Parliament House is a challenging place for a geographer, and not only because you feel embarrassed to find yourself heading north instead of south along its endless corridors. Last week I was in Canberra to represent the IAG at HASS on the Hill, the social science equivalent of Science Meets Parliament. The IAG is fortunate - and unusual - to be a member of both the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FASTS) and the Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS). FASTS has more than fifteen years head start on CHASS, having worked very hard to raise the profile of science since Barry Jones’s 1988 comment that scientists were a bunch of wimps. The response to that comment led to the establishment of the post of Chief Scientist, the advisory body that is now the Prime Minister’s Science, Engineering and Innovation Council (PMSEIC), and the glitzy black tie dinner for the Prime Minister’s Prizes for Science. Some of the discussion at CHASS was about whether we need the arts and social science equivalents – Chief Social Scientist? Chief Artist? Chief Poet?

I was struck by the different timescales over which this work must be done. CHASS will build up credibility over the years, and has received recognition and encouragement from the current federal government. At the other end of the spectrum we had to hone our pitch to the pollies for the ‘elevator’ timeframe – what would you say if you were stuck in the lift for one minute with the Treasurer? Most of us, me included, feel we are not very good at this, being trained to tease out complexity rather than simplify. I got to practice on Peter Garrett and Wilson Tuckey, who were each generous with their time.

After an hour with the performativity of question time, I couldn’t bear the Westminster system any longer, but not for the lack of geography. Border crossings, urban infrastructure, population projections, water supply, climate refugees – geography was everywhere. It’s good to see geographers jumping into these debates with their diverse opinions and targeted expertise. At the risk of naming two that I just happened to see, this week we read Phil O’Neill on Sydney’s food supply and Bob Stimson on a population of 35 million.

An IAG representative who is currently doing a great job in the policy arena is our indefatigable secretary Alaric Maude, who has been working hard on the background discussions and papers for the National Geography Curriculum. This is an important and essentially long term activity that will make a profound contribution to the geographical literacy of all Australian kids.

And finally, we are all grateful to the hard working James Cook Uni team who made the IAG Conference in Cairns such a success. I would much rather have been there than in radiation treatment for breast cancer, but my thanks to the many members who have sent supportive messages. All good wishes for the end of the academic year and some respite over the summer.

Lesley Head
Vale Michael Williams

Professor Michael Williams had a life-long research interest in Historical Geography and the formation of landscapes, and published widely on these themes, in recognition of which he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1989.

Early work was on land draining and landscape evolution in The Draining of the Somerset Levels (Cambridge, 1970), and then on initial settlement and environmental and landscape perception and understanding in The Making of the South Australian Landscape (Academic, 1976).


Shifting focus to global land-use/land cover transformation and change, especially in North America, he wrote Americans and their Forests (Cambridge, 1989), followed by Wetlands: A Threatened Landscape, (Blackwell, 1991), and Planet Management (Andromeda/OUP, 1992).

Returning to the practice of historical geography and geography in general he was lead editor (with T. Coppock, H. Clout, and H. Prince) of The Relations of History and Geography; Studies in England, France and the United States (Exeter, 2001) and co-edited with Ron Johnston the British Academy’s centennial volume A Century of British Geography (British Academy / OUP, 2003). His latest work was a global account and interpretation of deforestation entitled Deforesting the Earth: From Prehistoric to Global Crisis (Chicago, 2003).

These more recent works were awarded international prizes including the Weyerhauser Prize of the American Forest and Conservation Society (1990) for Americans and their Forests, again in 2004 for Deforesting the Earth, which was also awarded the Meridian Prize of the Association of American Geographers for “the most scholarly work in geography” (2004), and was runner-up in the annual British Academy’s Book Prize (2004).

Most recently he was working on a biography of the life and work of Carl Ortwin Sauer (1889-1975), American geographer, environmental thinker, student of Latin America, and many other interests including plant and animal domestication, and entry of early man into the Americas, the relationship of geography and the Social Sciences, and the nature of landscapes and change. (written by Professor Diana Liverman, University of Arizona)

Vale Ooi Giok Ling

Professor Ooi Giok Ling, Humanities/Social Studies Education, National Institute of Education, Singapore and Adjunct Professorial Fellow, Institute of Policy Studies, Singapore, passed away on 5 October 2009. She was a graduate of the Department of Human Geography, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University. Prior to her current position Professor Ooi taught at the University of Malaya from 1975 to 1978 and from 1982 to 1983 and University Sains Malaysia from 1981 to 1982. She was an Executive Systems and Research Officer at the Housing and Development Board, Singapore from 1983 to 1989 and the Director for Research at the Ministry of Home Affairs, Singapore from 1995 to 1997. Her research Interests covered Housing and Urban Studies, especially Public Housing Policies, New Town and Urban Planning and Heritage Conservation, and the Environment, notably Globalization, Sustainable Development and Nature Conservation. At the time of her death she was the President of the Southeast Asian Geographers Association (SEAGA).

