



**Geographical Society of New South Wales
The 9th Annual Honours Conference
Friday 18 November, 2005**

**Macquarie University
Lincoln Building – Senate Room (3rd Floor)**

Conference Program

9:00 - 9:30 Registration

**9:30 - 9:45 Welcome by Prof. Elizabeth Deane, (Dean, Division of Environmental and Life Sciences)
Assoc/Prof. Richard Howitt (Department of Human Geography)
Assoc/Prof. Richard de Dear (Department of Physical Geography)**

Session 1: Chair (Wendy Shaw)

**9:50 Alison Mellor
10:10 Lara Cummings
10:30 Tess Holgate
10:50 Joanna Curry**

Morning Tea

Session 2: Chair (Russell Drysdale)

**11:40 Ben Watson
12:00 Sarah Deards
12:20 Emma Calgaro
12:40 Samantha Phillips**

Session 3: Chair (Kurt Iveson)

**11:40 Jack Lewis
12:00 Kathy Wiseham
12:20 Lindsay Menday
12:40 Abby Yates**

Lunch

Session 4: Chair (Chris Gibson)

**2:00 Rebekah Coles
2:20 Nicolas Olivares
2:40 Sophia Alison
3:00 Louise Beehag**

Session 5: Chair (Mel Neave)

**2:00 Kelly Wilkinson
2:20 Nicola Rees
2:40 Grant Taylor
3:00 Clayton Sparke**

Afternoon Tea

Session 6: Chair (Bob Fagan)

**3:50 Colleen Miranda Wong
4:10 Patricia Tindall
4:30 Chris Brennan-Horley**

**5:00 Presentation of honours prize and closing remarks.
(Prof. Bob Fagan)**

Conference Abstracts

Sophia Alison

University of Sydney

See Red: Corporate Social Responsibility in the Australian processing tomato industry

Corporate Social Responsibility has been heralded as a new paradigm for business - one in which it is called on to engage in and contribute to society at large over and above its regulatory requirements and shareholder responsibilities. This thesis argues that the fundamental elements of CSR - social, economic and environmental sustainability - contain inherent which form major barriers to the realisation of CSR goals. A case study of The Unilever Corporation and its involvement in the Australian processing tomato industry is used to explore the intricacies, problems and issues associated with the implementation of a CSR initiative in an agri-food industry. This thesis employs qualitative research techniques in the form of interviews with key stakeholders as well as textual analysis to unbundle the complex and highly contested nature of CSR. Wider questions are raised regarding the legitimacy of the CSR agenda as a mode of social regulation to advance community interests.

Louise Beehag

University of Sydney

BEYOND THE MARGINS Strategies to overcome social exclusion and enhance resilience in young people: A case study of girls in Glebe

Young people are often both the targets and unintended recipients of urban policy. Despite this they are rarely provided the opportunity to genuinely engage in the reshaping of their urban environments. The importance of creating spaces for this to occur is heightened as new and changing urban landscapes are emerging across the Globe, punctuated by pockets of significant disadvantage within or next to areas of relative wealth and privilege. The consequences and management of this inequality has become central to many debates amongst planners and policy writers. Internationally 'place management' has been promulgated as a viable 'solution'. Targeting specific areas to address identifiable problems, this place management is frequently being adopted by state and local governments in Australia.

The inner Sydney suburb of Glebe was chosen as a case study as it has recently been identified as being challenged by high levels of socio-economic disadvantage. Various government agencies have begun to implement place management policies in this location. The purpose of this thesis is to provide an insight into the experiences of a small group of girls and young women growing up in this area. Participatory techniques were central to the research methods and included photo-voice, mental mapping and semi structured interviews. To provide context and depth, local service providers and government agencies were also interviewed.

Central to this thesis is the socio-psychological concept of 'resilience'. This refers to a person's ability to successfully overcome adverse circumstances. It is a critical framework to use particularly with youth as it determines their ability to develop the skills and competence necessary to effectively engage with and productively contribute to society.

