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# Research Connections #01

Parks and Leisure

# 01, July 2011

## PLA & ANZALS Welcome You

Welcome to this exciting new information sharing initiative on research across the natural and built leisure environments. Parks and Leisure Australia recognises there is a continual need to support practical knowledge gained through onground experience, with evidence based detailed research which identifies; debates; explores; clarifies and grows our industry knowledge. This newsletter is a critical tool for both researcher and practitioner alike, in strengthening a nexus of collaboration and communication.

To the practitioner, applied research is often lacking, confusing or unknown. To the researcher, a clear industry research agenda relating to critical knowledge gaps, specific issues and outcome related benefit is not identified within a collaborative investigative environment. This newsletter is a start toward bridging these gaps, combined with the recent collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Australian New Zealand Association of Leisure Studies (ANZALS) and Parks and Leisure Australia (PLA).

I congratulate our Queensland colleagues for initiating this communique and encourage all readers to contribute input to ensure the growth of relevant research, thereby strengthening greater understanding of the impact and benefits gained through leisure opportunity.

Garry Henshall, Chief Executive Officer, Parks and Leisure Australia

## Aims of Newsletter

- Inform members about current research projects, particularly within Australia and New Zealand
- Provide links to sources of information of potential interest to members
- Facilitate information exchange between researchers and members
- Identify member research priorities/interests
- Identify potential research sponsors / funding sources



## Some Queensland Research Projects: Griffith University

**Institution / Organisation** Griffith University, Department of Tourism, Leisure, Hotel and Sport Management, Nathan Campus

**Research Topic** **Influencing park visitor behavior: A belief-based approach**

**Researcher(s) and email contact details**

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**Web address for downloads** <http://journals.sagamorepub.com/ebooks/>

**Key Words** theory of planned behavior, behavioral influence, problem behavior, habitual behavior, Australia

### Abstract

Communication is a key component in management strategies designed to influence park visitor behavior and minimize social and ecological impacts. However, messages targeting management problems are often delivered without a real understanding of the specific underlying visitor beliefs. This paper applies the theory of planned behavior in the design and evaluation of messages targeting park visitor induced management problems. The method enables specific identification of how messages influence visitor beliefs and behavior. This enables managers to target and refine their messages in a measured, purposeful way for maximum effectiveness. Belief elicitation and measurement surveys were conducted at two Australian park sites, Badger Weir picnic area and Yellagonga Regional Park. The survey results informed the content of messages targeting specific problem behaviors at each site. Message interventions were installed at each site and their effectiveness evaluated based on a second belief measurement survey, and observations of visitor behavior. While the interventions were effective, repeat visitors with strong intentions and habitual behaviors seemed less prone to influence using this method. Despite overall increases in compliance at the two sites, the tested interventions were not successful in influencing salient beliefs or corresponding attitudes of these highly experienced visitors. This presents an additional challenge to parks managers. Visitors who engage in habitual behavior require an alternative approach involving different messages and different message delivery systems relative to their counter-parts. While more overt enforcement could be applied to address entrenched behaviors, alternative efforts might begin in the communities where local repeat visitors live, using a campaign style of communication.

**Funding sources / sponsors** Sustainable Tourism CRC

**Additional Notes / Comments** Journal of Park and Recreation Administration, 2009, 27(4), 38-53

**Research Topic****Picking up litter: An application of theory based communication to influence tourist behaviour in protected areas****Researcher(s) and email contact details**

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**Web address for downloads**<http://www.informaworld.com>**Key Words**

theory of planned behaviour, persuasive communication, littering, behavioural influence, tourism impacts

**Abstract**

Tourism to protected areas worldwide has increased rapidly, prompting management agencies to seek enhanced visitor management including communication aimed at influencing tourists' behaviour to reduce impacts and strengthen conservation viability. Research has shown that the greatest success in influencing visitors' actions comes from understanding what they think about a particular behaviour. This notion was investigated in this study in Mt Field National Park, Tasmania, using the theory of planned behaviour and the elaboration likelihood model of persuasion in a three-stage research process to design specific persuasive messages that were then evaluated for their impact on visitors' beliefs, attitude and behaviour. Of four salient beliefs found through survey, one offered much promise. Two experimental treatments based on that belief resulted in a 15%–20% increase in litter pickup compared with a control condition, and were also found to positively affect targeted beliefs and attitudes relating to this pro-environmental behaviour. Potential benefits include cost savings on litter collection for the park, fewer detrimental impacts on wildlife and less aesthetic degradation. Conclusions are drawn about the efficacy of a theory-based approach to influencing problem visitor behaviours in protected areas and the nature of the cognitive process which might be involved.