(written by Peter Rimmer)
News From the IAG Council

Report from Council

Council has approved the following awards:

Australia-International Medal
• Professor John Connell, University of Sydney

Distinguished Fellowship of the Institute of Australian Geographers
These awards were presented at the Cairns Conference. Citations can be found on the Awards page of the IAG website.
• Emeritus Professor Bob Fagan, Macquarie University
• Professor Ruth Fincher, University of Melbourne
• Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick, University of Tasmania
• Associate Professor Alaric Maude, Flinders University
• Emeritus Professor Roger McLean, ADFA@ UNSW

Fellowship of the Institute of Australian Geographers
• Professor Kay Anderson, University of Western Sydney
• Adjunct Associate Professor Patrick Armstrong, Edith Cowan University and UWA
• Mr Terry Birtles, ADFA@UNSW
• Professor Bill Boyd, Southern Cross University
• Professor Roy Jones, Curtin University of Technology
• Professor Brian G. Lees, ADFA@UNSW
• Professor Richard Le Heron, University of Auckland
• Emeritus Associate Professor Bob Loughran, University of Newcastle
• Professor Pauline McGuirk, University of Newcastle
• Professor Phil O’Neill, University of Western Sydney
• Associate Professor Elaine Stratford, University of Tasmania
• Emeritus Professor Murray Wilson, University of Wollongong
• Professor Hilary Winchester, University of South Australia

Editors of Geographical Research
Phil O’Neill, Brian Finlayson, Clive Forster and Wayne Stephenson have been appointed as Editors of Geographical Research, with Phil O’Neill as Editor-in-Chief. Their term of office commences in January 2010, but they have already begun work on issues for next year. Council has recorded its enormous thanks to the retiring Editors (Arthur Conacher, George Curry and Roy Jones) for their development of the journal to its current international status. A report on changes during their nine years of editorship is on the Geographical Research page of the IAG website.

Council Matters
The following matters were discussed at the Council meeting in December 2008.

A proposal for a Fay Gale Memorial Lecture, to be given at each IAG Conference by an outstanding early career researcher working in Australia, was approved. The organisers for each conference will select an appropriate speaker, with a preference for a local researcher, and send the nomination to the President six months before the conference. The President will issue the invitation to the chosen speaker.

Alaric Maude was appointed to represent the IAG on the Steering Committee of the Towards a National Geography Curriculum for Australia Project. Council also approved a contribution of $5000 towards the Project. Malcolm McInerney (President of AGTA and Chair of the Steering Committee) reported on the activities of the Project. He noted that the National Curriculum Board had no background reports on geography on which to base its work on a new curriculum, unlike other subjects. The aim of the Project was to provide this background information, identify what the curriculum should look like, and gain the support of the geographical community for this position.

A proposal that the IAG host an online undergraduate journal called Geoview, which had been running at Flinders University as a more local activity, was approved. Geoview can be reached through a link on the IAG website’s Publications page.

Council agreed that a pool of $20,000 be made available each year to support the activities of study groups. Individual groups could apply for up to $5000.

The following matters were discussed at the Council meetings in September 2009.

The Treasurer and Membership Secretary, Stewart Williams, reported a continuing growth in membership, and a healthy financial situation. Council thanked Stewart Williams and Paulene Harrowby for their enormous and painstaking work on the financial and membership records of the Institute.

Malcolm McInerney, President of AGTA and an ex officio member of Council, reported on AGTA’s activities for the past year. As Chair of the Towards a National Geography Curriculum for Australia Project he also talked about the two reports produced by the Project. Links to these reports can be found on the IAG website.

Council approved a proposal to be submitted to the Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for funding to support teachers of the new national curriculum with materials and training.
Council Matters cont....

Council decided that the Political Geography Study Group be disbanded, as it had been inactive for over a year and the Convenor was no longer an IAG member.

Two new Study Groups were approved: an Asia Pacific Transformations Study Group, with Barbara Rugendyke as the convenor, and a Legal Geography Study Group, convened by Robyn Bartel.

Council discussed the administration of study groups, and agreed to establish a Sub-Committee chaired by the Vice-President (Immediate Past President) (Jim Walmsley), with Kathleen Broderick and the Treasurer (Stewart Williams) as members. The Sub-Committee will be responsible for advising Council on the formation of new groups and the disbandment of old groups, monitoring their activities and deciding on their funding.

Future conferences will be in Christchurch (5-8 July 2010) in conjunction with the New Zealand Geographical Society, Wollongong (2011) and Macquarie University (2012).

Alaric Maude, Secretary

Update from the Treasury

Stewart Williams, IAG Treasurer, will be shortly posting reports from treasury on the IAG website.

Update from Heads of Geography

As usual, the Heads of Geography programs met just prior to the conference in Cairns. Detailed reports were received from twelve universities. These included:

• The Australian National University,
• Macquarie University, Newcastle University,
• Monash University, Flinders University,
• University of Sydney,
• University of Tasmania,
• University of Queensland,
• University of New England,
• UNSW@ADFA, and the
• University of Western Sydney.

These reports were detailed but, in summary, contained the following interesting information:

The organisational and structural changes of the past decade continue in many places. It was surprising to note that some previous amalgamations into schools are being re-organised into different schools after a period of stability. It seems quite strange, but is taking place in several locations.

Overall, with one or two exceptions, both undergraduate and postgraduate numbers in Geography are rising steadily. The average over the past three years, for those who provided figures, seems to be a +5% per annum increase in both UG and HDR enrolments. This is a pleasant development after years of declining numbers. With rising numbers of students, this is putting some pressure on staff in many places. However, at most places providing reports, both staff numbers and budgets are stable.

Nationally, the picture is a very healthy one for the discipline.