It will be demonstrated that neighbourhood conditions can impact on the development of resilience in young people. Specifically, with the right planning and sustained implementation place management can create the socio-spatial conditions necessary to enhance resilience in young people in areas of socio-economic disadvantage. For this to be effective it is crucial that young people and 'front line' local service providers are genuinely engaged in the policy process.

Chris Brennan-Horley
The University of New South Wales
Work and play: 'Post-industry' cultural production in Sydney's dance music culture

This thesis is an ethnography of work within Sydney's dance culture. Much recent research in industrial relations and economic geography has documented how, under modern capitalism, approaches towards work and types of work are changing. This thesis extends this research direction, uncovering the discourses that influence conditions of work in one previously under-researched sector of cultural industries and the cultural economy. Four key aims were investigated. First, the thesis interrogated the notion that a 'dance industry' operates in Sydney. Second, it examined the role that networking and social relations play in maintaining a dance music scene through which work opportunities were created. Third, it explored how attitudes towards work in this particular cultural pursuit can shed light on discourses of work in the wider cultural industries. Finally, it examined what influence risk and trust have on working within dance culture. In order to respond to these research aims, a qualitative ethnographic approach was employed – one that departed from usual quantitative analyses of cultural production. This study illustrated the importance of applying an ethnographic approach to problems that were traditionally considered as either 'economic' or 'cultural' in nature, and for gaining a firm analytical basis from which a wider picture of the extent of employment in cultural industries could be established. This study concluded that boundaries between work and non-work are porous for workers engaged in cultural production, and discussed the implications of these observations for the future of work in advanced capitalism.

Emma Calgaro
Macquarie University
Paradise in tatters: an analysis of the vulnerability of the tourism dependent community of Khao Lak, Thailand to the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami

The tourism community of Khao Lak, on the Thai Andaman Coast was devastated on 26 December 2004 by the largest tsunami in recorded history. Thousands of local residents and international tourists lost their lives. In response, the Thai Government introduced the Andaman Recovery Plan aimed at facilitating a rapid recovery of the tourism sector and building resilience against further shocks. However, almost a year after the disaster it is evident that many local people who depend on tourism for their livelihood find it difficult to survive as the community continues to struggle to recover its economic base, and powerful elites determine the (re-)distribution of resources and access to markets. It is argued that measures such as the Andaman Recovery Plan cannot be successful without taking into account the underlying socio-political and environmental factors that contribute to the construction of vulnerability. To address this gap, the research presented in this thesis is guided by three key objectives: 1) to identify the socio-political and environmental factors that contributed to the high vulnerability of Khao Lak to the tsunami, 2) to investigate how these factors are intrinsically linked, and 3) to deconstruct the power discourses that create and sustain these factors through existing socio-political processes and supporting structures operating across multiple scales of social organisation.

Whilst the vulnerability of tourism-dependent communities to sudden environmental or socio-economic shocks is acknowledged in the tourism literature, no attempt has been made thus far to explore in a rigorous and systematic way the complex causal factors and underlying power-laden processes that contribute to the construction of vulnerability. Building upon the emerging multidisciplinary approach to vulnerability analysis and human geography, three complementary theoretical concepts, Turner et al.'s (2003) vulnerability framework, relational scale, and the geographical concept of place, were used in combination to create a new extended framework for vulnerability analysis, which was then applied to the assessment of the vulnerability of Khao Lak to the tsunami. This assessment identified 12 inextricably linked environmental and socio-political factors that collectively contribute to the exposure, sensitivity and resilience of the community. A detailed examination of the structural processes that shape tourism development in Thailand and Khao Lak revealed that these factors are complex outcomes of both historically embedded and contemporary processes driven by social norms and the politicised agendas of the dominant elite operating through various scales of social organisation. Through the unique combination of vulnerability assessment tools with relational scale and place, this thesis has made several important empirical and conceptual contributions to the analysis of vulnerability in tourism communities.

