



Tourism Research Unit

Issue 10, November 2008

ARC linkage grant success for TRU-Zoo research

PhD student Liam Smith and Professor Betty Weiler have been awarded a prestigious Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Grant to undertake a 3-year, multi-zoo, nation-wide research project aimed at capitalising on the potential of zoos and other organisations to influence visitors' pro-environmental behaviours. The project is being undertaken in collaboration with the Taronga Conservation Society Australia, Zoos Victoria, Zoos South Australia and Perth Zoo, and will include fieldwork at eight zoo properties.

The aim of the project is to compare the effectiveness of a range of theory-based persuasive communication approaches to achieve these pro-environmental outcomes. Given annual visitation to Australia's zoos of 14.5 million, including about 4.2 million to partner organisations, zoos are uniquely placed to use their experiential platform to foster pro-environmental behaviour. How best to do this, however, is still poorly understood.

This research will improve the capacity of zoos to use their emotive wildlife experiences to influence visitor behaviours that may redress some of the threats to wildlife and their habitats. Linking motivational, emotional and experiential factors with visitors' susceptibility to persuasion will assist zoos and other organisations that seek to foster pro-environmental behaviour.

The ARC has awarded the research team \$314,000 and the industry partners have committed \$130,000 cash and \$145,000 in-kind to the project over three years. Monash University will also be contributing approximately \$100,000 during the course of the project. The grant provides funding for a postdoctoral fellowship for Liam, along with a full 3-year scholarship for a suitable PhD candidate to work closely with Liam, Betty and one or more of the four zoo organisational partners on the project.

For more information on this project, please contact Liam on (03) 9904 7107 or email Liam.Smith@buseco.monash.edu.au.

Welcome Dr Keir Reeves

TRU is delighted to announce that Dr Keir Reeves will be taking up a Monash Fellowship in early 2009. This 5-year position will be jointly hosted by the Department of Management (Faculty of Business and Economics) and the National Centre for Australian Studies (School of Humanities, Communications and Social Sciences).

Keir's research project is entitled Heritage Tourism and the Historical Landscapes of Australia, Asia and the Pacific, and will investigate the use of cultural landscapes as a research framework to evaluate heritage tourism sites. The project will draw on disciplines such as history, cultural heritage, tourism and sustainability studies to analyse how heritage sites can be best thematically interpreted and developed for their sustainable heritage tourism potential.

Keir holds undergraduate degrees in arts and economics from Monash University and a Masters and PhD in history from the University of Melbourne. His main research focus to date has been on the cultural history of gold mining communities, particularly the experience of the gold fields Chinese in Victoria.

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Welcome Dr Keir Reeves

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He is currently chief investigator on an ARC Linkage project entitled Historical Studies in Central Victoria's Regional Heritage 1834-1950, a project that will move to Monash in the New Year. Keir is also involved in the Places of Pain and Shame ARC Discovery project with the Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific at Deakin University. This project is conceived as a cross-cultural study of imprisonment sites, their heritage values and the ways that communities, government agencies and heritage professionals deal with these cases of "difficult heritage."

Keir is looking forward to joining the team at TRU and further developing the research synergies that exist across the relevant departments and disciplines. For more information, please email Keir at keirreeves@iprimus.com.au.

TRU's fifth anniversary

Five years ago, TRU was established at Monash University as a focal point for research collaboration between the university and the tourism industry. In those five years, TRU has grown from a modest number of tourism researchers, largely based in the Departments of Management and Economics, to a current membership of approximately 35 academics, postdoctoral fellows and postgraduate researchers spanning three faculties, three schools, six departments and four Monash campuses.

To celebrate TRU's fifth birthday, a special anniversary event was held in September at the Berwick campus. TRU members were joined by industry partners and academic colleagues from the City of Melbourne, Parks Victoria, Zoos Victoria, Tourism Alliance Victoria, Polperro Dolphin Swims, La Trobe University and Victoria University to recognise the depth and extent of TRU's achievements and its future directions.

