



The Australian Anthropological Society Newsletter

Number 88, December 2002

REGISTRATION NO. Y02862.32 ABN 27 776 118 160 INCORPORATED IN NSW 1988

Table of contents

AAS Newsletter Editors.....	1
Newsletter Publication Policy	1
AGM 2002.....	1
AAS Presidential Report 2002	2
TAJA Annual Report, 2002.....	4
Strategic Plan for the AAS, 2002-2003	5
Report on 2002 AAS Conference, 3-5 October 2002	7
AAS Annual Conference 2003.....	10
AAS Annual Conference 2004.....	11
AAS Clearing House Sub-Committee	11
AAS Ethics Sub-Committee	11

AAS Newsletter Editors

The new Editors for the AAS Newsletter are Rosita Henry and Mary Patterson. We wish to thank David Martin, for his excellent job as Acting Editor for the past two years. David was not able to take on the Editorship, though he has offered to continue to assist in technical aspects of the Newsletter production and distribution.

The Newsletter is a vehicle for informing members of interesting books, notices, and conferences, and to provide brief commentaries on issues relevant to members. It is usually around 8-10 pages long. The roles of the Editors are to solicit and edit contributions from members and from others, but please do not wait to be solicited! We particularly encourage contributions from post-graduate students, for a new section of the Newsletter to be devoted to items of particular interest to our student membership. (Such items might include book reviews, brief accounts of fieldwork experiences, and notices of, and reports on, student workshops/conferences). If you wish to contribute an item for publication in the Newsletter, please contact either of the co-editors:

Rosita.Henry@jcu.edu.au

Phone (07) 47814966

or

m.patterson@anthropology.unimelb.edu.au

Phone (03) 83447572

Newsletter Publication Policy

A publication policy has been published in AAS Newsletter Number 87, and on the AAS web site. Members should be aware of the application of legal liability to publication of materials by AAS whether on AASNET or through the AAS Newsletter.

AGM 2002



Grant McCall, Wendy Asche, and Sarah Yu hard at work at the AGM, 2002

The Annual General Meeting of the Australian Anthropological Society was held at Australian National University, Canberra on Friday 4th October 2002. The full minutes of the meeting will be distributed to members with AAS Newsletter Number 91, to be published immediately before the next AGM. In this Newsletter we include the outgoing President's Address, the TAJA Editor's Report and a Draft Strategic Plan for the AAS prepared and outlined at the AGM by the newly elected President, Thomas Reuter.



A kiss between Presidents

AAS Presidential Report 2002

Julie Finlayson



Acknowledgments

On behalf of the membership I would like to thank all members of the current AAS Executive for their commitment to the Society in the work they have undertaken this year.¹ We have had to grapple with matters that have required additional energy from the Executive and I would like to acknowledge the efforts that

¹ Executive members are Vice President Mandy Thomas, Secretary Toni Bauman, Treasurer Wendy Asche, additional executive members Kingsley Palmer and David Martin, TAJA editor, Michael Allen.

went into resolving these matters. Each member of the Executive undertakes his or her role in a voluntary capacity, in addition to the active professional life each member has.

I would also like to thank Ms Liz Bell particularly. As the AAS office administrator Liz has brought her considerable financial and administrative skills to bear on Society business and has contributed significantly to the present professional status of the administration. She has also supported the Executive in their work and this has been greatly appreciated.

Resignations

At the 2001 AGM a motion to extend the term of AAS Executive positions from an annual to a two-year appointment was passed. It was felt that a stint of two years better afforded the Executive opportunities for planning and implementation. However, during 2002 Dr Fiona Magowan resigned from the position of Vice President. We appreciate her contribution to AAS while both Secretary and Vice President of AAS. Dr Mandy Thomas, from the ANU was elected by the members to replace Fiona as Vice President.

I resigned from the position of president to take effect from the closure of the 2002 AGM following which time Dr Thomas Reuter, from the University of Melbourne becomes AAS President. All Executive positions will be open for nominations and re-election in 2003. Activities undertaken by the AAS executive over the past 18 months have focused on developing firm foundations for a sustainable, and professionally managed and operated administrative arm of the Society.

The Move from Sydney to Canberra: 2000

Operating AAS administration from the Department of Anthropology at Sydney University was becoming increasingly untenable from 1999-2000. Wider changes in the administration of the University generally were impacting on the Department's capacity to sustain support for accommodating AAS. There had been recent critical changes to the AAS administrative personnel and a less than smooth transition to a new regime. In addition, the poor health of the new administrative officer limited her capacity to provide service to the Executive and membership. TAJA, however, remains Sydney-based.