Rebekah Coles
Macquarie University

Human rights discourse and aid delivery: A case study of Australian aid delivery to Africa, an assessment of water development projects

In this thesis, the Australian aid community's delivery of water development-aid to Sub-Saharan Africa is examined in the context of the current human rights discourse. A gap is identified between the rhetoric on water as a human right and the reality of aid-development practice. This gap is evident at two stages of the development-aid process. The first of these is at the policy and funding stage. Australia's aid community predominantly focuses on regional aid delivery with political, economic and security agendas at the forefront of aid assessment and priorities rather than a human rights based approach to development. A postcolonial analysis of this situation reveals a continuation of colonial power relations, in which the dominance of the developed world in dictating development geographies, remains intact. However, a challenge to this postcolonial division of the world's geography is evident through the existence of another geography. This is a geography of mass media which has focused individual Australian's attention away from the Asian region and on development issues in Sub-Saharan Africa. The second area where the gap between reality and rhetoric was exposed was the actual aid-development project selection and implementation stage. In this stage donor-recipient relationships continue to reflect colonial power binaries around a donor core and recipient periphery. However, at the grassroots level, issues of community empowerment, participation and ownership are identified as significant players in either further enhancing or bridging the gap between rhetoric and reality.

Lara Cummings
Macquarie University

What comes first? The chicken or the egg? A commodity chain analysis of attitudes to hen welfare

In Australia millions of egg-laying hens are kept in apparently appalling conditions. Crammed into tiny cages, each hen has so little space they are unable to flap their wings or walk freely. They will never see the sun or breathe a single breath of fresh air in their entire lives. This thesis explores the opinions of producers, animal protection groups, retailers and consumers to the welfare of laying hens. Only by understanding the opinions of all key stakeholders can the keeping of hens in such apparently cruel conditions be understood and an answer found to the age-old question – what comes first, the chicken or the egg?

Joanna Curry
The University of New South Wales

Consumer awareness of food miles in Australia: a case study of the beef industry

In the last two decades, there has been a steady, but profound change in the geography of food production. As agricultural industries have expanded, food has had to be transported greater distances and commodity chains have lengthened resulting in the advent of new environmental issues. The release of "The Food Miles Report", by Andrea Paxton in 1994, brought to life the issue of food miles, and for the first time outlined the social and environmental implications of the rapid rise in the distances that food produce was being transported in order to get from the farm to consumers' plates. In Australia the transportation networks for the beef industry, in particular, have spread, resulting in greater food miles. However, use of the food miles concept has not yet become common in Australia. The aims of this thesis were to estimate the food miles of beef, determine how aware consumers are of the food miles of beef products, and to explore the differences in consumer awareness of people from different regions. To achieve these aims surveys were conducted with butchers and their customers in Sydney and Parkes. Although the food miles of beef have increased, consumers in Australia appear to be unaware of the immense distances that their food is increasingly travelling, or of the effect that this may be having on the environment.

Sarah Deards

The University of New South Wales

Bushfire: to what degree is preparedness a function of perception? A case study in Southern Sydney

Bushfire is a natural feature of the Australian environment, yet has caused much damage and loss of life, particularly at the urban interface of Australian cities. Individual preparedness for bushfire can dramatically reduce chances of property destruction in a bushfire event, yet many people do not undertake these actions. Despite some research, bushfire perceptions and preparedness and the interaction between these are not understood. This thesis investigates the perceptions and preparedness for bushfire in the Sutherland Shire in southern Sydney, and identifies factors influencing these. The interaction between perceptions and preparedness for this hazard is also examined. Maps generated using GIS were used to assess bushfire risk throughout the study area and postal surveys were used to investigate the perceptions of and preparedness for bushfire. Perceptions of bushfire were found to vary spatially, such that respondents overestimated the bushfire risk on a wider scale but underestimated their immediate risk. Overall bushfire preparedness was quite low, with those in locations exposed to highest risk from bushfire possessing a greater level of preparedness. A number of factors were found to be particularly important in influencing bushfire perceptions and preparedness including proximity to areas of bushfire risk and previous experience with bushfire. However it was concluded that relationships between perceptions and preparedness for bushfire are complex and cannot be assumed to be linear as many previous studies have done.