Brian Lees
Recently the Institute of Australian Geographers held its annual conference at JCU Cairns from 28 September to 1 October 2009. The conference theme “Balancing Choices and Effects in a Dynamic World” attracted 230 delegates from all parts of Australia, from New Zealand, Canada and Britain. This was the first time the annual conference had been held in Cairns, and only the second time it had been held in North Queensland. The local organizing committee was comprised of SEES staff: Steve Turton, Dave Gillieson (Co-Chairs), Lisa Law, Karen McNamara and Marc Leblanc. Major sponsors were JCU, the Australian Tropical Forest Institute, Wiley-Blackwell and Routledge publishers. The conference was opened by the Mayor of Cairns, Cr Val Schier.

The programme reflected the current diversity in the discipline of Geography. Sessions included topics such as: World Heritage and tourism; Geographies of climate change and adaptation; Re-imagining the tropics: sites and networks of knowledge; Globalisation, consumption and development; GIS, spatial analysis and modeling; Community food economies; Indigenous peoples and colonialism, post-colonialism, racialisation and whiteness.

Well attended plenary sessions included presentations by SEES staff members Peter Valentine, Michael Bird and Brian Roberts. The Fay Gale Lecture was given by Dr Melissa Nursey-Bray, a JCU Cairns PhD graduate now at the Australian Maritime College. She provided a highly stimulating overview of the issues involved in working with Indigenous and rural people in natural resources management.

A Postgraduate workshop on “Thinking/writing theory” was run by Professor Katherine Gibson (University of Western Sydney). This was an interactive workshop targeted at postgraduate students and designed to explore issues surrounding theoretical writing and the nature of theory. Field excursions to the Daintree and to the Atherton Tablelands were led by Steve Turton and Dave Gillieson respectively and were very well attended.
The 2010 IAG Conference will be held in conjunction with the New Zealand Geographical Society. Below is a message from the Christchurch organisers.

Dear Australian geographers,

The biennial conference of the New Zealand Geographical Society in conjunction with the Institute of Australian Geographers will be held in Christchurch, New Zealand 5-8 July 2010. Full details about the conference can be found at http://www.nzgs2010.org.nz/ and further information concerning keynote speakers and field trips will be added in due course. The call for panel proposals and individual abstracts on any geographic theme is now open. The conference is open to geographers anywhere in the world and we especially encourage graduate students as well as established faculty to attend and present their work.

Panel proposals
Conference attendees are invited to submit proposals for panels, special sessions or workshops. Once approved by the programme committee, convenors will be responsible for issuing a call for papers and finding speakers. Each approved panel will be given one or two 80 minutes sessions of four speakers per session.


General abstract submission
Speakers who are not assigned to a specific panel should submit an abstract of 250 words through the conference website at http://www.nzgs2010.org.nz/ and the programme committee will assign the paper to an appropriately themed session. The deadline for submission of abstracts is 1 April 2010.

Listserv
We have also created a New Zealand Geography listserv which we will use to send out conference updates. To subscribe to the listserv, go to the following web page:
http://lists.canterbury.ac.nz/mailman/listinfo/nzgeog

Once you have subscribed you are also welcome to use the listserv to send out information to other NZ geographers. Please tell your graduate students about the list and encourage them to sign up.

Further information
If you have any questions about the conference programme, please contact Julie Cupples at julie.cupples@canterbury.ac.nz. If you have any questions about registration, the website, accommodation or any other conference-related matter, please contact the conference manager Eddy van Til at eddy@eenz.com.
CONFERENCES

Asia-Pacific STS Network Conference, Brisbane
23 - 25 November 2009
This inaugural annual meeting of the new Asia-Pacific Science, Technology and Society Network will focus on research and practice in the region. A special focus is on environmental and indigenous themes.
For more information please email r.hindmarsh@griffith.edu.au

State of Australian Cities Conference, Perth
24 - 27 November 2009
The 4th State of Australian Cities Conference will be held at the University of Western Australia.
For more information please email maginnpi@cyllene.uwa.edu.au

Urban History Planning History Conference, Melbourne
7 - 10 February 2010
This conference will be held at the University of Melbourne
For more information please visit http://www.abp.unimelb.edu.au/aboutus/event/conferences/greenfields/call-for-papers.html

Agri-Food XVI Conference, Auckland
24 - 27 November 2009
This conference will encourage debate, information exchange and collaboration between researchers based in universities and other organisations
For more information please email r.leheron@auckland.ac.nz

Managing Biodiversity in a Time of Global Change, Hobart
30 November - 3 December 2009
This meeting of the Society for Conservation Biology Oceania Section will focus on a range of Oceanian terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystem as well as Antarctic ecosystems.
For more information please email karina@design.com.au

NEW... IAG Study Group Legal Geography

The Legal Geography group are pleased to announce its formation at IAG Cairns and would like to issue an open invitation to those who would like to join us. Legal Geography encompasses several areas of geographic interest including: regulation of land use through planning (urban or town planning, regional and rural planning, social and environmental planning) and property (both land and in personality and in the privatisation of the global commons and interests in non-human nature); mobility (regulation of personal movement and migration); political environmental geography; regulatory theory ( theorizing of the relationship between formal and informal means of regulation and people and place); markets (the ultimate regulator of all markets is the law); governance and social justice issues (relationships of power with regards to inclusion/exclusion, citizenship, community planning, rights and freedoms, including public participation, movement and political expression of minority groups and interests). All of these are regulated in some way through the mechanism and institution of the law.