When it was suggested that the AAS office relocate as part of a suite of changes associated with reforming and re-grouping the administrative facilities, the idea of relocating to Canberra [and to the ANU] was embraced with enthusiasm. Michael Allen fully supported the shift and very generously assisted the move by bringing essential pieces of office equipment and records down to Canberra in his own car. We thank him for these generous efforts.

AAS Administrative Support

The Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, the Faculties, ANU has provided space for the new office. I thank Professor Merlan for her generous support and

assistance in facilitating the accommodation and capacity for AAS access to infrastructure support.

The arrangement has now been formalised between AAS and the Department to the extent that the costs of using certain Departmental resources has been waived [office space] but user-pay costs applied with respect to identified items. The AAS Executive holds telephone conferences every three months to conduct AAS business.

In 2000 Ms Chris Watson was appointed to the combined position of administrator-publications officer in Canberra. These offices were combined in an effort to cost save. Previously, the Publications Officer position was undertaken on a voluntary basis, often in combination with that of the Secretary. Chris held the combined position for 12 months from 2000-2001.

In 2002, Ms Liz Bell replaced Chris who returned to higher degree studies. The position was separated and David Martin filled the role of Acting Editor of the AAS Newsletter. Ms Bell was appointed to the position of Office administrator following public advertisement. Duty statement and selection criteria were developed. Her appointment was the first step to filling the paid position on a professional basis.

Under Liz's administration, AAS has now implemented systems for financial management and professional administrative support. The following operational systems were initiated or extended over 2001-02:

- Installment and use of MYOB for maintaining AAS accounts, including automated electronic invoicing and maintenance of the membership data base;
- Publication of the current membership register on the AAS web site;
- Electronic distribution of membership renewal notifications and other notifications relevant to members;
- Electronic distribution of the AAS Newsletter.
- Systematic archival management of AAS records, collation of back issues of the Newsletter, in-coming correspondence, and other documents relating to AAS business.

Internet Banking has also been implemented and is proving very successful and convenient to the Treasurer and the Executive generally.

The Website

The AAS web site has been completely redesigned and updated through engagement of a professional web designer. The site now provides a far more professional and accessible source of information on the Society and has been linked to a number of related sites.

Papers from a number of conferences and seminars are posted on the web site and are thus freely and readily available to down load. These include:

- Papers presented at the Adelaide AAS Native Title Conference, 2001

- The AAS 2001 Presidential Address
- Papers presented at the CAEPR Hindmarsh Island seminar, 2002
- The AAS 2001 Keynote Conference Address by Dr Jeremy Beckett
- Papers presented at the AIATSIS Native Title Conference 2002 in Geraldton, Western Australia.

General information about the Society is also available on the web page as are key documents such as the Constitution, Code of Ethics, Membership Forms, and details of the Annual Conference. Statistics of visitation to the site indicate that it is regularly and frequently visited. For example, between March 29th and June 30th 2002 [ie 94 days] a total of 46,500 hits were made on the site. This involved just below 4,200 page views.

Clearly the web site is emerging as an important means of communication amongst members and the wider community. Some of the most frequently down loaded files on our site were as follows:

- Over 500 copies of Newsletter No 84
- Just under 500 copies of the membership Register
- 450 copies of the Keynote Address of the 2001 Conference
- almost 400 copies of the Code of Ethics
- more than 200 copies of Peter Sutton's TAJA paper
- almost 200 copies of the Presidential Address of 2001
- between 150-200 copies of papers by anthropologists John Morton, Mary Edmunds, Geoff Bagshaw and Bruce Rigsby.

AAS Newsletter

A major issue occurred in 2002 over proposed publication of a letter in the AAS Newsletter. *Pro bono* legal advice was sought by the Acting Newsletter Editor prior to the Executive forming a sub-committee to handle the matter.

A publication policy has now been published in the AAS Newsletter and on the AAS web site. This initiative is a response to the need for broad education of the complex and delicate issues of legal liability behind notions of 'academic freedom'. Members should be aware that legal liability applies to publication of materials by AAS whether on AASNET or through the AAS Newsletter.

AAS Conference

Annual conferences are no longer organised by the AAS Executive nor financially supported by AAS. To maintain communication between the Executive and Conference Committee it has been the practice to ensure that either an Executive member sits on the organising committee, or the Chair of the organising Committee joins the Executive.