Tess Holgate

The University of New South Wales

New spaces of production and consumption: An examination of farmers' markets on the Far North Coast, NSW

The globalisation project has resulted in food becoming a commodity rather than a necessity – one, it is argued, which should come from wherever it can be most efficiently produced. However, discontentment with global food provision systems has led to the development of local solutions including the rise of farmers' markets. This study examined the motivations to participate for both producers and consumers, and interpreted farmers' markets in light of theories of modes of production, characterised by the form of labour and capital organisation utilised.

A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was employed to obtain a thorough understanding of the motivations of both producers and consumers that led to participation in farmers' markets. The Far North Coast of NSW was selected as the study site because of a strong perception of localism in regional culture, and transformations in the region from extensive demographic change in the last thirty years.

Consumers were generally drawn to farmers' markets because they believed that the market offered better quality produce, with only one in five people indicating that organic food was of greatest importance to them. Producers asserted that participation in the farmers' market was driven by profit-making potential, although additional benefits such as interaction with the consumer and connections with other producers were outlined. Farmers' markets represent a hybrid economic form, drawing on selected features of pre-capitalist, post-Fordist, and alternative economies.

Jack Lewis
The University of New South Wales
Moving to Merimbula

This thesis examines the migration flow patterns to and from the Bega Valley Shire, on the far South Coast of NSW. Processes associated with these migrational patterns indicate the various motivations for different migrant groups to the coastal area around Merimbula, which has the largest urban population in the region. Impacts associated with these migrational patterns and processes have been mapped directly onto the urban and rural landscapes of the area. A qualitative approach was used to understand these impacts on the areas social, political and economic land-use patterns. Census data, a sample survey and direct observation were the key tools in developing the conclusions for the current growth patterns for selective migrant groups to the area.

The Merimbula area was observed to be most attractive as a migration destination for consumption-led migrants that are between the ages of forty to sixty-five that were previously living in the cities of Sydney or Melbourne. Meanwhile the impacts have led to younger demographics to be marginalised in the area, which was evident by a large counter-migration stream away from the region in the twenty to thirty-nine year age group. There also appeared to be several other migration streams between the locations of the ACT and country NSW and Victoria, yet these individuals were less likely to remain in the region for the long term.

By understanding migration streams patterns and processes in a locational study, impacts can be better mapped out and planned for by local government grappling with pressures associated with the Sea Change phenomenon.

Alison Mellor
University of Wollongong
A place for Kangaroo on the Dinner Plate? Exploring University Students' Ideas and Practices of Kangaroo, Kangaroo Meat and Kangaroo Farming'

Thinking if kangaroo belongs on the dinner plate is a new question for many Australians. The farming of kangaroos is being promoted by some scientists and the kangaroo industry as an ecologically sustainable practice. Yet the consumption of kangaroo is controversial, with the construction of kangaroo as a food contradicting other popular ideas of kangaroos as wild, native, cute and an Australian icon. This thesis aims to explore the ideas and experiences of kangaroo, kangaroo meat and kangaroo farming of university students interested in 'environmental' issues. Exploring how and why a place is made for kangaroo on the dinner plate in the context of animals geographies, geographies of nature, and geographies of consumption, provides a valuable contribution to broader national and international debates of human to nonhuman relationships and environmental ethics. The aim of this thesis was achieved through investigating four objectives. The first and second objectives were to explore students' ideas about kangaroos and their practices and experiences of consuming kangaroo meat, respectively. The third objective investigated students' understanding of the relationship between ecologically sustainable development and kangaroo farming. The fourth objective explored students' understanding of the relationship between animal ethics and kangaroo farming. These objectives were explored by utilising qualitative methods and interviewing twenty-three university students.