The study group foresees that the intellectual examination of these areas will escalate in the near future as the law increasingly enters the sphere of geography in the regulation of globalized markets, terrorism and security, trade in carbon and water, land management and land use, and in the blurring of the boundaries between private and public ownership and management of land and natural resources. This will only compound and reinforce the significance of the law as both a necessary variable and explanatory tool for the spatial variation of human activity. Likewise, the social justice, participation, representation and inclusion of minority groups (on the grounds of race, ethnicity, Indigeneity and sexuality) are increasingly voiced and regulated through legal mechanisms, framing and underpinning issues of governance, mobility and rights.

We are therefore pretty excited about the formation of the group and are also keen to engage in dialogue with other study groups. We are especially focusing in the short term on the NZGS (with IAG) conference next year.

Robyn Bartel (Chair)
Griffith Taylor Medal
The medal is awarded for distinguished contributions to geography in Australia. No more than one medal is to be awarded in each two year period.

Award Rules
Nominations will be invited in September each second year through the IAG list and through a notice in the Institute’s last Newsletter for the year. A full statement (of no more than 1000 words) must be made describing the nominee’s suitability for the award. This statement is to be accompanied by the signatures of two proposing financial members and seconded by a further two financial members. Awards will be made by a majority of Council after receiving advice from the President. Nominations for awards are strictly confidential and must not be made known to the nominee. No member shall be informed of nomination until formally invited by Council President to accept the award. Nominations should be sent to the Secretary.

Professional Services Award
In recognition of a distinguished contribution to geographical education or for the advancement of geographical practice in Australia. Each nominee should be required to have a continuous record of IAG membership of not less than ten years. There will be a maximum of three awards annually.

Award Rules
Nominations will be invited in September each year through the IAG list and through a notice in the Institute’s last Newsletter for the year. A full statement (of no more than 1000 words) must be made describing the nominee’s suitability for the award. This statement is to be accompanied by the signatures of two proposing financial members and seconded by a further two financial members. Awards will be made by a majority of Council after receiving advice from the President. Nominations for awards are strictly confidential and must not be made known to the nominee. No member shall be informed of nomination until formally invited by Council President to accept the award. Nominations should be sent to the Secretary.

Fellowship of the Institute of Australian Geographers
The Fellowship is awarded for distinguished service to the Institute. No more than one Fellowship is to be awarded each year.

Award Rules
Nominations will be invited in September each year through the IAG list and through a notice in the Institute’s last Newsletter for the year. A full statement (of no more than 1000 words) must be made describing the nominee’s suitability for the award. This statement is to be accompanied by the signatures of two proposing financial members and seconded by a further two financial members. Awards will be made by a majority of Council after receiving advice from the President. Nominations for awards are strictly confidential and must not be made known to the nominee. No member shall be informed of nomination until formally invited by Council President to accept the award. Nominations should be sent to the Secretary.

Australian-International Medal
In recognition of either outstanding contributions by Australian (or Australia-based) geographers to the advancement of Geography worldwide or of outstanding contributions to the understanding of the geography of Australia by geographers permanently residing outside Australia. No more than one medal is to be awarded each year.

Award Rules
Nominations will be invited in September each year through the IAG list and through a notice in the Institute’s last Newsletter for the year. A full statement (of no more than 1000 words) must be made describing the nominee’s suitability for the award. This statement is to be accompanied by signatures of two proposing financial members and seconded by a further two financial members. Awards will be made by a majority of Council after receiving advice from the President. Nominations for awards are strictly confidential and must not be made known to the nominee. No member shall be informed of nomination until formally invited by Council President to accept the award. Nominations should be sent to the Secretary.

Past Winners
Griffith Taylor Medal
• Mrs Ann Marshall 1989 (citation)
• Dr Les Heathcote 1997 (citation)
• Dr Joe Gentilli 1998
• Professor Fay Gale 2001 (citation)
• Professor Bruce Thom 2004 (citation)
• Emeritus Professor John Holmes 2006 (citation)
• Professor Joe Powell 2008

Australia - International Medal
• Professor Janice Monk 1999
• Professor Reginald Golledge 2000
• Professor Tom McKnight 2001
• Emeritus Professor Harold Brookfield 2005 (citation)
• Emeritus Professor Ian Douglas 2006 (citation)
Grants and Awards Received

Lesley Head (University of Wollongong) has won a rare **ARC Laureate Fellowship** for her project ‘Cultural environmental research: the missing link in multidisciplinary approaches to sustainability’. The Fellowship enables Lesley to undertake research exclusively for five years, and provides funding for the establishment of the Australian Centre for Cultural Environmental Research (AUSCCER) in the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of Wollongong. The aims of AUSCCER are to: 1. undertake in-depth cultural analysis of Australia’s highest priority environmental issues to make both intellectual and practical contributions to the pressing problems of environmental sustainability; 2. strengthen national humanities/social science research and research training capacity in the environmental field, with particular strengths in ethnographic and related social science methods; 3. drive theoretical and practical research frontiers on the cultural environment; 4. provide a basis for more effective multidisciplinary engagement with the natural and physical sciences; 5. contribute to the development of relevant local, state and federal policy; and 6. build Australia’s international research presence in the cultural dimensions of environmental sustainability.

Chris Gibson (University of Wollongong) has been awarded one of the inaugural **ARC Future Fellowships** (FT0991193, 2010-2013) at the level of Professorial Fellow, enabling him to pursue full-time research on a project entitled “Crisis and change: cultural-economic research on the adaptability and sustainability of Australian households”.