AAS Strategic Planning

Early in 2002 discussions were held between the President of AAS and the President of the WA Anthropological Society regarding possible affiliation by the WA Society with AAS. The amalgamation would have been structural

and enabled WA to retain its autonomy. However, this initiative was not embraced by the Western Australia Society membership and no further discussions have occurred.

In 2001, the Executive developed a strategic plan to focus future work. The aims of the Australian Anthropological Society are published in the Society's Constitution. However, the Executive decided to establish key objectives and strategies for the operational year 2001-2002 in order to set direction and performance outcomes. The following objectives and strategies were agreed to:

Objective: To increase the membership base of AAS, particularly from amongst the next generation of professional anthropologists.

Strategies:

Develop a formal membership strategy to reach post-graduate students particularly using the web site;

Invite a group of active post-graduate students to form a working group led by the AAS Vice-President to implement proposals and to ensure AAS remains relevant to the needs of the younger generation of anthropologists. These proposals could take the form of conference sessions at AAS, lobbying for equitable research terms and conditions between institutions; lobbying DEST on the matter of research scholarship terms and conditions.

Objective: To provide an enhanced administrative service to AAS members.

Strategies:

To finalise the establishment of the Canberra office and streamline administrative systems;

Appoint an administrative officer, initially for 12 months in line with a transparent employment process and on the basis of job selection criteria and qualifications.

Objective: To provide a forum for referred publication of papers by AAS with the potential to become a path to publication through TAJA.

Strategy:

Form a small group of interested parties to implement the proposal and maintain its viability.

Objective: To ensure that the AAS Code of Ethics is relevant and reflective of the working circumstances of Australian anthropologists.

Strategies:

Form a sub-committee to identify key issues for initial reform;

Set timeframes for revision of the Code at this first level of reform;

Replace existing Code with revised code following consultation and approval of the membership.

Many of these objectives have been achieved. Some require on-going work over the next 12 months.

Establishment of the Clearing House

The Clearing House was the outcome of two processes. First, a survey was conducted amongst members as to the

level of interest in such a forum for applied anthropologists and consultants. Second, detailed legal advice was sought regarding the capacity to establish a support unit under the present constitution.

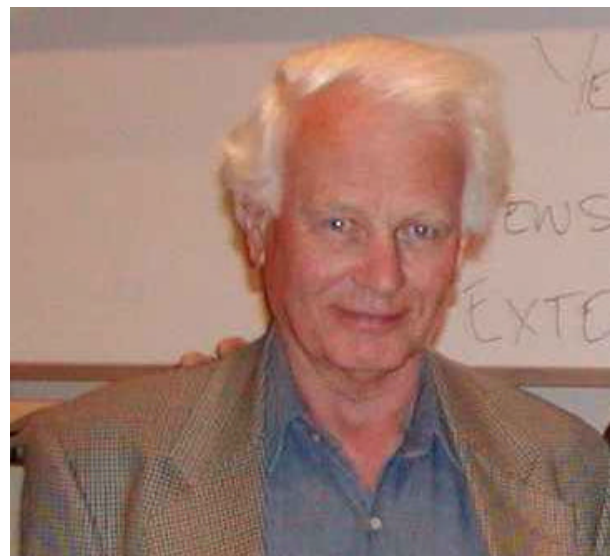
The aim of Clearing House is to offer information and professional support to consultants and applied anthropologists. Initial efforts have been to provide information about services required by applied anthropologist such as purchase of indemnity insurance. One of the first achievements in this regard was to secure insurance tailored to the needs of anthropological practitioners and pegged to the level of earned income. Other services include financial management, taxation planning and career coaching.

To become a member of the Clearing House you must first be a current member of AAS. For an additional fee, you gain entry to the Clearing House and information to members is posted on the AAS web site via a gateway. To date there are 13 individual and corporate members.

Further work is needed to develop the Clearing House services. I have indicated to the current Executive that I would like to take responsibility for this role in 2002-03. One proposed outcome in 2002-2003 will be a paper on fee scales for consulting anthropologists working in the Australian Aboriginal field.