**Funding sources / sponsors**

Sustainable Tourism CRC

**Additional Notes / Comments**

Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 2010, 18(7), 879-900

**Research Topic****Vertical Communities****Researcher(s) and email contact details**

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**Abstract**

Griffith researchers Sacha Reid, Simone Fullagar, Kathy Lloyd and Chris Guilding are aiming to extend preliminary research on the issue of liveability within vertical communities (medium-high rise in-fill development) within SE QLD. This research examines community perceptions of liveability within and surrounding vertical communities. The qualitative research will examine the different meanings about community that are constructed in relation to changing urban landscapes, leisure facilities, open space and transport.

## Some Queensland Research Projects: Griffith University

### Research Topic

**Planning for active lifestyles in an era of population growth: The challenge to local government in Southeast Queensland**

### Researcher(s) and email contact details

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### Abstract

Similar to other liberal democratic governments, the federal government in Australia has embraced the healthy and active agenda as a bulwark against lifestyle diseases and obesity. Through an ideology of "healthism" the state has shifted responsibility onto its citizens to demonstrate active citizenship through physical activity and sport, and eating a healthy and balanced diet. The agenda is set by the federal government and policies are framed and partly funded by the state governments, but it is the local government which must actually plan, design and deliver the spaces, programs and services for sport and active recreation to its communities. In July 2009 the state government released the South East Queensland Regional Plan for 2009-2031 "to manage growth and protect the region's lifestyle and environment" (<http://www.dip.qld.gov.au/seqregionalplan>). It estimates that the population in the region will grow from 2.8 million to 4.4 million, an increase of 1.6 million people. This project entailed conducting focus groups with sport and recreation, Active and Healthy Communities, Open Space Policy officers and planners and other relevant staff from four local councils in Southeast Queensland to discuss the challenges they face to plan and deliver sport and active recreation for an increasing population. These focus groups ranged in size from 3 to 7 members for a total of 20 informants. An area of most concern was the 'disconnect' between what the state wants local government to do to increase sport and active recreation opportunities in their communities and their unwillingness to release the land needed to meet even current demand. The other area is the questionable role of property developers in the provision of green space for active living and play. The solutions suggested by members of various councils to enable active lifestyles in an era of population growth were both innovative and forward thinking.

My other current research topic is looking at how parents understand the healthy and active agenda and whether this understanding influences their family leisure practices. I currently only have one Honours student and her topic is still in the developmental stage but it is about young women's (18-24) involvements in sport and social media.

### Research Topic

**How parents understand the healthy and active agenda and whether this understanding influences their family leisure practices**

### Researcher(s) and email contact details

Maureen Harrington

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## Research Topic

**How leisure industry staff can learn more developed or complex understandings of foundation concepts relevant to their work**

## Researcher(s) and email contact details

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## Abstract

My research has been examining how leisure industry staff can learn more developed or complex understandings of foundation concepts relevant to their work. Given staff with more complex understandings or experiences tend to display more desirable workplace outcomes, organisations can benefit by using the findings to improve staff knowledge and performance. Examples of concepts investigated thus far include: experiences of leisure, recreation activity leadership, and inter-organisational business relationships.

Important propositions framing the project are that for any given concept, it is possible to identify a limited number of different ways of experiencing a particular concept. Experiences differ according to meanings of dimensions forming the content of experiences, and perhaps most interestingly; experiences can be interpreted as a continuum representing less to more complex understandings of a concept.

Thus to give an example, a study with recreation staff including sport coaches, adventure guides and fitness instructors; revealed three experiences of being an activity leader: (1) instructing clients in activity skills by modelling and reinforcing correct performance, (2) educating clients by developing their understanding of the reasons and techniques for learning skills, and (3) facilitating personal growth by inspiring clients to teach themselves new skills. Dimensions common to each experience were: the context of leadership situations, relationships and locus of control between clients and staff, roles and delivery styles adopted by staff, and client outcomes. For each experience, these dimensions were given different meanings. For instance in Experience 1, the context was to tell clients how to perform skills; in Experience 2, the context was to provide clients with confidence to become self learners; in Experience 3, the context was to inspire clients to apply their knowledge of learning to other areas of their lives.

