

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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Crime, education, sexuality: Geography is more than maps

Two hundred researchers from across the globe will next week converge on UTAS for the 2008 Institute of Australian Geographers (IAG) Conference, hosted by the School of Geography and Environmental Studies.

The IAG has more than 400 members and focuses particularly on the well-being and prospects of postgraduate students and early career researchers.

The Conference will run from Monday 30 June to Thursday 3 July in a variety of locations at the School of Geography and Environmental Studies and will cover a wide range of topics.

Associate Professor Elaine Stratford, Head of the UTAS School of Geography and Environmental Sciences, said that the perception of geography as being all about maps and topography is old-fashioned.

“What people may not realise is that geography can also include the study of sexuality, gender, ethnicity, race and attachment to place, among other things such as natural resource management, conservation and – yes – mapping too.”

“Understanding the Earth, its processes, and our positive and negative impacts on it is crucial if we are to address so many of the changes that face us – climate change, sea level rise, urban water shortage, or rural depopulation among them. Geographers are key to such understanding,” Assoc/Prof Stratford said.

The Conference marks 50 years of the IAG, which promotes, supports and defends Australian geography here and overseas.

*** Conference highlights are below. For locations contact the Media Office.**

*** For more information on the conference or to arrange interviews, please contact Associate Professor Elaine Stratford, Head of the UTAS School of Geography and Environmental Studies.**

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*** Conference highlights:**

Monday 30 June 2008

- **“The unspoken landscape of sex work: Violence in New South Wales sex industry settings.” Jason Prior, University of Technology, Sydney (2.20pm-2.40pm)**

Drawing on a detailed analysis of several hundred reports lodged between 2000 and 2007 by sex workers from across New South Wales, this paper provides detailed insight into the relationship between the locations of sex work – street, private, parlour, escort – and levels and types of violence perpetrated against sex workers.

- **“Children’s perceptions of bushfire risk: Implications for education.” Briony Towers and Douglas Paton, UTAS (3.40pm-4pm)**

Inquiries into bushfire disasters acknowledge the need to raise levels of community bushfire knowledge and preparedness. Schools have been identified as a valuable resource for pursuing this objective. This research aims to develop a model of bushfire risk perception that represents the perspectives of children and young people. To develop this model, a large number of detailed focus groups have been conducted with children, youths and parents in bushfire prone communities across Tasmania and Victoria.

- **“The racialisation of religion in everyday space.” Kevin M. Dunn, University of Western Sydney (6.10pm-6.30pm)**

Contemporary anti-Muslim sentiment in Australia is reproduced through a racialisation that includes stereotypes of Islam, perceptions of threat and inferiority, as well as fantasies that the Other (in this case Australian Muslims) do not belong. Racialisation occurs at the scale of the body, suburb and nation. These spaces involve reactions to hijab wearing, applications for mosques and Islamic schools and fear of the geopolitical Other.

Tuesday 1 July 2008

- **“Life in the fast lane? Exploring the world of mobility.” Key note address by Professor Tim Cresswell, University of London (9.30am-10.30am)**

Professor Tim Cresswell is fascinated by movement. His talk will consider the politics of mobility and address the idea that who is allowed to move and in what manner, has become a key question for our age. Prof Cresswell’s lecture will cover the use of SUVs, questions of immigration and asylum, the politics of air travel and the provision of public transport.

- **“Supplying the ethical latte: A study of the discourses shaping the Fair Trade movement in Australia.” Miriam Williams, University of Newcastle (2.40pm-3pm)**

The paper discusses the implications of supplying Fair Trade products in conventional retail spaces for the perceived viability of ethical, caring and just economies. Drawing on multi-method research the paper identifies three discourses—of *mainstreaming*, *fairness* and *care*—and investigates how particular actors mobilise these discourses in order to promote Fair Trade.

Wednesday 2 July 2008

- **“Bio/Geo/Graphy: life in beauty's secrets and nature's surfaces.” Hayden Lorimer, University of Glasgow (9.30am-10.30am)**

W.A. “Walter” Poucher was the most popular British mountain landscape photographer of the mid-twentieth century. His celebrations of elemental wildness and upland scenery define a traditional visual aesthetic of the ideal landscape image. The opening sections of this lecture are dedicated to a series of reflections on the possible relations between geography (“earth-writing”) and biography (“life-writing”).

- **“At risk? The changing nature of independent mobility along a child's walk to school.” Vivian Romero, University of New South Wales (2.40pm-3pm)**

Social, environmental, and cultural forces have limited children's capacity to freely explore their local surroundings. There is concern directed towards the diminishing number of children walking independently to and from school. Despite the implications attributed to the declining levels of independent mobility among children, children are being driven to school with an underlying parental belief of good intentions. Yet how does the school journey contribute to a child's health and well-being in the context of independent mobility?

- **“A question of balance: a path to sustainability or business-as-usual?” Plenary address by Dr Ronlyn Duncan, UTAS (4.30pm-5.15pm)**

Dr Duncan's address examines the tricky question of how to balance the social, economic and environmental aspects of major developments, concentrating on the Basslink electricity interconnector case.