

Tourism and Media Researchers Feature in International Conference hosted by TRU

The second International Tourism and Media (ITAM) conference was held at Monash University on 28 November – 1 December 2006. Hosted by TRU in association with La Trobe University and the University of Otago, ITAM was conceived as a forum for reflection upon the broad relationship between tourism and the media and to develop this exciting field of tourism research.

Presentations covered a full spectrum of topics, such as film-based tourism, visitor management and media impacts on tourism, including the following by TRU members (story continues on page 4):

From Backlot to Runaway Production: Exploring Location in Film-Based Tourism (Warwick Frost);

Media in the Anticipation Phase of a Recreation Experience: Port Campbell National Park (Brent Moyle and Glen Croy);

Journey and Epiphany: Film and Tourism in the Outback (Warwick Frost);

Contested and Mediated Rurality: A Case of the High Country, South Island, New Zealand, Te Waipounamu, Aotearoa (Glen Croy, TRU, and Anne Buchmann); and

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TRU News and Views

TRU Members Contribute to Research Information Sharing Forum Hosted by Life Saving Victoria

Jim Curtis and Damian Morgan from TRU participated in a research information sharing event on water safety in early October. The purpose of the forum, which was chaired by Dr Bernadette Matthews, Manager Research and Injury Prevention, Life Saving Victoria (LSV), was to facilitate linkages and networks among researchers in water safety and related fields. Following Bernadette's overview of current LSV initiatives, representatives from the Department of Justice, Marine Safety Victoria, Sweeney Research and Monash University presented current research projects. During discussions it was noted that LSV will be coordinating a range of future projects targeting water safety. To support this, regular water safety research forums will be held to discuss mutual research interests and research collaboration. The forums present a valuable opportunity for research dissemination and the sharing of strategies to improve water safety.



Participants Niki Macionis (Griffith University), Noëlle O'Connor (Limerick Institute of Technology, Ireland) and Gary Best (La Trobe University) are pictured above enjoying some of the welcoming hospitality at the conference BBQ.

Upcoming Presentations by TRU Members

11-14 February 2007

CAUTHE 2007 Conference

Manly, Pacific Hotel, Sydney

Contact: cauthe2007@uts.edu.au

Web site: <http://www.cauthe2007.uts.edu.au/index.html>

18-22 March 2007

ARAZPA 2007 Conference

National Museum, Te Papa Tongarewa
New Zealand

Web site: <http://www.wellingtonzoo.com/inform/events/arazpa.html>

23-25 April 2007

TTRA European Chapter Conference

Hotel Le Méridien, Nice, France

Web site: <http://www.ttra-europe.org/>

17-21 June 2007

ISSRM Conference

Utah State University, Park City, Utah,
USA

Web site: <http://www.issrm2007.org/>

June 2007

TRU Seminar

9.30am-3pm

Monash University, Berwick Campus

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Inaugural Meeting of TRU Advisory Board

An impressive cross-section of stakeholders who are widely recognised in their fields of expertise have come together to form the new Tourism Research Unit (TRU) Advisory Board, to assist TRU in achieving its strategic vision and mission. The Board's function involves a number of key areas such as exploring research needs that can be met by TRU, developing and strengthening links with other tourism stakeholders (primarily for research, but also for learning, and

commercial activities) and facilitating cross-fertilisation and collaboration across organisations. The Board met for the first time in September (pictured below) and a second meeting will be scheduled in mid 2007.

A full list of members, terms of reference and minutes of the inaugural meeting can be found on the TRU Website - <http://www.buseco.monash.edu.au/units/tru/AdvisoryBoard/advisoryboard.php>



Researcher in Cultural and Heritage Interpretation Visits TRU

On Monday 21 August, TRU hosted a visit by Associate Professor Jane James, a well-known Australian expert in cultural tourism and heritage interpretation. Dr James, who is Head of Cultural Tourism at Flinders University, gave an overview of the Australian National Heritage and Tourism Thematic Interpretation Framework, which she developed as an output of a research consultancy project funded by the Australian Department of the Environment and Heritage. She then demonstrated how the framework was used to construct interpretive themes and stories from a national through to a site level for the Naracoorte Caves World Heritage Site. Providing information to visitors within such a structure is seen as a way of helping visitors connect with the site they are visiting, as well as make connections to places they have already been and places they are thinking of visiting. Dr James illustrated how such



an approach to visitor communication enhances the visitor experience and increases the chances that each experience is not only enjoyable, but memorable and meaningful.

The discussion that followed focused on areas for potential extension of the project's methods and findings.

New Research Projects

STCRC Funds Research on Community Values for the Murray River Reserves

TRU member Dr Sharron Pfueller, along with Dr Xuan Zhu from the Faculty of Arts, Monash University, Paul Whitelaw of Victoria University and Dr Caroline Winter from Latrobe University are undertaking a project which aims to provide insight into how sites along the Victorian bank of the Murray River are valued by the community for conservation, camping, tourism and recreation.