On the basis of these findings, instructing clients in skills was the least developed experience as it emphasises dependant learning; educating clients for understanding was more developed because it focuses on becoming a self learner; facilitating person growth was the most developed understanding because it aims to produce independent, lifelong learners.

Organisation can apply these ideas using the following techniques:

1. Discuss with staff, either individually or in a group, how they experience a concept relevant to their work situation; e.g., "can you give me an example of X and describe what X means to you". Follow this question by asking staff to identify important aspects or dimensions of their experience that are central to their understanding and ask them what these aspects mean to them.
2. Summarise the information into several (e.g., 3-6) statements capturing the essence of different experiences. Identify and abstract common critical dimensions (e.g., 3-6) and highlight their different meanings for each experience. Consider how experiences might be less or more developed by valuing their respective implications.
3. Use the experiences and dimensions as a resource of training staff through sharing their understandings. Change in understanding comes through the individual's capacity to discern and demonstrate different meanings of dimensions and hence different experiences – relevant to particular work place contexts and client needs.

## Some Queensland Research Projects: Griffith University

### Research Topic **Gender, Slow Travel and Green Leisure**

#### Researcher(s) and email contact details

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 Erica Wilson        erica.wilson@scu.edu.au  
 Kevin Markwell     kevin.markwell@scu.edu.au

#### Abstract

Griffith researcher Simone Fullagar has undertaken research with women who have participated in the 9 day Cycle Queensland tour to explore the gendered meaning of cycling as slow travel. She is working with Erica Wilson and Kevin Markwell at Souther Cross University to complete an edited book on slow travel that will explore the relationship between different forms of mobility, sustainability and the travel experience.

### Research Topic **Crime in Vertical Communities: Perceptions and Types of Crime in High Rise Apartments in Surfers Paradise**

#### Researcher(s) and email contact details

Sacha Reid            s.reid@griffith.edu.au

#### Key Words

High rise living, perceptions, crime, vertical communities

#### Abstract

Current town planning and public housing policies in Australia suggest that in the very near future housing density will be much higher than current levels. In addition, there has been little consideration given to how these policies might impact on levels of crime and fear of crime in an Australian context. Using the Gold Coast City Council as a case study community of existing high density housing, the aim of this proposal is to *inform policy development by exploring the variation in types and volumes of crime in a range of existing high density communities with a view to revealing the correlates of place management and risky facilities*. Specifically, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What are the types and rates of crime in high rise residential/ touristic buildings in Surfers Paradise, Gold Coast?
2. How do differences in crime type and rates depend on level of density, management approach/style and physical security measures (architectural elements, CCTV, alarms etc)?
3. Influence of situational factors and security measures on perceptions of safety and incidences of crime within high rise buildings.

**Research Topic****Determinants of "Sense of Community" in Suburban Brisbane Vertical Communities****Researcher(s) and email contact details**

Sacha Reid      s.reid@griffith.edu.au

**Key Words**

Vertical communities, high rise living, sense of community

**Abstract**

This creation of higher density, higher rise buildings or vertical communities are being created within and beyond the traditional city centre zones in capital cities around Australia. This qualitative research project aims to identify the factors influencing 'sense of community' in high density residential developments in suburban areas of Brisbane. Specific research objectives are:

1. to identify high density resident's perceptions of 'sense of community'
2. to analyse how residents interact socially within vertical communities
3. to identify how perceptions of a 'sense of community' are linked with social interactions
4. to understand developer's intentions and aspirations for social interaction in high density residential developments

