Welcome

Welcome to the latest newsletter of the School of Geography, Population and Environmental Management. This year promises to be an interesting experience for Australian Universities as we attempt to deal with the impacts of a new Federal government on our teaching and research activities. Our School is also dealing with the recommendations of reviews of our Bachelor of Environmental Management, Master of Environmental Management and Bachelor of Applied GIS degrees, carried out over the past two years. All the reviews praised the quality of content and teaching but also pointed to ways of making our offerings even more relevant, well-structured and successful, and we look forward to the continuing challenge of implementing their recommendations. On the research front, our staff and research students continue to be active over a wide range of subjects, as shown by the stories and list of publications in this newsletter.

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

Five Year Course Reviews

The 5 year Course Review Committee for the Bachelor of Environmental Management and its Honours Component met on campus on 17 - 18 September 2007. The committee was chaired by Associate Professor David Mercer (School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning, RMIT University). The other committee members were: Mr John Blumson (Zero Waste SA); staff members Ms Cecile Cutler (School of Geography, Population and Environmental Management at Flinders University) and Dr Phil Lawn (Flinders Business School at Flinders University); and students Ms Elena Mazourenko and Mr Ben Phillips. The Review Committee released their report in November 2007.

In summary, the Committee found:

“The BEM continues to be an integral part of the University’s range of academic offerings and contributes to its goals and objectives for teaching.”

Postgraduate Welcome

The School hosted a morning tea on Wednesday 26 March to welcome the new postgraduate students and to get together with current postgraduate students and staff of the School.

Clive Forster, Head of School, with staff members: Noel Richards, Debbie Faulkner, Selina Tually and Meryl Pearce

Applied Population Studies postgraduate students: Dian Irawaty, Dini Desriani, Dini Nur Afni, Afrida, Maria Gayatri, Vita Yulia Devi
Graduate Profile: Georgina Numbasa

Georgina Numbasa completed her Masters in Environmental Management in 2004 and after returning home, was employed in 2005 as a lecturer with the Department of Environmental Science and Geography at the University of Papua New Guinea (PNG). Georgina feels her skills gained as a former teacher combined with her learning experience at Flinders enabled her to adapt the flexible and innovative teaching style of most of her lectures at Flinders into her own teaching.

Georgina is also actively involved in research and consultancy work, and in 2006 she represented the University of Papua New Guinea at the International Geographical Union Conference in Brisbane. Later in November, she was invited by the South East Asia Geography Association in Singapore to present three papers on ‘Geography of Development in Papua New Guinea’, ‘Globalization and Natural Resource Exploitation in Papua New Guinea’, and ‘The Use of Urban Space in Port Moresby by the Informal Sector’. Georgina also coordinated two groups of students surveying solid and hazardous waste, and medical wastes for the Port Moresby City Authority. She has supervised several students who worked with four urban local level governments to develop their urban waste management strategies. At the end of 2007, she evaluated the work of all Non-Governmental Organizations in PNG. Georgina is currently the PNG representative to the Geography regional network under the International Geography Union for South East Asia, Australasia and the South West Pacific. Following on from her studying environmental management at Flinders, Georgina is providing expert advice to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UNMDG) Technical Working Group Goal No: 7 ‘Environmental Sustainability to the Government of Papua New Guinea’.

Georgina feels studying Urban Environmental Management and other topics at Flinders has broadened her understanding on different environmental, social and economic issues affecting urban areas in developing countries and has contributed to her writing and teaching three new courses combining themes in Urban Geography, Environmental Management and Urban Environmental Management. She is currently working on two major projects: Urban Environmental Study of the National Capital District in Port Moresby sponsored by the Office of Higher Education in PNG; and Land Transactions amongst the migrant settlers in Wewak Urban, East Sepik Province of PNG. This research is in collaboration with Curtin University of Western Australia with funding originally from the Australian Research Council.

She is enjoying teaching and research and the challenges that come with them, and is considering a PhD in the area of urban environmental planning and management using GIS and Remote Sensing tools. Georgina believes the wealth of knowledge and skills gained at Flinders will make this possible.

Staff Research

New research report on the future of women’s housing in Australia

A new research report on the future of women’s housing in Australia to 2025 by Dr Selina Tually, Professor Andrew Beer and Dr Debbie Faulkner of the AHURI Southern Research Centre (hosted by the School) and commissioned by the Women’s Housing Caucus of SA was recently launched by the SA Minister for Housing, the Hon. Jay Weatherill.