According to Dr Pfueller, communities value natural locations in different ways: from recreational, tourism, economic or natural resource perspectives. "Through a mapping task, residents, visitors and tour operators have shown the places they value and their reasons for doing so. Analysis of this data using geographic information systems (GPS) technology reveals the locations of places of particular importance to these individuals. In response to

a questionnaire, respondents have indicated their opinions about the region and its future."

This research provides strategic knowledge to the tourism industry by revealing places where further development is desirable. For Parks Victoria and the Department of Sustainability and Environment, the results will assist in decisions about management of parks, forests and reserves which may include provision of further recreational facilities or, alternatively, increased conservation measures. The results will also be important to the status of protected areas in Victoria in light of the current Victorian Environment Assessment Council's assessment and recommendations on what areas have greater need for conservation and protection.

Attitudes and Values of Non-Users of Parks

Dr Christine Lee, a member of TRU and Dr Graeme Galloway from La Trobe University have received an STCRC network grant for a project titled "Analysis of Victorian communities who do not currently use parks," valued at \$18,000 for 2006/2007. The industry partner for this project is Parks Victoria.

National parks and metro parks are generally public places where members of the community, tourists and visitors can enjoy leisure and recreational activities. Therefore, planning for the development of new parks need to take into account the different types of communities that live near these areas, and the different types of visitors travelling to these regions. With the changing demographic profiles relating to ethnicity, age group, gender,

education level, health and lifestyle status over time, it is timely to explore the needs and perceptions that are generally held by the different ethnic communities in relation to the use of parks. This project analyses the nature of these populations and investigates non-user attitudes and values relating to parks. It provides the opportunity to identify negative perceptions and modify attitudes about parks through education and other positive means, thus promoting and encouraging park visitation in the future. In addition, the results may contribute to the future planning of parks through strategies such as location, provision of facilities and target marketing to encourage the utilisation of parks.

TRU Seminar Series Continues to Stimulate Discussion and Debate

Forty researchers were on hand for the latest round of research-in-progress presentations of the biannual TRU seminar held at Monash University's Berwick Campus on Tuesday 14 November. This seminar, the sixth in a series, showcased current tourism research projects conducted by four Monash University staff and research students and two invited academics – Emeritus Professor Elery Hamilton-Smith (Charles Sturt University) and Dr. Karen Smith (Victoria University, Wellington).

Topics included national parks and community engagement, modelling and forecasting Australian domestic tourism and a critical commentary on the vocabulary of tourism.

Brent Moyle – "The Impacts of Protected Area Tourism on Host Communities: A Tourist's Perspective"

Dr Karen Smith – "Recruitment and Selection of Tourism and Event Volunteers"

Leah Purvis – "National Parks and Community Engagement"

Professor Elery Hamilton-Smith – "Do We Mean What We Say? A Critical Comment on the Vocabulary of Tourism"

Neelu Seetaram – "Air Travel and Demand Elasticities to Australia"

Dr George Athanasopoulos – "Modelling and Forecasting Australian Domestic Tourism"

Most of the presentations are available on the TRU website at <http://www.buseco.monash.edu.au/units/tru/conferences.php>

The next TRU Seminar will be held in June 2007.

Accolades

Awards

Professor Betty Weiler, Director of TRU, was successful in winning the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Postgraduate Supervision, one of two awarded at Monash University this year. Well done Betty on this prestigious award, which is testament to her dedication and experience as a higher degree supervisor (Prof Weiler is pictured below with her current HDR students).

Leah Purvis, (pictured below) a postgraduate TRU member, was highly commended for her honours thesis, entitled Case Study of the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park: Exploring Issues of Interpretation and Community Engagement, at the 30th Annual Australia and New Zealand Regional Science Association Conference. Leah's

achievement is particularly noteworthy as this was not a Tourism Conference. Apart from the winner, there were only two high commendations, effectively recognising Leah as runner-up. Well done Leah.

PhD Completions

Three TRU members have completed and passed their PhDs recently – Lee Davidson (pictured right), Jennifer Laing and Pieter Van Dijk. Lee's PhD was titled 'A mountain feeling: the narrative construction of meaning and self through a commitment to mountaineering in Aotearoa/New Zealand', while Jennifer's PhD looked at 'Extraordinary Journeys: Motivations Behind a Frontier Travel Experience and Implications for Tourism Marketing.' Pieter's PhD examined emotional labour in the tourism based customer service industry.



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The Role of the Media in Shaping Motivations Behind Travel Experiences: A Case Study 'From the Frontier' (Jennifer Laing, TRU, and Geoffrey Crouch).

Two special issues of journals (Tourism Review International and Tourism Analysis) will cover selected papers from the conference.

For further information and a full list of presentations as well as abstracts of papers from ITAM, see <http://www.buseco.monash.edu.au/units/tru/conferences.php>



Prof Weiler's current higher degree students surrounded her to celebrate her winning the Vice Chancellor's Award (Pictured above - back: Jim Curtis, Leah Purvis, Brent Moyle, Kirsty Tumes, Liam Smith ; front: Varintra Sirisuthikul, Betty Weiler, and Fiona Wheeler.

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