## Some Queensland Research Projects: Southern Cross University

**Research Topic****Enhancing Family Cohesion through Leisure and Tourism****Researcher(s) and email contact details**

Dr Gui Lohmann      Gui.Lohmann@scu.edu.au

**Web address for downloads**[www.guilohmann.com](http://www.guilohmann.com) (personal site)**Key Words**

Leisure; tourism; family cohesion

**Abstract**

Despite the increasing importance of leisure and tourism in modern society, particularly as a way to escape the routine and stress of modern life, research in leisure and tourism in the context of families is still scarce. Prominently, it is necessary to investigate how leisure and tourism can contribute to create greater cohesion among family members. This is the central purpose of this research project that also aims to compare the differences between the habits of leisure and tourism in different family structures and families in different stages of the family cycle. The methodology is structured from the theoretical model of family cohesion known as FACES III (Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales - 3rd edition). The main data collection instrument used is questionnaires that will be applied to parents and students. In a complementary fashion will also be used structured interviews with experts in leisure, tourism and family in order to ascertain how policies for leisure and tourism can contribute to a better quality of life in families with school-age children.

## Some Queensland Research Projects: Southern Cross University

### Research Topic

**Managing Local Tourism Master Class**

### Researcher(s) and email contact details

Dianne Dredge

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### Key Words

Local government, tourism, regional development, public policy, collaboration.

### Abstract

Local governments are increasingly involved in tourism as a means of creating and maintaining prosperous, vibrant and diverse communities. Research shows that sustainable, competitive destinations generally have local governments that engage in tourism planning and management in strategic and innovative ways. Such an approach involves balancing product development, marketing and promotional activities, service delivery and good governance arrangements that transcend traditional administrative boundaries and planning practices. The Managing Local Tourism Mast Class is especially designed for regional councils, and provides an opportunity to:

- Explore key issues and concepts in managing local tourism in a setting that encourages dialogue between council divisions
- Develop a shared appreciation of the cross-sectoral tasks involved in achieving sustainable, competitive destinations.
- Develop collaborative dialogue within and between councils and regional organisations about tourism planning and management issues.
- Identify possible strategies and actions that may be employed to improve local tourism destination management and visitor experiences.

The Managing Local Tourism Professional Development Program is a two and one-half (2½) day program run at a regional or sub-regional level. A minimum of two councils and a maximum of five councils is recommended for delivery of the Program.

### Funding sources / sponsors

This project is offered as a research consultancy

### Additional Notes / Comments

This program has been successfully run in two locations involving multiple councils in Western Australia and New South Wales. Further information is available.

**Research Topic****Scenic Rim Regional Tourism Strategy****Researcher(s) and email contact details**

Dianne Dredge      **Dianne.Dredge@scu.edu.au**

**Web address for downloads**

The final strategy will be presented to Council in mid-March. Details will be found at [visitscenicrim.com.au](http://visitscenicrim.com.au) in the future or by contacting the above researcher.

**Key Words**

Regional tourism, plan, collaboration, local government, public policy,

The Scenic Rim Regional Tourism Strategy provides a framework to guide destination planning and management into the future. The Strategy is intended to be a living strategy that guides the development of innovative, viable and sustainable tourism activity. A living strategy is one that is owned by the local community, by the tourism industry and by government and embodies the essence and aspirations of Scenic Rim places and communities. The Strategy reflects the intrinsic natural, social and cultural values of the Scenic Rim and supports strategies and actions that contribute to a strong and vibrant future for local communities set within a global context. Accordingly, this living strategy is capable of adapting to changing conditions, local needs and issues and embodies a shared vision that lives within the minds and actions of the stakeholders and agencies involved in tourism.

**Abstract**

In this context, the broad goals of this Strategy are to:

- Protect and enhance the existing strengths of the region, including its natural environment, small country towns, rural landscapes and local communities consistent with the Scenic Rim region brand.
- Promote tourism development that is consistent with community values and aspirations and contributes to community development and well-being.
- Develop distinctive and competitive tourism products and experiences in the region, with the flexibility and resilience to respond to future market, environmental and social changes.
- Strengthen collaboration and partnerships between Scenic Rim

**Funding sources / sponsors**

Scenic Rim Regional Council and Southern Cross University, Gold Coast Beachside Campus

**Additional Notes / Comments**

This project represents a very successful collaborative approach between Southern Cross University and local government. The development of the strategy involved a range of leading edge collaborative and community building techniques and knowledge transfer. A clear framework, comprehensive data collection and the development of clear strategies and actions were developed from the work.

