

## **History of fourth year conference**

In 1997, we initiated the “Inaugural Fourth Year Student Project Conference” for the Geographical Society of New South Wales. The aim of the conference is to showcase honours research undertaken in university geography (and cognate areas) across the State of NSW.

The conference aims include:

- To provide an opportunity for recently completed honours students to communicate the results of their research
- To showcase the variety of honours projects being conducted at NSW universities, and
- To provide avenue for these students to present a conference paper on their research in a supportive environment, gain constructive feedback and meet students and staff members from other universities
- To enable Honours students to share their research experience with Honours candidates from various universities

The one-day conference brings together recently completed Honours students who are working in a range of Schools in NSW and who have focused on a particular aspect of geographical research during their Honours year. Recently completed Honours students are welcome from all aspects of geographical knowledge.

Student interest in participating in the past has been very strong and feedback from those who have participated suggests they have found the day highly beneficial.

The conference is now an annual event (Wollongong 1998, 2004 & 2009; Sydney 1999 & 2003, 2008; Macquarie 2000, 2005; Newcastle 2001, 2006; UNSW 1997 & 2002, 2007). These meetings have been essential to research inter-change, professional development of research students, and the sharing of teaching resources.

## Reports by year

### 2009

The 13th Annual Geographical Society of NSW Honours Conference was successfully hosted by The University of Wollongong on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2009. The 2009 Geographical Society of NSW Honours Conference was attended by 27 people. Professor Chris Gibson welcomed students, staff and other guests to the conference on behalf of the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences. He talked about his own experiences as an honours student at the University of Sydney. He then spoke encouragingly about how the research training of an honours degree positioned those honours students thinking about conducting a postgraduate degree.

There were 14 presentations given by students representing University of Sydney, UNSW, UTS, UWS, Macquarie University, Newcastle University, the Australian Defence Force Academy, and the University of Wollongong. The conference schedule was divided into four sessions on Urban and Young People's Geographies; Resource Management and Rivers; Geographies of Climate Change, and Tourism Geographies. Each student presented outcomes from research that they'd undertaken as part of their Honours year and within each session a diversity of topics were covered including: urban planning responses to homelessness, river morphology diversity, and sustainable tourism.

For chairing the sessions, thanks must be given to Scott Sharpe (Australian Defence Force Academy), and to Gordon Waitt, Nicholas Gill and Christine Erikson (University of Wollongong). Thanks also to Michele Barbeau for her assistance with behind-the-scenes organising and to the other staff and Councillors who attended the conference to support their students and the conference generally.

Professor Kevin Dunn, at the close of the conference, congratulated all the students for participating and commented on the extremely high quality of the presentations. He also presented the Jim Rose Geography Awards. The award for the best presentation at the conference was given to Daniela Cortez (University of Technology, Sydney) for her paper titled: "Longitudinal changes in macroinvertebrate and periphyton assemblages in three rivers with variable disturbances within the Hunter Catchment, NSW". Alex Collie (University of Sydney) received the Highly Commended award for a presentation on a physical geography topic, for his paper titled "The effects of land holding ownership change on vegetation in rural New South Wales". Theresa Harada (University of Wollongong) received the Highly Commended award for a presentation on a human geography topic for her presentation titled "Driving cultures and climate change: Bodies, space and affluence". Thanks to Scott Sharpe (ADFA), Kevin Dunn (UWS) and Christine Erikson (UoW) for their award judging throughout the day.

Professor Dunn thanked the organiser Gordon Wait (University of Wollongong) and Chairs, and he reflected on the history of the conference and its success in 2009. He made reference to the Geographical contribution of Jim Rose, especially to the establishment of Geography at Macquarie University. He encouraged the students to continue on with their geographically focused research, and to write up their work for *Australian Geographer* or for *Geographical Research*, so that the results could be widely read.

Gordon Waitt  
University of Wollongong

## **2008**

The 12th Annual Geographical Society of NSW Honours Conference was successfully hosted by The University of Sydney on Friday 14th November, 2008. Professor John Connell welcomed students, staff and other guests to the conference on behalf of the School. He talked about his own research experiences and how the Honours year prepares students for academia and he congratulated all the students on their excellent research performances. He also encouraged the students to write up their work for an academic journal, so that the results could be widely read, and in particular urged them to consider sending their papers to Australian Geographer. Professor Kevin Dunn also welcomed the students on behalf of the Society, once again congratulating them on surviving the Honours year and encouraging them to continue on with their geographically focused research..

