

Indigenous Issues Study Group report to IAG AGM 2009

- Since the IAG Hobart conference meeting the main initiative has been the organisation of two sessions at the IAG Cairns conference, and the Study Group is starting to formulate proposals for the 2010 conference.
- Action has commenced to enhance the Study Group's web presence. One initiative being explored is to establish a Study Group blog, which can function as a 'virtual tearoom' for researchers working in the area of Indigenous issues to chat about work in progress, bounce ideas around, and discuss weighty issues of methodology and research ethics. This may be of particular use to postgraduates working on Indigenous issues. We are also looking for opportunities to showcase Study Group members' work via the website with a view to bringing Indigenous issues towards the core of the discipline, and promoting reconciliation.
- Study Group members have continued to pursue their own research interests. The variety of papers to be presented at the Indigenous Issues sessions at the Cairns conference indicates the breadth of the issues Study Group members are working on: landscape, cultural heritage and natural resource management; reconciliation; cultural tourism; youth development; social and environmental planning; cross-cultural communication; Indigenous rights, knowledge, methodologies and research ethics are just a few examples.
- The Study Group is working (slowly) to implement the actions identified in our *Study Group Plan 2008-2010*. Initiatives in progress which relate to the *Plan* include the web development discussed earlier, the themed sessions at the Cairns conference, and early discussions with colleagues at the University of Canterbury about joint conference sessions and, perhaps, a pre-conference gathering, at Christchurch in 2010. Discussions around the *Plan* at the Business Meeting held in Hobart pointed to a subtle redefinition of focus for the Study Group towards postcolonial and intercultural issues, natural resource management and caring for country, traditional knowledge, and the related issues of Indigenous knowledge, methodologies and ethics. A priority area is to increase opportunities for participation in Geography by Indigenous Australians through, *inter alia*, seeking to link Geography postgraduates with schools with high Indigenous enrolments, and by establishing a network to link Indigenous undergraduates and postgraduates in Geography and allied disciplines.

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