Director and founding member of TRU, Professor Betty Weiler, said that the unit's success is a result of forming strong partnerships with key industry organisations and people. "TRU developed from the ground up. We've



built good long-term relationships and are guided by research that is important to our partners," Professor Weiler said. Research with these partners has allowed TRU to make significant industry and academic contributions locally, nationally and internationally. "We work with people, organisations, innovators and leaders who want to make a difference and be at the top of their game in what they do," Professor Weiler explained.

TRU looks forward to another successful five years as it continues to expand its research interests, funding opportunities and collaborations with new and existing research partners.

For more information about TRU, please email Annita Allman at Annita.Allman@buseco.monash.edu.au, or visit the TRU website at <http://www.buseco.monash.edu.au/units/tru/>.

Green and lean: Sustainable options for festival and event management

Dr Warwick Frost and Dr Jennifer Laing of TRU were recently invited to present a workshop on the greening of events at a series of seminars on sustainable tourism, hosted by Qantas during October. These seminars were held in various cities around Australia and were well attended. Warwick presented the workshop in Melbourne, Canberra and Darwin, while Jennifer presented in Perth. The practical workshop covered planning and managing a 'green' event, including issues such as carbon offsetting, recycling, waste and water management, transport, choosing an appropriate venue and using events to promote a 'green' message. Invitees to the seminar series included tour operators, local government, state and regional tourism organisations and tourism-related associations.

Warwick established Events Management studies at Monash University in 2003 and

his research interests include the impact of regional and rural festivals, music festivals and anniversary events. Jennifer now teaches the 'Festival and Events' unit in the undergraduate program and has been researching the role of summer events

and festivals in destination recovery post bushfires in the alpine regions of Victoria.

For more information, please email Warwick Frost at Warwick.Frost@buseco.monash.edu.au or Jennifer Laing at Jennifer.Laing@buseco.monash.edu.au.



Photograph of participants at one of the recent workshops courtesy of Qantas.

Tourism's Pacific Solution

Building the capacity of a developing country's tourism industry workforce is one of the keys to pro-poor tourism. At the Pacific Islands Forum in 2006, the Australian Government announced initial funding of \$149.5 million to provide for the establishment and operation of the Australian Pacific Technical College (APTC). The purpose of this initiative is to provide Australian vocational education to critical industry sectors, tourism being one of them. TRU member Joseph Cheer is the Technical Adviser to the APTC School of Tourism & Hospitality.

The key activity centres for the APTC project are located in Apia (Samoa), Nadi (Fiji) and Port Vila (Vanuatu), which are all strategically placed to service the needs of all 16 Pacific Forum member countries. The project engages the tourism industry at provincial, national, and international levels to ensure that the project's deliverables are relevant and appropriate to the broad range of stakeholder needs.

Recently, the first cohort of tourism industry graduates attended the inaugural graduation ceremony in

Honiara, the capital of the Solomon Islands. The Solomon Islands Minister for Culture & Tourism, the Honourable Mr Seth Gukuna, emphasised that ambitions of doubling tourism visitation to the Solomon Islands by 2010 would only be achieved if the country delivers a quality tourism experience.

While the inroads made so far have been small, the longer term impact on tourism employee livelihoods in the Pacific Islands will be profound. Pro-poor tourism objectives, including enhancing gender equality, contributing to poverty alleviation, providing income opportunities and developing greater levels of confidence and self determination, will ensure Pacific Islanders are at the helm of their tourism industries in the future.

Joseph is keen to further his research interests in pro-poor tourism development and is looking to ensure that the benefits of tourism in the Pacific permeates more deeply through all levels of Pacific Islander communities. For more information, please email Joseph at Joseph.Cheer@arts.monash.edu.au or visit http://www.aptc.edu.au/news/solgrad_oct08.html.



Mrs Nancy Palmer and APTC Honiara Team with Joseph Cheer.

Philanthropic tourism: Tackling poverty in Kenya



How the other half lives: shared toilet facility in a settlement on the Ewaso Narok River (Abadare Ranges, Kenya).

There has been a recent shift in the way tourism is used in the war against poverty. In the past, tourism was used to promote wealth-creation through development, a tactic that often increased the wealth gap and magnified the plight of the poorest of the poor. Pro-poor tourism, on the other hand, targets the needs of the poorest members of society, allowing them to access the benefits of tourism and to become contributors to the economy.