The report finds a mixed housing future for women over the next ten to twenty years, concluding that many women will remain vulnerable participants in the housing market because of their generally weaker financial position than men or due to changes in their personal circumstances. That is, because women continue to shoulder the majority of responsibility for both raising children and for caring for ageing or disabled relatives. Such care responsibilities reduce lifetime earnings for women, limiting their participation in the workforce and their accumulation of superannuation. Moreover, sustained high rates of divorce and separation from a significant relationship also clearly affect the financial circumstances of women, and their housing choices.

The report notes that the female population into the future will be a much more diverse population – including many more older women living alone,
ageing migrant and Indigenous women, and women with disabilities. The housing market will need to cater for the specific housing needs of people in these groups.

A number of important courses of action for governments are identified in the research, including:

- Taking steps to include Universal Design principles in the construction/renovation of dwellings;
- Reducing social isolation experienced by the increasing number of lone person households, and particularly for older women living alone;
- Planning cities that are more accessible and secure, especially for women raising children in higher density housing;
- Ensuring that women escaping family violence have affordable and secure housing options.

Importantly, the report strongly emphasises the need for governments of all levels to address the unaffordability of housing, and, across all tenures. This is shown to be a particularly important issue for women given the reduction in public housing dwellings and increasing demand, and as women already account for two-thirds of public tenants. It is also important given that housing stress is concentrated in the private rental market and increasing numbers of people are residing in this sector because of a lack of other affordable housing options.

The report is available via link at: http://www.socsci.flinders.edu.au/ahuri.src/publications/

**Student Research**

**Low Cost Housing Presentation**

David Bunce, a post-graduate research student, lodged a submission with Planning SA regarding proposed Development Plan Amendments to Residential Caravan and Tourist Parks. He addressed the Development Plan Advisory Committee and other industry and local authority representatives present in February.

The submission was based on research carried out in 2007 on an outer suburban residential park. The survey of 62 households living in relocatable homes revealed that 70 per cent of respondents were fearful of their park being closed for redevelopment and thus being evicted from the park. It was pointed out to the Advisory Committee that park closures result in the further loss of affordable housing and destroys existing communities. It was added that even the threat of park closures can cause chronic stress and detrimental health outcomes particularly among older, vulnerable residents. Under the Residential Parks Act 2007 residents need only be given 90 days notice of termination to vacate the park.

The Advisory Committee was informed that the proposed amendments to the development plan to recognise the existing use of residential parks is still inadequate because it does not allow for the permanent zoning of residential parks, and consequently residents do not have permanent security of tenure. A Development Application may still be made for a change of land use, and there is no requirement under the proposed amendments to include a Social and Economic Impact Assessment.

One of the proposed amendments included a recommended site area of 100 square metres per home. The Committee was advised that this represented extremely high density living for relocatable homes and constituted a potentially serious fire hazard due to the closeness of the homes and is exacerbated by attached carports. It was pointed out that under United Kingdom fire regulations for such homes there must be a clear area of non-combustible materials of at least six metres between homes.

The Advisory Committee was informed that if permanent zoning for residential parks could not be achieved then the following Amendments should be considered:

- Provision be made for long term leases of say 20 years duration
- Land management agreements be entered into with approving local authorities for residential park zoning for a specific number of years
- The State government set up a fund to enable residential park communities to collectively purchase the park should it come onto the market
- A Social and Economic Impact Assessment be mandatory for Development Applications
- In the event of a successful Development Application that the developer be required pay residents’ relocation costs, or purchase residents’ homes at sited value.
Other Activities

State of Australian Cities Conference
Several members of the School were involved in the 3rd State of Australian Cities Conference (SOAC 07) held in Adelaide in November 2007. The conference was attended by over 300 academics, researchers, students and policymakers; and attracted more than 100 research papers on the current state of research relating to Australian Cities and current urban policy challenges. Associate Professor Clive Forster was Program Committee Chair and chaired the conference plenary session. Dr Emma Baker presented a paper entitled ‘Housing and Health: Examining the Impacts of Generational Housing Reform on Vulnerable Urban Households’.

HREOC Panel Discussion
Dr. Gour Dasvarma participated in a panel discussion in November 2007 addressing a 10-member delegation from China’s National Population and Family Planning Commission (NPFPC) undertaking a Human Rights and Family Planning Study Visit. The purpose of the visit was to provide a group of officials from the NPFPC with knowledge of Australian experience, expertise and approaches to human rights protection in the delivery of family planning, reproductive and sexual health services. Dr. Dasvarma met with the delegation and spoke to them about the ‘Trends in fertility in Australia, causes of fertility decline, and their policy and planning implications’. The panel discussion on the social, psychological and behavioural aspects behind the choice to have children was organised by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), the Research Centre for Reproductive Health (RCRH) and Healthy Development Australian (HDA), under the China-Australia Human Rights Technical Cooperation Program (HRTC), a bilateral program of cooperation between the two governments, funded by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and managed by HREOC.