Louise Crabtree (University of Western Sydney) received the inaugural **Federal Housing Minister’s Award for Early Career Researchers** in August for her paper ”Housing as a social-ecological system: resilience, adaptive capacity and governance considerations” which was presented at the National Housing Researchers’ Conference. The paper presents the theoretical framework for her UWS Early Career Grant project, titled ”Housing affordability, adaptive comanagement and resilience: an audit of innovative housing in Australia”. Fieldwork for this was undertaken in July, in Castlemaine, Victoria and Bega, NSW.

Tom Measham (CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems) Tom Measham (Human Geographer, CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems) was part of the winning team awarded the **‘Eureka Award for Innovative Solutions To Climate Change’** 2009. The prize was awarded to a team of 10 researchers, including Tom and geographically oriented scientists Ben Preston (CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research) and Tim Smith, (University of the Sunshine Coast) for their work on the ‘Sydney Climate Change Adaptation Initiative’. This collaboration has assisted Councils in the Sydney region to better understand potential climate change impacts in the Sydney region and how they can adapt to them at the local and regional scale.

PhDs Recently Awarded

Darrell Fisher (UNE) graduated with a PhD in human geography in October for his thesis, ”Grain drain: The Impacts of Changing Infrastructure and Marketing on the Wheat Landscape of Northern New South Wales”. Darrell was supervised by Prof. Jim Walmsley and Assoc. Prof. Neil Argent.

Paul Hodge (University of Newcastle) recently graduated. His thesis entitled “Development discourse and the postcolonial challenge: the case of Fiji’s aid industry” presented a postcolonial critique of development and academic discourses in the context of the South Pacific, focusing on Fiji’s aid industry.
ARC Discovery and Linkage Grant Successes

IAG members were awarded the following grants in the most recent ARC Discovery and Linkage grant round:

‘Institutions for Food Security: Global Lessons from Rural India’. Sydney University
Bill Pritchard (UoS); Anu Rammohan (UWA); Jay Bandara, Griffith; Madhushree Sekher and S. Parasuraman from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai); 2010-2013

The project will use a series of networked case studies to document the ways that the rural poor in India are navigating the current global food crisis.

‘Developing criteria to help solve Australia’s urban infrastructure crisis’. University of Western Sydney.
Phil O’Neill; $164,000

The project seeks to recover and rebuild a language for understanding the role of infrastructure in Australian cities and then devise criteria for better enactment of the infrastructure procurement and provisioning processes. The project’s prime outcomes will intersect with a growing need for better ways to build and operate large economic infrastructure and thus contribute to building cities that perform better economically, are more liveable, and contribute to long term environmental sustainability goals.

‘Soil erosion and river system response to climate change and early human activity in Australia’. University of Wollongong.
Dr A Dosseto (UOW); Prof AR Chivas (UOW); Dr AM Heimsath; $300,000; 2010-2012.

This project will provide a much needed quantitative understanding of how soils and rivers have responded and adapted to climate change and human activity in Australia. The outcomes will inform models to predict how our environment is likely to adapt to new conditions in the future as a result of indirect (global warming) and direct (intensive land use) human-related stresses. This project will contribute to the innovative character of Australian research through the development and implementation of new approaches to study soil and river processes.

‘Untangling the links between El Nino and the changing global climate’. University of Wollongong.

Dr HV McGregor (UOW); Prof CD Woodroffe (UOW); Dr SJ Phipps; Dr A Timmermann; Dr AW Tudhope; Dr JN Brown; Dr D Fink; A/Prof A Fedorov; $350,000; 2010-2012.

Australia is a country of ‘drought and flooding rain’, and a key factor governing these cycles is the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO). Our project will provide the following benefits to the nation (i) increased understanding of ENSO variability; (ii) increased knowledge of the extremes of ENSO; (iii) insights into what causes ENSO to vary; and (iv) improved ability to forecast ENSO. Understanding ENSO is essential for anticipating changes in drought and rain in the future. This understanding will help us to adapt Australia’s valuable agricultural and farming industries to climate change, and to manage our precious water resources.

‘How green were our deserts? Evidence for Late Quaternary climate change and the source of water in the Lake Eyre basin’. University of Wollongong

Prof GC Nanson; A/Prof BG Jones; Prof CV Murray-Wallace; Dr TJ Cohen (all UOW); $350,000; 2010-2012

This project addresses the National Research Priority of Environmentally Sustainable Australia by examining evidence for what has controlled climate change and variable runoff in the vast Lake Eyre basin. It will provide evidence for why Australia, presently the world’s driest inhabited continent, has as recently as medieval times supported large lakes holding many cubic kilometres of fresh water adjacent to the now-barren Flinders Ranges. It will show if this water had a tropical or temperate source, fundamental information for understanding Australia’s past climate, and allow predictions of future climate to be based on firm evidence.
Human responses to long term landscape and climate change in the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area. University of Wollongong

Dr N Stern; Dr KE Fitzsimmons; Prof CV Murray-Wallace (UOW); $652,000; 2010-2012.

A multi-disciplinary research endeavour that includes the Traditional Tribal Groups from the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area will investigate the impact of past global climate change on a fragile, semi-arid ecosystem in the continent's southeast.