TAJA Annual Report, 2002

Michael Allen



Publication record

The journal continues to experience a satisfactory intake of material for possible publication. For the three issues ending August 2002 (12:3, 13:1 and 13:2) we received a total of 35 articles of which we published 18, and in addition, 3 shorter communications, 2 obituaries, 1 book review article, 3 book review essays and 41 book reviews. For the fifth year in succession we yet again increased the total number of pages published (from 375 to 437), mainly due to the bumper size (187 pages) of Special Issue 13. We are also well placed for the year ahead for in addition to Special Issue 14 edited by Catherine Palmer

on the topic of the “Anthropology of Sport”, scheduled for publication in December 2002, we currently hold some 18 additional unpublished (mostly refereed) individual papers, and approximately 50 book reviews. This is sufficient material to take us through most of, possibly the whole of, 2003. We were also approached almost a year ago with a proposal to publish a Special Issue on the “Anthropology of Food”, a promising-looking collection of articles first presented at last year’s annual conference. Provided all goes well this collection will be published under the joint editorship of Mandy Thomas and Kalissa Alexeyeff as Special Issue No 15 in December 2003.

Finances

Our financial health continues to look good with yet another trading surplus, this time of \$10,290, and an increase in assets from \$107,344 to \$119,476. However, this happy position has been mostly attained through containment of costs, a situation which is not likely to continue indefinitely. Indeed, my principal aim in seeking annual surpluses, and hence increasing assets, is to increase the income flow from cash invested (up this year from \$3157 to \$4168) to a level whereby we may be able to gradually reduce the volume of unpaid voluntary work currently contributed by the editor and book review editors. This year we transferred approximately \$43,000 from our trading account to a Commonwealth Bank Term deposit, thereby increasing the total on deposit \$102,193.

There is, however, one financial matter that is not quite so rosy - a decline in income raised from subscriptions from last year’s total of \$41,783 to this year’s figure of \$38,677. Though there is nothing very alarming in such figures, for there is always some variation from year to year, I nevertheless suspect that it also reflects a slight decline in the total number of subscribers. I therefore once again appeal to all fellows and members who do not subscribe to TAJA to not only seriously consider doing so yourselves, but also to bring pressure on your institution’s library purchasing officer to do likewise. More than 400 pages of top quality printed anthropological thrills for a paltry \$50 is surely good value! Subscription rates for 2003 remain unchanged for the third year in a row. However, we are seriously considering a small increase for the following year.

Management and accommodation (archives, stock and office)

With the return of Robyn and Denis Wood to TAJA last year all has been smooth sailing on the management front. However, we are currently attempting to navigate some very choppy seas on the accommodation front. Some six months ago the Sydney anthropology department was informed by the university administration that towards the end of the calendar year they would be moved out of their ancient and sacred quarters to the Mills building. My immediate concern was the fact that very large numbers of TAJA and *Mankind* back numbers were stored in various departmental cupboards. In addition, all of the files and correspondence of the Anthropological Society of New South Wales dating back to 1928, most of it directly to do with *Mankind*, was likewise stored in the

department. The prospect of being allocated storage space in the Mills building did not look bright.

Then, to add to our further alarm, we were told about three months ago that we would have to vacate our office in the Fisher stacks as it was going to be needed to temporarily accommodate academics in a number of buildings scheduled for major renovation. Clearly, an alarming situation seemed to be developing and our appeals and complaints were loud and strident. But then we were informed by Neil Maclean, anthropology HOD, that our protests had resulted in a reversal of the plan to chuck us out of our office, a welcome decision which led us to decide to solve, thanks firstly to the efforts of Peter Newton, part of the departmental storage problem by donating all of the many boxes of *Mankind/Taja*’s past history to the archives of the State library of New South Wales, and secondly, through a hard day’s work on the part of Robyn, Denis and myself, by reducing our quite excessive stock by pulping many hundreds of issues, leaving many more hundreds for students to take freely, and by transferring the remainder to our office in Fisher stacks. We therefore no longer have any property stored in the department, our presence being reduced to a pigeon hole for mail!

We had just at few weeks in a fool’s paradise, rudely shattered when informed by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts that the original plan to use the Fisher stacks to temporarily accommodate staff in buildings undergoing renovation was still on, indeed had never been abandoned, and that we would quite certainly be moved out this November/December - just where, as also for how long, still remains unresolved, though it may be to share a small university-owned terrace house (116 Darlington Rd) with *Oceania* and the *Journal of Religious History*. Sad to say, journals seem to be regarded as superfluous trivia by SU admin!!

HAPPY POSTSCRIPT 29 September. We are now comfortably installed in our own room in 166 Darlington Rd, by far the best accommodation the journal has had for many a long year, though communication problems still await solution.