The results demonstrated that the creation of a place on the dinner plate for the kangaroo is far from simple, underpinned by complex interweaving of ideas about kangaroos and kangaroo meat, animal ethics and ecologically sustainable development. Though there is support for the consumption of animals, and the farming of kangaroos in the context of ecologically sustainable development, few interviewees regularly make a place for kangaroo on the dinner plate. This is because of conflicting ideas about the kangaroo and kangaroo meat. Kangaroo on the dinner plate is also associated predominantly with particular times and places, excluding it from the everyday dinner plates of most students. Another key finding is these students' understandings of ecologically sustainable development and animal ethics leave the nature/culture binary largely unchallenged. Ideas of the kangaroo are also often constituted around binaries of wild/domesticated and native/introduced. Such binary thinking may prove problematic for kangaroo farming new ways of understanding the relationships between humans and animals, and animals as part of a moral community.

Lindsay Munday
The University of New South Wales
Assessing the 'Principles' of an Australian New Urbanism: a case study of Casuarina Beach

New Urbanism is a planning philosophy, which originated in the United States of America and espouses the return to village and small town urban forms. The proponents of New Urbanism promote its principles as a solution to the social and ecological degradation of modernist suburbanisation. The concept has gained popularity, since its birth in the early 1990s, and is being accepted on a global scale. The Casuarina Beach development, on the North Coast of New South Wales, is an example of an Australian development that is influenced by New Urbanism. Developers of Casuarina Beach have contextualised the ideas of New Urbanism into three principles that govern the development. These are “conserve and enhance the natural environment”; “create an unique, high quality, built environment” and “encourage an inclusive local community culture”. This paper examines how these three principles have been formed into identities to market the development. I use a Foucauldian approach, suggesting that the development has been purposely designed to reflect dominant cultural discourse, so that it has appeal as cultural capital. From this examination, I found that the primary function of the three principles was to create symbolic indicators of class differentiation. I concluded that the constructions of nature in the development do not challenge the human relationship to nature and, therefore, maintain environmental conflicts. Further that the symbolic constructions of identity have actually been consumed as markers of class differentiation.

Nicolas Olivares
University of Newcastle
Social Impact Assessment: an analysis of the gap between theory and practice

Theoretically, Social Impact Assessment (SIA) is assumed to be an effective means of assessing the social consequences of proposed actions (such as: plans, programs, policies, and projects) so that decision-making regarding an action's approval might be improved. However, in practice, the outcomes of SIA are often varied from what is expected according to theory. Since SIA theory sets the parameters for effective SIA practice, this suggests the existence of a gap between the theory and practice of SIA. Investigation of the gap between the theory and practice is a crucial element in guiding the improved practice of SIA. The paper seeks to explore in-depth three key components identified as likely contributors to the emergence of this gap: public participation, strategic interests, and community dynamism. Through the use of a case study of SIA practice – an analysis of the SIA for the upgrading of the Pacific Highway between Karuah and Bulahdelah, in relation to the Myall Way community – the influence of these components is examined in order to assess how this gap shapes the process and outcomes of SIA in practice. The findings presented in the paper are used to provide some working recommendations to guide the conduct of SIA towards closer alignment with principles of best practice.

Samantha Phillips

The University of New South Wales

Does trust and risk communication influence risk perception within a local community: a case study of Orica's Groundwater Treatment Plant in Sydney's south-eastern suburbs

Orica's chemical manufacturing operations have long posed an environmental risk to the local residents of the Botany Bay and Randwick Local Government Areas. Over the past 40 years Imperial Chemical Industries (now Orica), through poor practice, contaminated the Botany Sands Aquifer with 5 potentially carcinogenic chemicals. The commissioning of the Groundwater Treatment Plant (GWTP) aims to remediate this contamination. This study examined current levels of risk perception within the local community associated with the GWTP, and how risk communication, trust and distance influenced these perceptions.

A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was employed to obtain a thorough understanding of the influence of trust, distance and risk communication on the community's perceptions of risk. A series of areas ranging from 500 metres to 2 kilometres from Orica were chosen as the study site.

This study revealed there was a high level of concern within the community about the impacts of the GWTP. However, there were relatively few people familiar with the Plant or aware the impacts associated with the Plant. Awareness of the groundwater contamination and the Plant decreased with distance, although the community's trust toward Orica was uniformly low. The amount of risk communication received by residents (e.g. newsletters) decreased with distance. The study also revealed that most people who had lived in the area for 15 or more years or aged over 40 did not trust Orica. Interestingly, age and length of time living in the area appear to be the leading influence over risk perception, whereas distance influences awareness.