There were 12 presentations given by students representing Sydney, UTS, UWS and Macquarie (notably, this is the first year we have had representatives at this conference from UTS and UWS). The conference schedule was divided into three sessions on Environmental, Cultural and Physical Geographies. Each student presented outcomes from research that they'd undertaken as part of their Honours year and within each session a diversity of topics were covered including: issues surrounding climate change and indigenous communities, transnational issues and migration, the use of magnetic inclination as a dating device and the ecology of urban Pelicans.

For chairing the sessions, thanks must be given to Kevin Dunn (UWS) and Wendy Shaw (UNSW). Thanks also to Michele Barbeau and Kurt Iveson for their assistance with catering and behind-the-scenes organising and to the other staff and Councillors who attended the conference to support their students and the conference generally. Professor John Connell, at the close of the conference, congratulated all the students for participating and commented on the extremely high quality of the presentations. He also presented the Jim Rose Geography Awards. The award for the best presentation at the conference was given to Brad Ruting (University of Sydney) for his presentation titled: 'Travel to the Old Country: transnational engagements and the Estonian diaspora'. Rachel Green (University of Sydney) and Justin Thompson-Laing (University of Sydney) also received highly commended awards for their presentations titled 'From little things, big things grow: investigating remote Aboriginal community gardens' and 'Floodplainwater connection. Is it important? An investigation of inundation influence on floodplain soils'. Thanks to Therese Kenna (UWS) and Professor Gil Valentine (University of Sheffield) for their award judging throughout the day.

Mel Neave  
University of Sydney

## **2007**

The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Geographical Society of NSW Honours Conference was successfully hosted by The University of New South Wales on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2007.

Professor Paul Adam, Head of the School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences welcomed students, staff and other guests to the conference. He explained how the honours year was a very taxing experience, much more hectic and stressful than PhD study, and that it was a rite of passage that prepared you for an academic career. He encouraged all the student presenters to write up their work for an academic journal, so that the results could be widely read.

There were 20 presentations divided into five sessions, with students representing UNSW, Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and Macquarie. Each student presented the outcomes from the research that they'd undertaken as part of their Honours year. Approaches that students applied ranged from discourse analysis, through statistical modeling, to charcoal surveys. A diversity of topics were covered including: gated communities, fisheries management, tourism and microfinance as development tools, indigenous sovereignties, etc (see the website for presenters, titles and abstracts).

For chairing the sessions, thanks must be given to Therese Kenna (UNSW), Pauline McGuirk (Newcastle), Scott Mooney (UNSW), Daniel Robinson (UNSW) and Wendy Shaw (UNSW). Thanks also to Therese Kenna and Marilyn Herrod for their assistance with catering and behind-the-scenes organising and to the large number of other staff who attended the conference to support their students and the conference generally. Over forty delegates attended the event.

Professor Ian Burnley, at the close of the conference, congratulated all the students for participating. He also presented the Jim Rose Geography Awards. The award for the best presentation at the conference for was given to Tamsin Lloyd (Sydney University) for her presentation titled: *Cyber-citizenship: Wikipedia's 'world in the wires'*. Alanna Kamp and Sophie Pieters-Hawke also received highly commended awards for their presentations titled *'Business' and 'Bisnis': Evaluation of a microfinance program in Vanuatu*; and *Rhetoric of exclusion: Chinese and the nation in parliamentary debates, 1901*. Professor Burnley (UNSW) reflected on how Jim Rose had assessed Ian's PhD thesis, and had founded a very robust geographical department at Macquarie University. Jim Rose had been very much involved in the NSW Geographical Society, and had also helped organise the highly successful International Geographical Congress in Sydney in 1988. Thanks to Scott Mooney and Wendy Shaw (UNSW), Mel Neave and Kurt Iveson (Sydney), and Ela Taranto, for their award judging throughout the day.

Kevin Dunn  
University of NSW  
20 November, 2007

## **2006**

The 10th Annual GSNSW Honours Student Conference was held at the University of Newcastle on 17 November 2006. There were 19 presentations made by students from Sydney, NSW, Newcastle and Macquarie Universities.

## **2005**

The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Geographical Society of NSW Honours Conference was successfully hosted by Macquarie University on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2005. Professor Elizabeth Deane, Dean of the Division of Environmental and Life Sciences, Associate Professor

Richie Howitt, Head of Human Geography, and Associate Professor Richard De Dear, Head of Physical Geography welcomed students, staff and other guests to the conference. They all expressed their enthusiasm for the discipline indicated through the large number of honours students and geography staff from a range of universities participating in the conference.