‘People, Pumps and Pipes: A social study of change in the collaborative supply of irrigation services’. University of South Australia

Dr Lia Bryant, Dr Matthew W Rofe, Prof Guy M Robinson; 2010-2012; $162,663

The research addresses key National Priorities and Priority Goals relating to improved sustainable water management in Australia's foremost river system. The research offers deeper understanding of the social dimensions of National Water Initiative reforms, and specifically motivations for irrigators' decisions contributing to more sustainable water use following legislative reforms. The project links understanding of the nexus between policy and environmental behaviour to advance knowledge of more sustainable water use. Given the current demands on water in the Murray-Darling system and the systems national significance, the research will make a vital contribution to management of this critical national resource.

Other Research Grants

Fran Rolley and Neil Argent (University of New England)

have been engaged by the NSW Department of Planning, Demography Unit, to identify better indicators of net migration change in non-metropolitan NSW. The consultancy is worth c. $26 000.

Jenny Cameron (Newcastle University)

received a New Staff Grant to facilitate her work on food-based community enterprises.

Sarah Wright (Newcastle University)

received a Project Enhancement Grant to work on places of crossing and connection in Australia's northern border region.

Elaine Stratford (University of Tasmania)

With colleagues Dr Doug Colbeck (Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching) and Dr Steve Watson (Honorary Research Associate), and aided from time to time by Ms Kristin Warr (recently a Green Cross Ambassador) has recently received three $50k grants from the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

The commissioned work is at the interface between research and knowledge engagement, providing continuing professional development systems, content and quality assurance for the Department’s Green Loans home sustainability assessors. The work is part of a program of disparate projects in the School being conducted on various aspects of housing and sustainable development, one in Aceh on the cultural geographies of post-disaster housing [Catherine Elliott, PhD Candidate], another on retrofitting for energy and equity [Philippa Watson, PhD Candidate].

Amy Griffin (The Australian National University)

With Dr Lyndall Strazdins, Prof Dorothy H Broom, Mr John D Glover, Dr Catherine Banwell, Dr Jane M Dixon, Dr Rosemary Korda, Miss Megan A Shipley, Dr Francesco Paolucci, Dr Marian T Esler, Dr Stephen J Corbett were awarded a grant by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs , Sydney West Area Health Service for the project ‘Time scarcity in Australian families: another inequity?’
Gordon Waitt, Chris Gibson, Lesley Head and Nick Gill
(University of Wollongong)

Gordon Waitt, Chris Gibson, Lesley Head and Nick Gill have conducted a major survey of households in the Illawarra, as part of their ARC Discovery Project ‘Making Less Space for Carbon: Cultural Research for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation’.

The project seeks to understand how households are responding to the twin challenges of becoming more sustainable, in a time of financial vulnerability. Over 11,000 households were sent surveys, and over 1,400 completed surveys were received.

Pauline McGurik, Kathy Mee, Lesley Instone, Robert King (University of Newcastle) and Phillip O’Neill (University of Western Sydney)

are working on an ARC Linkage grant with the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet (Hunter Region) to develop data-sharing protocols across government agencies as a prelude to developing fine-grained indicators of social well-being and vulnerability. The research has progressed and is now undertaking the extensive process of analysing data received from the participating government agencies.

Jenny Cameron
(University of Newcastle)

has been working with several Newcastle and Brisbane-based community enterprises, looking at the diverse economic practices the enterprises are using to enact their social, economic and environmental commitments; the challenges the enterprises face, and the ways they are addressing the challenges. She has been invited to present on this work at several fora, including a Queensland State Government roundtable on sustainable and secure food futures. She has also been running writing workshops for PhD students at the University of Newcastle and Griffith University.

Laurence Knight
(Queensland University of Technology)

Presented a paper on Australian birding tourism at the Borneo Bird Festival. The festival was held at the Sepilok Rainforest Discovery Centre near Sandakan on the north coast of Borneo. Laurence writes ‘The organisers very kindly organised a trip after the festival that took me and my fellow Australians to Sukau (on the Kinabatangan River) and to Mt Kinabalu (the highest peak in SE Asia) on our way to Kota Kinabalu. Collectively, we saw a little over 200 species of birds and a number of iconic mammals (Orang utans, Proboscis Monkeys, and a Slow Loris etc). We also got to experience both low altitude and high altitude equatorial rainforests, and saw a fair bit of the oil palm industry’.

Research on Sydney’s master-planned communities is advancing, with major survey of six case study estates completed and follow-up interviews in their final stages.

Geographers are Working On...
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Brad Rutting (University of Sydney)

Was elected at the student council representative to the Geographical Society of New South Wales for 2010. Brad is planning to run some postgraduate events/activities in 2010.

Sarah James, Phil O’Neill and Louise Crabtree (University of Western Sydney)

have recently completed research on Sydney’s food value chain as part of the Urban Research Centre’s Feeding Sydney project. This research was presented at two recent conferences on Sydney’s food system. The first at the University of Western Sydney’s Hawkesbury campus highlighted critical issues around food production and water supply. The subsequent ‘Food Summit’ took a complimentary focus, addressing issues of consumption and related health and waste issues. Each conference drew over 200 attendees. Sarah and the Feeding Sydney team also continue to run their workshop series with fellow food researchers at Macquarie University under Professor Bob Fagan.

Elaine Stratford (University of Tasmania)

has recently returned to Australia after being invited to participate in the Cini Foundation’s San Giorgio Dialogues in Venice. The three-day conversation, on the theme of space as contested terrain: landscaping politics, included Bruno Latour, William Cronon, Godfrey Baldacchino, Tim Ingold, Nigel Thrift, Claire Bishop, and Philippe Descola. Significant insights came from the Dialogues, in particular around questions ‘inventing political visions’, ‘managing territories’, and ‘organising liveable spaces’. See http://www.cini.it/uploads/press/def80f5c1f4d4e28da6842436042ae4c.pdf for further details.