Nicola Rees

The University of New South Wales

The Influence of Participatory Research on Acid Sulfate Soil Management: A Case Study of the Oyster Industry in the Lower Hastings Catchment

This thesis investigated the influence of participatory research on ASS management in the Lower Hastings Catchment. It examined the historical development of acid sulfate soil (ASS) management in the Lower Hastings Catchment with an emphasis on the influence of the Port Macquarie oyster industry reactions on management response and their role in activism. The thesis analysed the farmer responses to ASS problems and the impacts on the commercial, recreational and conservation value of estuary resources.

Participatory research is a contemporary and activist approach used to empower the local community, or representatives and is fundamentally about having the right to speak and contributing unique attributes in the research process. The Port Macquarie oyster farmers were involved in participatory research by means participating in the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) project, which commenced in 1997 in the Lower Hastings Catchment. The farmers provided access to their oyster leases for scientific monitoring, monitored water and oysters regularly, provided equipment and resources to scientists and environmental managers and identified suitable leases for research. Farmer knowledge consequently increased as a result of communicating with environmental managers and scientists, which led to significant activism movements.

Qualitative questionnaires, interviews and discourse and textual analysis on media representations and primary and secondary data were used to identify the influence of participatory research on ASS management in the Lower Hastings Catchment. The results from this study found that participatory research had a positive approach in shaping present day management paradigms. Participatory research enabled the oyster farmers to become experts on the environmental problem, as a result of the progression of knowledge through participation. The strategy of involving the Port Macquarie oyster farmers as stakeholders in the research process was an encouraging step for education and increasing the awareness of ASS within the Lower Hastings Catchment as well as initiating statewide planning and management policies.

Clayton Sparke

University of Newcastle

Corridors in the Hunter: Ecological Processes and Community Perspectives for Integrated Environmental Management

Corridors as a biodiversity conservation tool are sometimes misunderstood by science and misinterpreted by managers. They are used by planners, land managers and the community beyond the safety of evidence and scientific understanding. Capturing the shared ideas of those stakeholders through in-depth interviews and comparing them to what works in real landscapes through a simple predation study provided recommendations for managing corridor issues in local planning settings.

A review of the scientific literature attributed many different characteristics and functions to the term corridor, suggesting that the term has become a 'bucket' concept for anything approaching a roughly linear habitat patch. Interviews with 12 Key Stakeholders in the Hunter Valley involved in managing corridors in a development-prone environment added further support to idea that there exists little detail in the common understanding of the concept. The corridor characteristics the stakeholders described were often scale dependent, rather than transferable between landscapes.

An adaptive management framework was considered to be the most appropriate approach to breaching the divide between what researchers provide and management requires. A field study was structured and trialed as a method capable of being undertaken by land holders at the property level, as a means of assessing corridor function at the regional scale. No difference in predation pressure across habitat types was detected, but conservation strategies in fragmented landscapes may benefit from integrated pest control and habitat management approaches. This project involved both human and animal subjects and demanded a transdisciplinary research design to contribute towards a more appropriate research and management framework.

Grant Taylor

Macquarie University

Landslides around Lake Burragorang, their characteristics, distribution and impact potential

The majority of landslides described and identified within the Sydney Basin are contemporary cliff line collapses associated with underground coal mining activities. The largest of these, the Nattai North rock avalanche, which involved a volume of some 14 million m³, is located within the study area of Lake Burragorang, Sydney's principal water storage reservoir. The aim of the project was to identify other landslides sites around the foreshores and adjacent slope of this lake, with a particular focus on pre-European events. In all some 14 different pre-European landslide sites were identified including rotational slumping and a rock avalanche. Attention was focused on one of these sites known as Tumbledown Mountain. At this site a natural rock avalanche involving 1.4 million m³ of material exists, along with rotational slumping. Initially it was thought that the rotational slumping and the rock avalanche were not related, however a direct link was identified between the two different forms of landsliding. Rotational slumping involving the Permian rocks beneath the Triassic sandstone cliffs leads to basal support removal beneath the cliff face. This creates instability within the cliff and provides a precursor to large scale cliff line collapses. This process of natural escarpment retreat, which has not been previously identified before, has significant implications in regards to landscape evolution and future landsliding within the catchment, including the security of Lake Burragorang.