Philanthropic tourism is a subclass of pro-poor tourism in which supporters visit charitable projects during their vacations. Currently under-researched, philanthropic tourism appears to offer particular promise in enhancing ongoing charitable activity and improving the capacity of the poor to engage profitably with tourism. The genre is highly dispersed, low volume and targeted squarely at the needs of the poor.

In February, TRU PhD candidate Gary Lacey will return to his birthplace to research the nature and impacts of philanthropic tourism in an isolated part of the Abadare Ranges of central Kenya. Data collection will take place over a period of five months and assist with our understanding of the ways in which this form of tourism can tackle the problem of poverty on the world's most impoverished continent.

For more information on this project, please email Gary at Gary.Lacey@buseco.monash.edu.au.

New PhD student: Rob Saunders



A new member of TRU in 2008, Rob Saunders has 30 years experience in outdoor recreation planning and park interpretation.

Rob is undertaking a PhD on long distance walking and in particular the role of transformative tour guiding. While long distance walking has traditionally been the domain of self-reliant recreationists, commercial operators now offer a range of highly differentiated walking tours. For example, on the Great Ocean Walk in Victoria, more than twelve tour operators offer distinctive specialised guided walks.

The notion of tourism as a transformative process is not new. It can be seen in the traditional concept of the 'Grand Tour' of Europe. Transformative guiding can also be traced to fields outside tourism, including outdoor education and wilderness therapy. A relatively new phenomenon is the incorporation of similar objectives and techniques into more mainstream tourism packages.

Surprisingly little research has been undertaken into long distance walking, so this research will be of interest to tour operators and facility managers in terms of planning, operations and the intensity and diversity of lived experiences that can be obtained within a relatively simple, accessible and sustainable context.

Rob is keen to hear from potential industry partners interested in this area of research. For more information on the project, please email him at Robert.Saunders@buseco.monash.edu.au.

Contact details

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New PhD student: Danielle Ramirez



Another new member of TRU in 2008, Danielle Ramirez is undertaking a PhD examining the influence of gender on convention attendees' decision-

making behaviour. Although women now represent a larger proportion of convention attendees than in the past, research on women and convention travel has commonly been overlooked. Researchers have noted that convention attendees and how they make decisions have received little attention to date, which highlights the need to explore their behaviour and understand how they decide which convention to attend.

Existing convention attendee decision-making models appear to be gender-neutral, suggesting that there is scope to investigate whether the way men and women make decisions differs and, if so, what factors influence this. The findings will provide a gender-based analysis of convention attendees' decision-making processes, which to date have not been explored empirically. From a managerial and practical perspective, understanding convention attendees' decision-making behaviour could assist meeting planners and marketers to tailor their campaigns more specifically based on the needs of both genders.

The project will be a partnership between TRU and the Melbourne Convention + Visitors Bureau (MCVB) where Danielle is employed full-time as a Research Manager.

For more information on Danielle's project, please email her at Danielle.Ramirez@buseco.monash.edu.au.

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Dr Jim Curtis



Congratulations to TRU member Jim Curtis who completed and passed his PhD in July. Jim's thesis is entitled "Influencing Visitor Use of Alternative Transportation Systems in Australian National Parks." Focusing on the voluntary shuttle bus services offered to visitors at the Grampians in Victoria and Cradle Mountain in Tasmania, Jim's research demonstrates the value of using persuasive communication interventions informed by the social sciences to influence visitors' travel mode choices. The results from Jim's research are of direct relevance and use to park authorities and tourism operations contemplating the introduction of similar alternative transportation systems in other national parks and visitor destinations.

Jim is currently employed as the TRU Research Coordinator, in addition to working on other research projects at Parks Victoria and Curtin University. These include the influence of population and recreation trends on the future use of parks in Victoria, the effectiveness of a "hazard and barrier signage system" in making visitors more aware of hazards in national parks, and using persuasive communication to influence residents in Western Australia's Swan-Canning River Catchment to purchase more environmentally sensitive fertilisers for their home gardens.

For more information on any of Jim's research projects, please contact him on (03) 9904 7067 or email James.Curtis@buseco.monash.edu.au.