Strategic Plan for the AAS, 2002-2003

Thomas Reuter, President, AAS

The aims of the Australian Anthropological Society are published in the Society’s constitution. In addition, the Executive needs to identify some key objectives for the operational year 2002-2003 and establish strategies in order to achieve these objectives. The aim is to lend direction and accountability to the activities of the Executive and thereby to ensure that the society continues to develop better services and remain relevant to members and to the Australian public.

The AAS Executive ratified this strategic plan on 18 November 2002, after a process of discussion and amendment. The Strategic Plan has been placed on the

AAS web site to provide transparency. The aim is keep members of the Society fully informed and able to comment on the activities of its Executive.

Objective: To increase the membership base of the AAS, particularly from amongst the next generation of professional anthropologists

Strategies:

- Have introduced a two-tiered structure of AAS conference registration fees, with a 30% lower fee for paid members of the AAS than for non-members (other than overseas visitors who are members of the equivalent anthropological society in their country of origin). Members are advised not to let their membership lapse if they intend to participate in the conference.
- Have defined membership categories more clearly on the subscription form so as to avoid 'misunderstandings' (however, the present honour system is to be retained): People eligible to be 'fellows' should not be 'ordinary members'; 'Unsalariated' and other discount rates apply only to full-time students and Australian Healthcare Card holders.
- Will launch an advertising campaign to reach post-graduate students, using the AAS web site, departmental email lists and other means.
- Will invite a number of active post-graduate students to form a working group led by the AAS Vice-President to make and implement proposals for ensuring AAS is relevant to the needs of the next generation of anthropologists.
- Will link AAS membership and TAJA subscription, at a heavily discounted rate for TAJA of only \$30 (members) or \$ 15 (Unsalariated) p.a. The aim is to add to the value of AAS membership, and to raise the profile of Australian anthropology by increasing the circulation of TAJA. This decision still requires approval from members by postal ballot or at the 2003 AGM. Comments are invited in the meantime. NB. TAJA will remain financially independent.

Objective: To continuously review administrative services provided to AAS Executive, members and the public

Strategies:

- Will continuously work toward establishing new procedures for a more streamlined delivery of administrative services to the Executive, members, and the public.

Objective: To ensure that the AAS Code of Ethics is relevant and reflective of the research and working circumstances of Australian anthropologists

Strategies:

- Have appointed an Ethics Subcommittee to identify key issues for initial reform in view of a changing research and consulting environment in Australia and abroad. Members include Mandy Thomas (Chair), Patrick Sullivan, Wendy Asche and John Morton, with a possibility of further additions.
- The Ethics Subcommittee will produce a discussion paper with proposals for possible changes to the Code of Ethics. After extended consultation with members, a draft of a new code will be prepared and ratified by the Executive. Members will then be asked to vote on the proposal for a new code, as is required by the AAS constitution.
- The Ethics Subcommittee will provide a timeframe for the revision process described above, as soon as possible.

Objective: To deliver professional services to specific subgroups in the AAS membership

Strategies:

- Have provided an interim arrangement for a new category of membership in relation to different service levels, in the form of the 'Clearing House' (Chair: Julie Finlayson). Memberships for 2002-2003 have been renewed at no cost due to the interim nature of the current service arrangements. The long-term aim of the Clearing House will be to meet the needs of different groups of anthropologists working as full-time or occasional consultants, in Australia or overseas, in a variety of sub-fields of anthropology.
- Have taken steps towards establishing a mentoring system for applied anthropologists working in Australia by applying to the National Native Title Tribunal for funding of a pilot project in mentoring (initiative by Julie Finlayson).
- Will consult widely with the membership to ascertain the level of demand for specific professional services which the Clearing House does provide already or could provide in future. Members are encouraged to come forward with constructive suggestions.
- Will develop a strategic plan and implementation timeframe for the Clearing House.

Objective: To increase and consolidate international linkages

Strategies:

- Have formed a working group to explore possibilities for developing existing and creating new linkages with institutions and anthropological societies in the region and globally (Thomas, Reuter, Mandy Thomas, further members welcome)

- Have entered negotiations with ASA (Commonwealth) about bringing their 2005 offshore conference to Australia (Reuter, Dawson, Thomas).
- Have entered negotiations with SfAA (International Society for Applied Anthropology) about bringing their 2004 offshore conference to Australia, to be held in conjunction with the 2004 AAS conference in Melbourne (Reuter, Manderson).
- Will add to our newsletter and web site info on, and links to anthropological organizations abroad.