There were 23 presentations divided into six sessions, with students representing UNSW, Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and Macquarie. Each student presented the outcomes from the research that they'd undertaken as part of their Honours year. Approaches that students applied ranged from discourse analysis to participatory research. A diversity of topics were covered including: landslides around Lake Burragorang, environmental impacts of festivals; exploring ideas and practices of Kangaroo, Kangaroo meat and Kangaroo farming; and strategies to overcome social exclusion and enhance resilience in young women. (see the website for presenters, titles and abstracts).

For chairing the sessions, thanks must be given to Wendy Shaw (UNSW), Russell Drysdale (Newcastle), Chris Gibson (Wollongong), Mel Neave and Kurt Iveson (Sydney). Thanks also to Helene Mountford and Marilyn Herrod for their assistance with catering and behind-the-scenes organising and to the large number of other staff who attended the conference to support their students and the conference generally.

Professor Bob Fagan, at the close of the conference, congratulated all the students for participating. He also presented the new Jim Rose Geography Awards for the best presentations at the conference. The award was given to Emma Calgaro, Macquarie University, for her presentation titled: *Paradise in tatters: an analysis of the vulnerability of the tourism dependent community of Khao Lak, Thailand to the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami*. Sophia Alison and Samantha Phillips also received highly commended awards for their presentations titled *See Red: Corporate social Responsibility in the Australian processing tomato industry*; and *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*. Bob noted to the group that it was particularly appropriate that the first Jim Rose Prizes were awarded at Macquarie University as Jim Rose was the founding Geography Professor at Macquarie and was involved in the NSW Geographical Society. In addition Jim had been a key inspiration for Bob in his decision to do honours in Geography.

Kate Lloyd  
Macquarie University  
15 March, 2006

## **2004**

The 8th Annual Geographical Society of NSW Honours Conference was successfully hosted by the University of Wollongong on Friday 26st November, 2004. Emeritus Professor Murray Wilson from the School of Earth and Environmental Science welcomed students, staff and other guests to the conference. He specifically pointed out that the students who presenting their ideas at the conference were the future of the discipline of Geography. He took delight in the enthusiasm for the discipline that he witnessed in the room and the possibilities of sharing ideas through the opportunities presented by the conference. There were eleven presentations divided

into three sessions, with students representing Macquarie, UNSW, Sydney and Wollongong. Each student presented the outcomes from the research that they'd undertaken as part of their Honours year. Approaches that students applied ranged from spatial modeling to discourse analysis. A diversity of topics were covered including: physical and chemical properties of sodic subsoils on an intensive shrimp farm, Steve Irwin's 'new' environmentalisms and the creation of the perfect woman through cultural globalisation and cosmetic surgery (see the website for presenters, titles and abstracts).

For chairing the sessions, thanks must be given to Nicholas Gill (Wollongong), Wendy Shaw (UNSW) and Kurt Iveson (Sydney). Thanks also to Wendy Weeks and Marilyn Herrod for their assistance with catering and behind-the-scenes organising and to the other staff who attended the conference to support their students and the conference generally.

Associate Professor Gordon Waitt, at the close of the conference, congratulated all the students for participating. At this time he acknowledged the importance of conferences in maintaining the discipline of Geography and the value of joining the Society in maintaining the identity of a Geographer. Furthermore, he congratulated all participants for the quality of their presentations. Finally, on behalf of the Geographical Society of NSW Council and Emeritus Professor Murray Wilson, Gordon awarded Carl Hopley, University of Wollongong, the prize for what was considered by a panel of judges to be the most outstanding presentation of the conference. Carl Hopley's presentation was titled: The Holocene and Beyond: Evolution of Wandandian Creek delta, St Georges Basin, New South Wales. Particular thanks must be given to Murray Wilson for providing prize-money to reward the student who provided the most outstanding presentation on the day. The Society matched Murray Wilson's generosity, enabling the presentation of a combined Geographical Society of New South Wales and the University of Wollongong Geographer's Prize, 2004.

Gordon Waitt  
The University of Wollongong  
24 February, 2005

### **2003**

The 7th Annual Geographical Society of NSW Honours Conference was successfully hosted by the University of Sydney on Friday 21st November, 2003. The Head of the School of Geosciences at the University of Sydney, Professor John Connell, welcomed students, staff and other guests to the conference. He specifically welcomed Iain McDonald-Holmes and noted the resemblance to the picture of Iain's father on the wall of the room.