Stewart Williams (University of Tasmania)

has now completed all outputs in his AHURI funded project Natural disaster preparation and response for State Housing Authorities. The $67,000 project with Dr Keith Jacobs, a sociologist at UTAS also benefitted by input from Professors Peter Newton at SwinburneUT and Ed Blakeley at USyd. Additionally, it led to Stewart being invited to speak at the Australian Social Policy Conference at UNSW in July, and at the National Housing Conference at Melbourne in November.

Stewart and Keith have also officially since been invited to edit a special issue of the UK-based Housing Studies on an aspect this topic. The call for papers is still current and can be accessed through the journal’s web page. The issue will be published as ‘Disasters, housing and actuarialism: the securitisation of risk’ in early 2011.

Deirdre Dragovich (University of Sydney)

now an honorary associate in Geosciences at the University of Sydney, completed several years as Associate Dean (Faculty of Science) and a two-year term as Director of Postgraduate Studies for the Faculties of Science, Agriculture and Veterinary Science at the end of 2008. She continues as a member of the University’s Middle East Group; supervises 5 research postgraduates; teaches a postgraduate course; and is co-leader of the Gravestone Project, part of the Geological Society of America’s EarthTrek program www.goearthtrek.com.

Julie Davidson (University of Tasmania)

has all but finished work funded by the Australian Government Department of Climate Change from the Climate Change Adaptation Skills for Professionals Small Grants Program. With novel educational outcomes now tested and awaiting roll-out in mid 2010, the project had one specific aim to develop and trial a model to integrate teaching and learning for climate change adaptation into existing unit structures. The first objective has been to build understanding and skills for climate change adaptation planning among planning professionals. The second has been to assist in mainstreaming climate change adaptation into existing postgraduate education and training for planners and managers of built and natural environments, and emphasize problem-based learning (PBL) as a key strategy. These objectives have been achieved by designing and developing coursework material for a one-semester unit that can be readily incorporated into postgraduate environmental planning courses across Australian universities.

Recently The Australian Physical Environment, co-authored with Howard Bridgman and John Dodson and published in 2008 by OUP, was joint winner of the Australian Publishers Association annual award for a tertiary (wholly Australian) single title.
Peter Rimmer  
(Australian National University)

During 2009 Peter Rimmer has been teaching in the Masters in Global Logistics Management (MGLM) in the Graduate School of Logistics at Inha University. He was instrumental in helping to establish the program when he was The Hanjin Shipping Chair Professor of Global Logistics at the University (2005-06) and has continued to present the introductory module in subsequent years.

Currently, Peter is working on a book, tentatively entitled Global + Local Logistics: Perspectives on the Asian-Pacific Region, which is based on his course given at Inha University. He is also a consultant to the Transport Planning and Research Institute (TPRI) of the Ministry of Transport of the People's Republic of China in the Transport Efficiency through Logistics Development Policy Study funded by the Asian Development Bank. With a specific focus on multimodal transport, this project involves fieldwork in four provinces in China — Anhui, Hunan, Sichuan and Zhejiang — and comparisons with Germany, Japan, Korea and the United States. The output is intended for inclusion in China's 12th Five Year Plan (2011-2016).

Matthew Rofe  
(University of South Australia)

recently attended the Geographies of Education Conference (Sept 8th and 9th) at the University of Loughborough, UK. The paper I presented was entitled International Educating Cities: Alternate pathways to global city status?

Michael Adams  
(University of Wollongong)

has recently been appointed to the World Commission on Protected Areas, one of six commissions of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the largest conservation organisation in the world.

Adams, from the Woolyungah Indigenous Centre at UOW (and Professor David Farrier from the Institute of Conservation Biology and Law), attended a workshop in Germany in July to help IUCN produce a major new publication, the international Guidelines for Protected Areas Legislation.

They jointly prepared a case study on Indigenous co-management at Booderee National Park, Jervis Bay, and Farrier prepared an overview of Indigenous co-management arrangements in Australia. Following the workshop, both academics were invited to join the World Commission on Protected Areas. Adams will contribute expertise to a range of IUCN projects, including the Cultural and Spiritual Values Specialist Group.

Postgraduate News

On Sunday 27th of September 27 Postgraduate Students attended an interactive workshop entitled ‘Thinking and Writing Theory’ which was led by Professor Katherine Gibson from the University of Western Sydney.

The workshop was held as part of the IAG conference in Cairns. Beginning with a discussion surrounding the question of how we ask questions of other peoples work, students then broke into groups to consider an influential piece of theoretical writing of their choice. The conversations arising out of this examination formed the material for a discussion that was aimed at unpacking a diverse range of theory in a way that was accessible to all. The workshop was a fantastic opportunity to meet other postgraduates from a variety of places and feedback from the workshop was overwhelmingly positive. I would like to once more thank all those students who attended and Professor Katherine Gibson for such a stimulating workshop and discussion on the complexity of theory. The workshop was followed by dinner where conversation continued. If any students have ideas for future postgraduate events please feel free to contact me at miriam.williams@studentmail.newcastle.edu.au.