Objective: To increase the visibility of our profession in Australian society

Strategies:

- Have decided to discuss current issues of public interest (such as can be illuminated by taking an anthropological perspective) regularly, among the Executive and in the Newsletter. This is to enable the Society to voice an opinion to the media from time to time, as do other professional organizations.
- Have decided that the society should occasionally offer professional advice to government bodies on domestic and foreign policy matters where an anthropological approach can be of benefit or avoid harm in relation to the target group of these policies.



It's a good year!

Report on 2002 AAS Conference, 3-5 October 2002

Mandy Thomas

Organisers:

Francesca Merlan, Mark Mosko, Jon Altman, Margaret Jolly, and Mandy Thomas. The organisers represented five different Anthropology Centres at ANU (Arch and Anthropology in the Faculty of Arts, Anthropology in the Research School of Asian and Pacific Studies, the Gender Relations Centre in RSPAS, the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, and the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research)

Until June 2002 Julie Finlayson was also on the committee to represent AAS, but after Mandy Thomas played that role.

Administrator:

Joanna Emmanuel

Theme:

The theme for the conference was 'Anthropology and Diversity: Disciplinary and Practice Perspectives'. This highlighted some of the multiplicity of contexts and outlooks in the present practice of anthropology, especially in Australia and the Asia/Pacific region. At the same time as exploring fundamental topics in anthropology including kinship, representation, social conflict and inter-cultural articulation the conference aimed to consider the consequences of a re-configuration of disciplinary boundaries for our research and for both current and future practitioners, especially today's Graduate students. In light of this theme the organising committee and session convenors developed a program which included many of the contemporary debates of critical importance to the discipline as well as Honours and Postgraduate Roundtable discussions.

Keynotes:

There were three keynote speakers:

Stanley Tambiah, an international speaker on violence;

Jeff Stead, a local speaker on Applied Anthropology in Indigenous Contexts in Australia;

Annette Hamilton, a local speaker on the state of the discipline in Australian universities.



Gillian Cowlshaw, Mary Patterson, Annette Hamilton

Sessions:

Articulating Culture; Violence in the Pacific; The Tradition of Radical Thought and Anthropology; Kinship or 'cultures of relatedness'?; Changing Cultural Contexts – representations of the Hmong; Governmentality and Subjectivity in Melanesia; Meanings of Violence; Gender, Sexuality and Culture; Post-Socialist Anthropology; Film Screening and Roundtable on Transcultural Cinema.

Organisation and Planning:

Meetings for organisers were monthly for six months prior to the conference. Regular email contact between Joanna Emmanuel and the organising committee was maintained throughout the planning stages.

5 Student helpers assisted through the conference for the cost of registration.

Numbers:

There were 3 keynotes, 65 paper givers, and approximately 200 people attended overall, although some for one day only. About 80 attended the dinner.

Finances:

The ANU's Vice Chancellor contributed \$10,000 for the administration costs and for the postgrad and Honours sessions. Each of the five ANU anthropology Departments contributed \$500 to the cost of the international keynote.

The ANU's National Institute for Indigenous Studies contributed \$500 for the welcome reception. The Australian Journal of Anthropology (TAJA) and The Asia Pacific Journal of Australia (TAPJA) each contributed \$500 for a reception to launch the journal TAPJA.

Money from registrations: to be calculated.

No money was provided by AAS.

Costs of the Conference will be provided in the next Newsletter, by which time accounts will have been settled. The costs involved Admin, Catering (morning teas, reception), Keynotes, Printing.

Evaluations:

In sum the conference was thought to be highly successful and collegial. People who attended commented positively on the range of sessions, the topical nature of the sessions on violence, the quality and variety of the keynotes (particularly Hamilton and Stead), the Honours and Postgraduate roundtables, and the excellence of organization.

The major complaint was that there were too many concurrent sessions. We had already cut out numerous sessions and combined others, so perhaps this will need to be done to a greater degree at the next conference. There was some criticism that the dinner was poor quality but we hunted for a low prices venue that students could afford, and unfortunately this is often the downside of a cheap venue.

When the accounts have been settled the full report will be provided to Sydney University Anthropology (Neil MacLean) to assist in developing next year's conference.