Patricia Tindall

The University of New South Wales

Economic impacts of a small scale youth sports event: a study of the Gromfest Surf Carnival

Many rural towns are facing an uncertain future. Tourism and special events are one way of attracting new income to these towns. Few studies have assessed the impacts of special events on small rural communities, preferring instead to focus on large-scale events in bigger cities. This study is unusual in this respect as it analyses the economic impacts of a youth surf carnival in a small coastal community and tests the theory that the type of event, combined with its size and that of the host community, has a substantial impact on the impacts that can be expected to accrue from the event. The event was found to bring up to \$109,200 in extra turnover to the town. This study is also unusual in that it utilises surveys of both visitors and businesses to gain a full understanding of the economic impacts of the event, whereas normally researchers rely on only one or the other. Comparisons of the two methodologies were also carried out, showing that the two methodologies were indeed supportive of one another.

Ben Watson

The University of New South Wales (ADFA)

The Burning Question; why does lightning strike twice: a case study of bushfire management on the urban rural fringe

Every year towns and communities all over Australia feel the effects of natural disasters. One of these calamities is bushfires and history has illustrated that this is one of the most recurring, costly disasters Australians annually encounter. Many Australians place themselves in the path of these bushfires when building houses on the urban rural fringe. The urban rural fringe offers large bush blocks in close proximity to urban infrastructure. Dwellers on the fringe are often unaware and unprepared for bushfires for a number of reasons stemming from a lack of awareness to complacency. This thesis examines how the bushfire threat is managed on the urban rural fringe and how key stakeholders in the management process interact using a case study approach.

The study area, Kenthurst, is approximately 40 kilometres north west of Sydney. The area has had three major bushfires in the past 30 years and each fire has destroyed homes and two of the fires have claimed lives. Within the area, three major stakeholders were identified: local council, Rural Fire Service and the residents. Data was gathered pertaining to the key stakeholders using qualitative and quantitative research techniques including interviewing key stakeholders, a social survey, observations and an analysis of previous literature on bushfire management. A conceptual framework was designed from the data collected and depicted how the stakeholders interact and utilise the bushfire management tools: controlled burning/mitigation, policy and education.

An analysis of the data collected from the case study area identifies four recurring themes, all discussed within recent reports and research papers. The themes include: complacency, over reliance on emergency services, importance of education and stakeholders working in unison. This thesis also outlines future directions for bushfire management on the urban rural fringe and elaborates future concepts the key stakeholders are planning to use.

Bushfires are inevitable and will relentlessly strike time and time again. Those affected by bushfires, such as dwellers who inhabit the urban rural fringe, must prepare and take responsibility for mitigating the bushfire risk. This thesis illustrates lightning has struck twice and will again and that everyone in a community has a responsibility to prepare for bushfires. "The whole issue of bushfire mitigation and managing ought to have the same mindset. You put your seatbelt on when you get in the car and you clean your place up before the summer basically, that is the aim," (Commissioner Koperberg 2005, pers. comm. 16 June).

Kelly Wilkinson

The University of New South Wales

Can Australia be more sustainable? A study of Australia's approach to sustainable development

Widespread acceptance of the concept of sustainability in the 1970s led to Australia, akin to many other countries, developing an approach in the quest to achieve it. However, as a result of sustainability yet to be truly understood, uncertainty exists and renders it difficult to develop and implement a truly effective approach. This study undertakes a critical review of Australia's approach to sustainable development in order to draw a conclusion as to whether Australia potentially succumbs to such difficulty and therefore could potentially be more sustainable. The study involves a critical review of Australia's *National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development* in conjunction with the Netherlands' *A National Strategy for Sustainable Development* in accordance with a framework presented by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development on key principles for national strategies for sustainable development. In addition, this study encompasses an assessment of Australia's State of the Environment reports to determine whether there has been progress since sustainability practices were allegedly implemented. A small case study on Australia's energy sector also forms a part of this study. This study highlights that Australia has a long way to go to become more sustainable. Minor modifications to the current approach, rather than the development and implementation of a whole new process, is attested to be most effective, primarily involving a more comprehensive national strategy and reporting process.