Left Out in the Cold Conference
Dr Deb Faulkner (Head of AHURI Southern) and Ms Cecile Cutler recently attended a conference entitled ‘Left Out in the Cold’ at Griffith University. The conference focussed on people experiencing chronic homelessness due to their impaired decision making. In many instances this impaired decision making is the result of Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) following alcohol or drug misuse. The speakers included representatives from housing organisations, Acquired Brain Injury Outreach Services and clinical neuro-psychologists. The legal aspect of caring for those with ABI was presented by the Office of the Adult Guardian who is frequently involved in assisting people unable to manage their housing especially in rental situations.

Be Active Conference
Dr Jonathan Sobels was an invited speaker at the recent ‘be active’ conference hosted by the Department of Sport and Recreation at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre in October 2007. The Department was interested in the fate of local community sport in times of drought. Such information formed part of his findings in the study of ‘Social Impacts of the Drought on the Lower Murray’ undertaken for the Lower Murray and Lakes Region Community Reference Group, funded by the Department of Primary Industries and Resources SA. Sport is an integral feature of communities in the bush and his description of the loss of participants and loss of participation was exemplified by loss of sports activities. This was due to increased isolation caused by the cash drought - especially increased costs - and increased workloads. Their sense of shame as failures to deal with the drought was also a strong feature of withdrawal.

2008 International Solar Cities Congress
Kristine Peters, a postgraduate research student, presented a paper ‘Knowing and Doing: Environmental Behaviour Change in Small Business’ at the 2008 International Solar Cities Congress (18-21 February) in Adelaide.

Student Awards

2007 Premier’s Natural Resources Management (NRM) Awards
Michael Stead, a Bachelor of Environmental Management Honours student, was awarded the Rising Stars NRM Youth Volunteers/Male award.

Murray-Darling Association Bursaries
The Murray-Darling Association in conjunction with the City of Marion awarded two $500 travelling bursaries to Flinders University students studying and having a significant interest in water issues in the Murray-Darling Basin. The bursaries included a 4 day tour of River Murray Icon sites including river red gum forests, freshwater lakes and floodplains. The bursaries were awarded to the School of Geography, Population and Environmental Management students Angus Bruce and Renee LeCornu.
IAG Postgraduate Student Award
Gavin Malone, PhD candidate, has been awarded the Institute of Australian Geographers postgraduate award for his paper ‘Ways of belonging: reconciliation and Adelaide’s public space Indigenous cultural marks’ which was published in *Geographical Research: Journal of the Institute of Australian Geographers*, vol. 45(2), pp. 158-66.

School Awards
Congratulations to the following undergraduate students:
Applied GIS Project Prize 2007 – Andrew Murray
EIANZ Award 2007 – Marissa Bertram
The Australian Population Association Prize 2007 – Nicole March

The ESRI Australia GIS Prize 2007 - Hugh Hunkin
The John Lewis Prizes in Geography 2007 – Robert Bruce, Renee LeCornu, Marissa Bertram
The Murray McCaskill Medal 2007 – Erin Parham

Congratulations to the following postgraduate students:
The Les Heathcote Award 2007 – Brenton Hastie
The RGSA John Lewis Silver Medal 2007 – Shah Nawaz

Visitors & New Staff
Dr Bernhard Stratmann, a lecturer in urban sociology at the Institute for European Urban Studies (IfEU), Faculty of Architecture, Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Germany, is currently a Visiting Scholar at Flinders University, Department of Sociology. Bernhard presented a seminar entitled: ‘Mega Cities: City Size, Climate Change and the Quest for Global Sustainability’ as part of the School of Geography, Population and Environmental Management research seminar series in March.

Professor Chris Paris, Professor of Housing Studies, School of The Built Environments, University of Ulster, recently presented a seminar in November on ‘Second Homes and Local Housing Markets in Ireland.’

Dr Peta Raftery has been appointed as a Post Doctoral Research Fellow to work with Professor Andrew Beer, Dr Emma Baker and Professor Gavin Wood (from RMIT) on the ARC Linkage Project ‘Housing assistance and the life course: Understanding the impact of policy alternatives’.

Recent Staff Publications
Baker, E. and Arthurson, K. 2007, ‘Housing, Place or Social Networks: What’s more important for Relocating Tenants?’, *Australian Planner*, vol. 44, no. 4, pp. 29-35.


Recent Student Publications


Richards, N.W. in press, 'Prescribed burning in temperate peri-urban Australia': how and why is the decision to burn made? *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Queensland*.

This newsletter is also available at: [www.ssn.flinders.edu.au/geog](http://www.ssn.flinders.edu.au/geog)
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