President's Vote of Thanks to Conference Organisers

Thomas Reuter

As President of the AAS, I would like to thank Francesca Merlan, Mark Mosko, Jon Altman, Margaret Jolly and Mandy Thomas of the Australian National University, as well as Julie Finlayson representing the AAS. Their excellent teamwork resulted in a very successful Conference for 2002. Thankyou!



Mark Mosko

Conference Dinner

The photos speak for themselves!





Reports on Sessions and Roundtables held at the 2002 AAS Conference

Some reports contributed by conveners of sessions and Roundtables are included below, more to follow in the next Newsletter!

Pacific Violence

Grant McCall

We all have a vision of what a conference paper (and session) should be. We have organised, attended, participated in such exercises of our tribe. We know what to expect, although part of the pleasure in the ritual is the surprise good paper, the innovative idea. It began when I put forward a standard academic proposal some months ago: a session on the Pacific islands, any topic and any approach. I got one taker (Rosita Henry) and her topic was a violent one. Until a few days before, it looked as though Rosita and I would be talking to one another. All of a sudden, events in Indonesia (before Bali) prevented another session from going on in its planned form: participants were unable to come to Australia. So, I was asked if I would like to have three, then two, people, all speaking about violence. Well, I thought, much of the conference seems to be on that topic, so I proposed over the weekend before the conference an ironic title: "Pacific Violence".

Rosita gave an excellent paper (well, that was not a surprise!), which told me things about the Connolly/Anderson "Black Harvest" film that were very new to me. But it was the contributions made by George Gray (Solomon Islands) and James Tanis (Bougainville) that both fascinated and unsettled me. They were accounts of very distressing events in their respective homes, periods of slaughter and outrage that we have seen in the back pages (mostly) of our local papers. Both were very well done personal pieces, well observed, but also reflexive. Gray is trying to resolve what he has done by studying at the University of the South Pacific in Suva; Tanis, the more polished of the two, is a frequent speaker in international fora: his next engagement was before the United Nations in New York.

The session was a rare mixture of real and the processed; the participant and the observer. I am grateful to Jaap Timmer and Sinclair Dinnen, who provided some background to these two speakers, from whom we no doubt will hear more in future.

Honours Roundtable, AAS Meeting, 3 October 2002

Francesca Merlan

The 'Honours Roundtable session' was sparsely attended, but fortunately by people from a variety of institutions. Institutions represented by someone present or by information sent ahead were UWA, ANU, Melbourne, Monash, James Cook, Sydney, and Newcastle.

Questions that had been posed in a previous e-mail asked about student numbers, enrolment patterns and trends, pre-Honours requirements, structure of the Honours year, thesis topics, and destinations of completing Honours students.

Further questions that arose in discussion were:

1. how to account for the lack of preparedness of Honours students, which almost everyone felt to be the general situation;
2. issues of interdisciplinarity in the Honours degree (is it possible, desirable?);
3. fieldwork (is it allowed in the Honours degree, desirable?);
4. what should we be preparing students for, contemporary environment and its consequences for intellectual life;
5. the strong feeling that students should be sent elsewhere after the first degree; yet there is pressure on everyone to retain students, what to do?
6. marking levels, and the possibility that Honours students may be comparatively disadvantaged unless marks are boosted.

Commonalities:

Every institution had some Honours year coursework requirements (2 was typical, Sydney had the highest coursework requirement with 3 in the Honours year).

The coursework/thesis balance of marks was generally 50-50, that is, 50% of the year's mark depended on coursework and 50% on thesis. Differing from this general pattern were ANU and Newcastle (coursework 40%, thesis 60%).

The typical length of the thesis was 15,000 words. Monash has a range of 15,000-18,000, and ANU a range of 12,000-15,000.

Differences:

Sydney appeared to have the most demanding pre-Honours requirements, with two required pre-entry courses: History of Anthropological Thought and Theory and Ethnography. Still, the feeling was that students were ill prepared. Sydney only requires a 65% (Credit) average for entry, but is considering raising this. ANU requires a Distinction (later-year) average; so do Monash and

Melbourne. We did not systematically compare entry requirements across all institutions.

