flinders.edu.au or telephone 08 8201 2107.

Environmental Degrees Information Evening

The University held a combined Environmental Degrees Information Evening on 13 September. About 40 prospective students attended and heard about each of the Environmental degrees offered at Flinders. Dr Simon Benger (Bachelor of Applied GIS) and Dr David Bass (Bachelor of Environmental Management) from the School attended the evening. This was a new format for the evening and included current student and Nippy’s Environmental Award winner Tammy-Jo Sutton who was able to talk about her experiences as a student at Flinders.

Ways of Belonging Exhibition

Gavin Malone, a visual artist and PhD candidate, presented an exhibition arising from his research as part of the 40th anniversary commemorations of the 1967 Australian referendum on Indigenous issues. The exhibition Ways of Belonging: Reconciliation and the Symbolic Value of the Public Space in Adelaide was held at Tandanya, the National Aboriginal Cultural Institute from 25 May – 22 July 2007. It was launched as part of the official Reconciliation Week program in South Australia. A related paper is included in the Geographical Research special issue on Indigenous matters, Vol 45(2).
Graduate Profile: Khamlar Phonsavat

Khamlar Phonsavat was an undergraduate student in the Bachelor of Environmental Management at Flinders University from 2001-2003. Khamlar found that the degree provided an innovative, flexible and multidisciplinary approach to environmental management. Some of the topics Khamlar undertook as part of the degree included Environmental Economics, Asian Regional Development, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Geographical Information Systems (GIS). These topics enabled her to better understand environmental issues and to identify sound measures using available technology such as GIS and Remote Sensing to mitigate the impacts in both developed and developing countries today. Khamlar found the staff in the School to be friendly, helpful and supportive which made her transition as an overseas student to Australian tertiary education a smooth and enjoyable experience.

After graduating from Flinders, Khamlar was employed for 2.5 years as an Environmental Scientist with Earth Systems Lao Ltd, an environmental consulting company formed in 2000 by Earth Systems Australia Pty Ltd, (based in Melbourne) with a Lao interest. Here, Khamlar had an opportunity to work for the Nam Theun 2 Project on the Land and Asset baseline study, providing technical support to the Environment Department for the Sepon Gold-Copper Project (Oxiana Ltd). This also included Gavin and his Chthonic Spirits work. It was filmed at Palmer where Gavin is jointly coordinating with Greg Johns the long term art and ecology Palmer Project.

Research

Housing Careers and Australia’s Housing Future

A recent report by Professor Andrew Beer, Dr Debbie Faulkner and Dr Michelle Gabriel for the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute 21st Century Housing Careers and Australia’s Housing Future: Literature Review * brings together a wide range of evidence to consider how shifts in household structure, the labour market, fertility patterns, attitudes to home ownership, and government assistance will influence the demand for government interventions in Australian housing markets over the next decades.

A central concept in the analysis is that of the housing career – the sequence of housing circumstances an individual or household occupies during a lifetime. Because assumptions about housing careers form the basis upon which many housing development and investment decisions are taken, identification of shifting trends in attitudes and expectations can be a valuable part of the planning and policy development process.

Previously, individuals were typically raised in the family home before entering private rented housing either as an individual or member of a group (often following marriage), then moving to home purchase (frequently upon the birth of a first child) and finally outright ownership. Emerging evidence suggests that in more recent years the connection between life course and the stage within a housing career has weakened, and that an individual’s position in the labour market has become one of the most important determinants of housing circumstances. Other commentators have suggested that the traditional life stage/housing relationships still remain, but with greater lags than in the past.

The Literature Review highlights an increasing focus among commentators and researchers upon the differences between Australia’s generations with respect to their employment prospects, social attitudes and housing careers, and goes on to identify four generations of Australians with distinct housing careers.

The research findings suggest that the current younger generation of Australians is set to follow a less structured pathway in terms of career and life stages than its predecessors. The housing careers of those in their middle years are also becoming more complex due to factors such as the significant disjuncture caused by divorce.

The report concludes that, based on the research findings available, trends in home ownership rates among Australians aged less than 35 years are related primarily to changes in relationship status and living arrangements. Delaying entry into owner occupation is not as significant a change within housing careers as never entering the tenure. Nevertheless, it remains a profound shift which will affect the age at which households achieve outright ownership, may affect the
size and type of dwelling purchased, and could influence late-life housing consumption.

It also identifies issues for further consideration and policy implications that arise from the research findings.