Kathy Wiseham

University of Wollongong

There is no place like home. A case study of Gerringong, NSW

Young (2005) challenges the concept of home for women as a site of oppression and alienation. Instead, she suggests home is simultaneously oppressive and affirming. Her reconceptualisation of home is examined within the context of the process of 'sea change'. The 'sea change' idyll suggests a 'new', fresh lifestyle away from the seemingly hectic urban life. Do women who have adopted a 'sea change' in their life understand their new residence as 'home'? Are 'sea change' homes understood and experienced as simultaneously alienating and affirmative? These questions are explored drawing on a case study of Gerringong, NSW, Australia. Gerringong is located on the east coast of Australia some 150km south of Sydney. The data for this research is largely drawn from twenty semi-structured interviews of women residing in Gerringong since 1996. Questions explored are women's ideas of home and their practices of homemaking. Content analysis reveals a number of emergent themes by which these women understand and make home including 'cooking', 'family and friends', and 'community'. Confirmation is given to Young's idea of home as simultaneously a site of oppression and affirmation. In the context of the process of 'sea change' in Gerringong these women are conscious of the processes and practices by which they both make Gerringong their home, and are excluded and included from Gerringong as a place to call home.

Colleen Miranda Wong

The University of New South Wales

Environmental Impacts of a Festival: Exploring the Application of the Ecological Footprint as a Measuring Tool

Festival and events are a segment of the tourism industry undergoing significant growth. Research on the impacts of festivals and events has predominately been conducted from an economic perspective, with environmental issues covered in a very limited sense. The aim of this thesis was to explore the applicability of the ecological footprint as a measuring tool for assessing the environmental impacts of staging a festival. Splendour in the Grass, a major music festival held annually in Byron Bay was chosen as a case study. Three estimates of the ecological footprint of the festival were produced: a low, medium, and high consumption estimate. The aggregate and component-based results were compared to previous applications of the ecological footprint. Cross-tabulations of variables and consumption patterns were also conducted to ascertain relationships that could aid in the prediction of ecological footprints for future festivals. This thesis concluded that while problems exist in adapting the method for applications to festivals and events, the ecological footprint has great potential for future use. Its ability to measure various environmental impacts and be easily communicated to non-academic audience means that not only can it evaluate different types of festivals and events and different categories of audiences but also act as a vehicle to educate and raise awareness on the ecological impacts of human activities such as festivals.

Abby Yates

The University of New South Wales

A coastal community's response to development: Catherine Hill Bay, NSW

Along the New South Wales coastline pressure from large-scale tourist and residential developments as well as environmental and population concerns, are growing issues for today's society. This thesis concerns itself with the threat of residential development and resident responses to development in a small coastal town on the New South Wales coastline, Catherine Hill Bay.

Catherine Hill Bay is a town located around a 2 hour drive north of Sydney. In Catherine Hill Bay, the population is made up of permanent residents, short and long term renters and sea changers. The sea changers are mainly periodic, visiting on the weekends and holidays.

Resident mobilization, in the form of letters and media discourses, was identified as forming against the development proposed for the area. Mixed resident responses were gathered by conducting interviews and surveys. The local Progress Association and community groups are lobbying the local councils and government to protect the area for the future. This was identified as a social movement as these groups are actively protesting for conservation of the bushland around the town. The underlying theme identified in this study was the NIMBY (Not-In-My-Back-Yard) theory. All resident responses had personal agendas regarding the proposed development. A class issue was also identified, between the residents that can afford for the development not to go ahead and those who can not.