## Some Queensland Research Projects: Southern Cross University

<b>Research Topic</b>	<b>Event Governance - Strategic Partnerships in Action</b>
<b>Researcher(s) and email contact details</b>	Dianne Dredge      Dianne.Dredge@scu.edu.au Michelle Whitford      Michelle.Whitford@scu.edu.au
<b>Key Words</b>	Event governance, collaboration, partnerships, tourism,
<b>Abstract</b>	This research seeks to establish good governance guidelines for effective collaboration in the planning and management of tourism events. Events are often planned and managed within very short timeframes and there are a range of actors and agencies involved. If effective consultation and collaboration between government, event organisers and local communities is not established early in these processes, significant community backlash can occur. Based on research into previous events, and the identification of lessons learned, this research project will identify good governance criteria and guidelines to assist with the planning and management of stakeholder relationships for future events.
<b>Funding sources / sponsors</b>	STHM Internal Research Grant
<b>Research Topic</b>	<b>Building a Stronger Future: Balancing Professional and Liberal Education Ideals in Tourism and Hospitality Education</b>
<b>Researcher(s) and email contact details</b>	Dianne Dredge      Dianne.Dredge@scu.edu.au
<b>Web address for downloads</b>	<a href="http://www.tourismhospitalityeducation.info">www.tourismhospitalityeducation.info</a>
<b>Key Words</b>	Tourism, hospitality, events, education, curriculum, reflective practitioner,
<b>Abstract</b>	In Australia, despite having a range of well-established and internationally recognised degrees for over 20 years, there has been little debate or clarity over what constitutes a tourism, hospitality or event degree, or exactly what such degrees should deliver. The aim of this project is to map the tourism, hospitality and event education curricula including core knowledge requirements and the pathways that students can take within the curricula space (e.g. from professional/vocational education to liberal education). Given that leisure, events and convention management, sports, social science and the environment are closely intertwined in the study of tourism and hospitality, these areas are also included in this investigation. The project is underpinned by a commitment to establishing collaborative dialogue between industry, higher education and the academic community about the future of tourism and hospitality education and practice. The project team is particularly interested in hearing from any industry representatives that have an interest in what skills and knowledge graduates should have.
<b>Funding sources / sponsors</b>	<b>Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) 2009-2011</b>

## Some Useful Links

Please click on any of the following links to access details.

- **Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)** <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/>
- **ANZALS Annals of Leisure Research** - <http://www.anzals.org.au/journal/annals-of-leisure-research-contents/> This contains tables of contents and abstracts of research articles. If people are members of ANZALS they have full access to the journal, but otherwise people need to access via a university library normally. In the next couple of months the journal is moving to a larger publisher Taylor and Francis, so once that is complete people will be able to sign up for an email alert that will tell them what is in the new issue.
- **Physical activity update summary** – if you want to be put on the monthly email list, contact Sherryn Davies, Queensland Health, Email: [sherryn\\_davies@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:sherryn_davies@health.qld.gov.au)

## Coming Issues

Target dates for 2011:

October 2011 – Newsletter 2: Focus WA research establishments?

February 2012: Newsletter 3: Focus NZ research establishments?

Information on other research projects or funding sources welcome at any time.

## Research Connections—Organising Committee

The aim being to recruit representatives on a regional basis from major universities and research establishments throughout Australia who can provide information regarding current research within each region.

The Research Committee (SEQ) currently comprises the following people: John Wood (co-ordinator and PLA-QLD Regional Councillor); Kylie Crocker (PLA-Qld Regional Councillor), Jason Byrne (Griffith Uni – Gold Coast), Paul Brookfield (Gold Coast City Council), Neil Sipe (Griffith Uni – Nathan), Sacha Reid (Griffith Uni – Nathan), Kathy Lloyd (Griffith Uni – Nathan), Simone Fullagar (Griffith Uni – Nathan & ANZALS), May Carter (Edith Cowan University)

If you are willing to assist with the collation of regional research information, please contact John Wood at [jwcs@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jwcs@bigpond.net.au)

## Interested in Sponsoring Research or this Newsletter?

Is your organisation interested in sponsoring research or advertising in this newsletter? Enquiries are welcome — just contact Gary Henshall, CEO PLA Phone +61 +3 5444 1763 or email [garry@parksleisure.com.au](mailto:garry@parksleisure.com.au)