- The concept of generations is useful, and the individual generations have distinct housing careers;
- From a life course perspective, the transition to adulthood has extended and the pattern of housing consumption has become more complex in early adulthood;
- Decisions taken early in adulthood can be a significant predictor of life course and housing career. Young adults who commit early to a relationship are more likely to enter into a long-term partnership and eventually home ownership;
- Young people appear to be postponing, rather than cancelling, entry into home ownership, a significant shift in Australian housing careers. Households that enter home purchase later in life may enter retirement still carrying a significant level of mortgage debt; this may influence their subsequent housing decisions and need for housing assistance. If they fail to enter home purchase and achieve ownership, demand for housing assistance late in life is likely to escalate;
- Incidence of divorce is prominent in the literature on the housing careers of persons in mid-life;
- Perhaps the most significant changes between the 20th century and emerging 21st century housing careers have been in the trends relating to older people, and the revolution in later-life housing careers that will arise as a result. Many of the aged have few options for their housing and do not plan for their housing future, but have rising aspirations. The growth of the aged population and longer life expectancy may mean that:
  o Retirement savings are less likely to last through a person’s lifetime;
  o There will be a need for assistance in maintaining and/or modifying the home, especially as a greater number of people age in place;
  o There will also be greater demand for accommodation suitable for aged persons, including stock provided by social landlords;
  o There are likely to be more sole person households occupying social housing;
  o The number of older non-homeowners will grow; many older pensioners in the private rented sector will need considerable financial support; and
  o The population of older Australians will have higher expectations of housing than earlier generations, but limited incomes to support themselves. Retirees will, however, be powerful within the electorate.

* The full report can be found at www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/NRV2_Research_Paper_1

Other Activities

Course Reviews

The 5 year Course Review Committee for the Bachelor of Environmental Management and its honours component met on campus between 17 - 19 September. The committee was chaired by Associate Professor Dave Mercer (RMIT). The other committee members were: Mr John Blumson (ZeroWaste SA); staff members Dr Phil Lawn (Flinders Business School), Mrs Cecile Cutler (SGPEM), student Mr Ben Phillips and graduate Elena Mazourenko.

Presentations and Addresses

Professor Andrew Beer gave the keynote address at the Australian Property Institute Annual Conference on the 14 September on the 'Changing Meaning of House and Home'. He also spoke at the Planning Institute of Australia's state conference in the Adelaide Town Hall on 'Adelaide at Population 2 Million: The Challenge of Urban Management'. Professor Beer also contributed to the Urban 45 Conference on 29 August, giving a paper that was co-authored with Dr Debbie Faulkner, Mrs Cecile Cutler, Dr Selina Tually and Dr Emma Baker on "The Greying City". Professor Beer will also be presenting at a symposium organised by the Institute of Public Policy, Melbourne University, on the Future of the Australian Car Industry.

Working Groups

Dr Udoy Saikia was invited to facilitate a working group (Water and quality of life in rural India) at the Australian Medical Students’ Association (AMSA) Developing World Conference. This year’s event was held in Adelaide from 28 June - 1 July 2007. The theme for the 2007 conference was ‘Pathways for Empowerment’ which aimed to explore the complicated matrix of social, political, health and economic factors that cause, contribute and continue problems in international health.

Awards

Dr Udoy Saikia has attended a Summer School at the Max Planck Institute of Demographic Research in Germany between 20 - 28 August 2007. The scholarship paid 1600 EURO to cover expenses and the Faculty of Social Sciences has approved a top up grant of $2000 to assist with travel costs.

Dr Udoy Saikia has also been awarded the Ron Lister Fellowship 2008 at the Department of Geography, Otago University, New Zealand. The fellowship carries an amount of $12,000 for airfares and maintenance during his 4 month stay.
Student Award

Ms Tammy-Jo Sutton won the Channel 9 Young Achiever Award in the Environment category. Tammy-Jo has been an environmental activist since completing school in 1998, and became involved with Greenpeace as an event frontline team leader and volunteer. Since 2003 Tammy-Jo has been employed as the Community Actions Campaigner for the Wilderness Society and heavily involved in advocating for the protection of South Australia’s Wild Country. She is majoring in environmental and Australian studies and is an active volunteer of the Flinders University Enviro Action Group. She was invited to attend the Gala Awards dinner on 31 March where she received her $1000 award.

![Tammy-Jo and Eric Compas at the awards dinner](image)

Visitors and New Staff

Dr Jonathan Sobels, an Adjunct staff member of the School, was appointed to teach GIS in Semester 2. Jonathan is an experienced researcher who has skills in remote sensing, GIS and GPS as adapted for agronomic decision making.

Dr Terry Clower from the Centre for Economic Development Research, University of North Texas gave a special seminar on ‘The Economic Impacts of Stem Cell Research’ on 3 July.

Recent Staff Publications


Recent Student Publications


This newsletter is also available at: [www.ssn.flinders.edu.au/geog](http://www.ssn.flinders.edu.au/geog)
For further details about any items in this Newsletter or course information email: geography@flinders.edu.au