Fiona McKenzie (University of Sydney)  
(Currently supervised by Associate Professor Phil McManus) participated in the ABARE/GRDC Grains industry productivity workshop in Dubbo, NSW. In August, Fiona was a guest speaker at the Australian Environmental Grantmaker’s Network 2009 Annual Conference, addressing the topic ‘Sustainable agriculture and food systems: the future of food in Australia’. In December, she will be attending the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.

University of Wollongong

Dr. Carol Farbotko joined the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of Wollongong as an associate research fellow in August 2009. She will be working on the ARC Discovery Project ‘Making less space for carbon: Cultural research for adaptation and mitigation’, completing an ethnographic study of Illawarra households over three years.

New four and five year lecturing positions have been advertised to replace Lesley Head and Chris Gibson while they undertake their fellowships.

University of New England

Professor Martin Thoms, formerly of the University of Canberra, has taken up the Chair in Geography and Planning following Jim Walmsley’s recent retirement.

Martin’s research interests incorporate fluvial geomorphology and limnology. He is an internationally respected researcher in the area of riverine system management.

University of Newcastle

Staff in the Discipline of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Newcastle were joined in August by Dr Meg Sherval. Meg’s current research projects include: investigating tunnel use and transport corridors through perceptions of commuters in Sydney; considering whether residential and recreational golf course developments can be utilised as a means of creating more green spaces and for the remediation of old industrial sites; and investigating regional development opportunities in Alaska post peak-oil and the decline of Prudhoe Bay. Her recent published works include:


Assoc. Prof. Jenny Cameron and Dr Sarah Wright led three sessions on “Community Food Economies at the recent IAG Conference held in Cairns, 28-30 Sept.

Dr Kathy Mee and postgraduate students Nicola Vaughan and Lisa Webber led a session on “Visual Methodologies” at the IAG Conference held in Cairns.

Professor Pauline McGuirk presented at Academy of Social Science Australia (ASSA) Workshops on ‘Privatisation, Security and Community: How Master Planned Estates are Changing Suburban Australia’, the University of Queensland, 28-29 September and ‘Space and Place: Informing Policy and Planning Through a Spatially Integrates Social Science’, ANU, 3 Nov

University of Sydney

Young Ng, PhD candidate of the School of Geosciences, was actively involved in setting up the urban geopark. Young is a member of the Hong Kong Geopark Taskforce, along with his supervisor Associate Professor Phil McManus. After years of hard work and lobbying, Young’s proposal of establishing a geopark in Hong Kong was accepted by the Hong Kong Government in 2008. The Hong Kong National Geopark officially opened on November 3, 2009. With the national status, Hong Kong aims at nomination for the UNESCO Global Geopark status in 2010. Young has also lined up Kanawinka Global Geopark of South Australia with Hong Kong National Geopark and five other geoparks as a sister network to enhance co-operation and exchange of management experiences in the region.

Five University of Sydney Geoscience postgrads presented at IAG Cairns:

Kate Griffiths: Cultures of Aid: Chinese aid to Cambodia

Paula Brown: Regulatory and livelihoods change around marine protected areas in Vietnam: Agrarian change processes in the coastal zone

Nguyen Tuong Huy: Poverty impacts of change to a ‘modern’ capture fisheries: Insights from fishing communities around Nha Phu lagoon of Vietnam

Nathan Wales: Combining remote sensing change detection and qualitative data to examine landscape change in the context of world heritage zoning

Wora Sukraroek: Embedding Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in the Lower Mekong Basin: rhetoric or realistic at the local level?

Brad Ruting (former honours student) also presented two papers: Migrancy, mobility and diasporic travel; The occupational integration of recent immigrants to Australia

University of Tasmania

The School of Geography and Environmental Studies recently received its Planning Institute of Australia reaccreditation for the Graduate Diploma and Masters in Environmental Planning courses. Staff in the spatial sciences group have also secured major equipment funds to purchase a 15 terabyte server, which will significantly enhance GIS, geodetic and remote sensing capabilities for teaching, pure research and research consultancies.
Peter Rimmer with Howard Dick (University of Melbourne) co-authored ‘The City in Southeast Asia: Patterns, Processes and Policy’ was published by NUS Press Singapore in association with the University of Hawai’i Press; this is a follow up to Howard and Peter’s Cities, Transport and Communications: The Integration of Southeast Asia since 1850 (Macmillan, 2003) which examined the impact of technological change on the region’s city systems and systems of cities.

Louise Johnson (Deakin University) has a forthcoming book on cultural capitals published by Ashgate.

Jeff Neilson and Bill Pritchard co-authored the book ‘Value Chain Struggles: Institutions and Governance in the Plantation Districts of South India. Published by Blackwell, Oxford, the book can be order online.

Stephen Gale has edited the October 2009 issue of Quaternary Geochrochronology


Members On the Move

Nicole Cook

has moved to Environment and Planning at RMIT University. The results from her post-doctoral research undertaken with Susan J Smith and Beverley Searle (for the project Banking on housing; spending the home) have been published in the Journal of Social Policy, the Journal of Sociology of Health and Illness, Consumption Markets and Culture and Area.

Brendan Whyte

has returned from teaching in Thailand to take up the position of Assistant Curator of Maps at the National library of Australia.

Back Files of Australian Geographical Studies
Available Online

In 2008 Wiley-Blackwell published the entire back history of Geographical Research (then Australian Geographical Studies) online. Content published since 1963 is now available alongside current content, at:
http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/119815348/grouphome/home.html

The IAG and Wiley-Blackwell are currently working on arrangements to provide all IAG members with online access to the back files.