Student number trends:

In most institutions the trend for Honours enrolments in Anthropology appears to be downwards. One exception was UWA, where high and increasing numbers, and the current enrolment of 24, seem to be explicable in terms of the same courses being available to Honours, M. Prelim and Grad Dip students, and the fact that the Honours degree is advertised and perceived as necessary for undertaking applied and consultancy work. Another exception is Melbourne, where numbers seem to range around 10-11 in Anthropology, and where students seem to be coming from outside (so increases at Melbourne seem to reflect decreases at e.g. Monash, where numbers seem to be declining somewhat). At James Cook, Rohan Bastin reported poor follow-through from a large First Year group. Service teaching, he suggested, was perhaps directly but INVERSELY correlated with follow-through in later years. At ANU there have been variable Honours numbers in Anthropology in recent years, and the same is also reported by Sociology. There was a suggestion that Honours here may to some extent be in competition with (a) combined, 4-year degrees, which are very common at ANU and (b) Master's degrees. This is not entirely clear, as annual Honours enrolments do vary, and are reasonably large in some years. ANU intends to establish a Faculty of Arts Honours School, which may increase enrolments. Andrew Lattas also reported an explosion of Master's courses at Newcastle (Soc/Anth) which seems to be correlated with a decline in Honours numbers. Gaynor McDonald reported an average of 10 Honours students at Sydney but a declining First Year enrolment.

Fieldwork:

Most institutions do not encourage fieldwork in the Honours year, but a few permit it if the student seems to have a viable project in hand (ANU, Melbourne). Only James Cook seems to be developing fieldwork as a more open option, since the shire council is interested in having Honours students do research projects (but here too, fieldwork had previously been discouraged).

Research topics:

Sandy Toussaint had provided a list of topics which UWA students have tended to focus on, and these seemed to be the general experience:

Aboriginal health, Native Title, anthropology of law, Religion and spirituality, identity politics, gender, class and nationhood; issues of representation, environmental anthropology and cultural tourism, health and medicine, post-modernism and cyberspace, anthropology of place, post-colonialism, migration and refugees, Aboriginal art. Others echoed the strong emphasis on the Internet, popular culture, youth culture, tourism.

Destinations:

It was generally agreed that there was little collated information on destinations of students after Honours. General feelings were: that only about 10% of students went on to PhDs (Sydney); that many people do Honours

hoping that it will serve as a research and professional qualification; that Honours students are able to use Honours as a professional qualification for moving into Land council, Native Title, environmental protection, heritage and sometimes museum work.

Conclusions

In short, the roundtable really only had time to collect some basic information about current trends and course structure.

1. Recorded was a general feeling of underpreparedness of students. Reasons for this would have to involve some further discussion of pre-Honours requirements and other factors.
2. We noted a general decline in Honours numbers (which however is countered by strengthening numbers at a couple of institutions, for different reasons -- first, students come to programs at some major institutions from declining Honours programs elsewhere, and second, numbers have risen at UWA where Honours is able to be incorporated and perceived as a professional qualifying degree).
3. Fieldwork was generally not encouraged in the degree, but a methods course (with some practical component) was seen as desirable, and typical of most institutions.
4. Interdisciplinary enrolment was generally seen as disadvantageous and not encouraged.

Follow-up among us might consider further questions of the structure and intellectual content of the degree, how we see it positioned in relation to other degrees, and for what we think we are preparing students.



Michael and Mary at the 2002 Conference Dinner

AAS Annual Conference 2003

The AAS Annual Conference 2003 will be hosted by the University of Sydney. The Conference Committee consists of Neil MacLean, Gaynor MacDonald, and Jeremy Beckett.

Further details on the Conference will be published in the next Newsletter and updated in due course on the AAS web page: <http://www.aas.asn.au>

AAS Annual Conference 2004

Plans to join the AAS 2004 conference with the SfAA offshore conference in the same year requires a commitment to a venue for the AAS conference two years in advance. The 2002 AGM has approved the bid by The University of Melbourne to host this joint event.

AAS Clearing House Sub-Committee

The Clearing House had been established to cater for the needs of applied anthropologists working both in Australia and overseas. It is still in the process of development. It was agreed at the AGM to accept Julie Finlayson's generous offer to devote time to developing the AAS Clearing house as part of a sub-committee with Nic Peterson. All AAS members are eligible to gain entry to the Clearing House for an additional fee.

AAS Ethics Sub-Committee

The purpose of the AAS Ethics sub-committee is to revamp the Code of Ethics and then put it to the AAS membership for approval. The AAS executive is in the process of finalising membership of the subcommittee. Please contact the AAS Secretary, Toni Bauman if you have a particular interest in serving the AAS in this capacity.

In fine spirits at the 2002AAS Annual Conference