There were eleven presentations divided into three sessions, with students representing Macquarie, UNSW, Sydney and Wollongong all delivering excellent presentations of important research that they'd undertaken as part of their Honours year. Topics ranged from an Actant-Network Theory approach to gardening through to water quality issues, and from the multi-functionality of agriculture in Japan to the effectiveness or otherwise of Indigenous health services in a NSW town (see the website for presenters, titles and abstracts).

Thanks to Gordon Waitt (Wollongong), Wendy Shaw (UNSW) and Pauline McGuirk (Newcastle) for doing a superb job of chairing the three sessions. Thanks also to Amy McKenzie for her assistance with catering and behind-the-scenes organizing and to the other staff who attended the conference to support their students and the conference generally. Echoing Kevin Dunn's call from late 2002, it would be good to see more staff attending this conference in future years.

In addition to allowing time for questions and discussion following each presentation, the conference scheduled encouraged interaction between the presentation sessions and enabled interested attendees to view the Geography Honours posters that were produced by the University of Sydney students earlier in the year.

The Society President, Dr Pauline McGuirk, closed the conference by acknowledging the high quality of the presentations and encouraging students to join the Society. She also encouraged students to consider submitting a manuscript based upon their research for possible publication in *The Australian Geographer*.

Everybody then partook of the food and drinks and, of course, discussed geography.

Phil McManus  
The University of Sydney  
27th November, 2003

## **2002**

The Sixth Annual Honours Conference was successfully hosted by the Geography Program in the Faculty of the Built Environment, The University of New South Wales, on the 22nd November, 2002. The welcome was delivered by the Head of Geography Program, Dr Bruno Parolin, who commented on the role of discipline identity for graduates, how important it was that the findings of honours research were given a wider audience than simple review processes allow, and he reflected on the international state of geography (having just returned from the Universitas 21 Head of Geography Meeting in the United Kingdom).

The Society President Dr Pauline McGuirk, opened the conference, outlining the history of the Honours Conference and also the utility of Society membership for the graduates. Dr McGuirk also advised delegates to consider seeking publication of their works in *The Australian Geographer*.

Fifteen students presented findings from their honours research. The students represented Universities from across NSW, including: The University of New South Wales, The University of Sydney, The Australian Defence Force Academy, The University of Macquarie, The University of Newcastle, and The University of Wollongong. The papers were of an excellent standard (see titles, abstracts, and title pages). Eight members of academic staff were in attendance. Our appreciation to the following staff for chairing sessions: Kevin Dunn, Pauline McGuirk, Phil McManus, Pierrick Geeraert and Bruno Parolin. Thanks to Marilyn Herrod for setting-up and staffing the registration desk, and to Charmain Hearder for assisting with the catering.

Kevin Dunn

GEOG fbe UNSW  
10/12/2

**2001**

The University of Newcastle on Friday November 30th, 2001

**2000**

Macquarie University November 24, 2000

**1999**

The third annual Fourth Year Student Project Conference was held on November 19, 1999 in the School of Geosciences at the University of Sydney. The conference was organised by Dr Gavin Doyle. The papers presented were outlines of fourth year student research projects. The quality of the presentations in 1999 were extremely high. Student presenters came from the following universities: Macquarie, Newcastle, Sydney and UNSW. The conference will be hosted by Macquarie University in 2000

**1998**

The second annual Fourth Year Student Project Conference was held on November 20, 1998 in the School of Geosciences at the University of Wollongong. The conference was jointly organised by Associate Professor Lesley Head and Dr Gordon Waitt. The papers presented were outlines of fourth year student research projects. The twenty-six student presenters came from the following universities: Australian Defence Forces (ADFA), Macquarie, Newcastle, Sydney, UNSW and Wollongong. There were over 50 delegates at the conference. The conference will be hosted by Sydney University in 1999.

**1997**

The Inaugural Fourth Year Student Project Conference was held on November 21, 1997 in the School of Geography at the University of New South Wales. The papers presented were outlines of fourth year student research projects. The fourteen student presenters came from the following universities: ANU; Macquarie; Newcastle; Sydney; UNSW; and Wollongong. There were over 40 delegates at the conference. Offers to host the conference have been received up to and including the year 2000 (1998 Wollongong, 1999 Sydney, 2000 Canberra).