

# SIAN

## Convenors' report and annual review

This year has seen a consolidation of the ASA in terms of membership, organisation and administration, as well as some exciting developments, especially through our new links with the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA).

Early in the year we convenors met and devised a plan of action to implement with the rest of the Core Group. We are pleased to say that most of our plans have been fulfilled and that new ones have emerged.

Following a successful membership drive, membership has climbed to previous levels (over 100), and we have a much improved membership data base. Our ongoing membership strategy targets Maori and Pacific Islands members as well as planners, environmental scientists, engineers, students, community development workers, academics and so on.

We are still keen to develop regional initiatives, particularly in the Auckland area. The Canterbury group has maintained an active programme over the year, starting with a bar-b-que and planning session and continuing with a series of professional development sessions with a "participation" theme.

ASA is now the New Zealand chapter of the IAIA. We believe we can benefit from being part of a broader international organisation and network.

We successfully bid to host the IAIA '98 conference in New Zealand. This year the conference was in Lisbon, Portugal; IAIA '97 (next May) will be in New Orleans, and in April 1998 the conference will take place in

Christchurch. An organisational base for the conference has been established, with three committees (Programme, Sponsorship and Local Finances, and Local Arrangements) led by Martin Ward and ourselves.

Please let us know if you would like to become involved or if you have any suggestions, particularly for themes or workshop topics.

Regular production of SIAN has continued despite ongoing difficulties in getting people to submit material. We see the newsletter as an effective means of getting information, ideas and advice to the social assessment community. We urge you all to use it. Our thanks to Jo Lynch, our outgoing editor, for all her hard work in putting together the newsletter over recent years. Welcome to our new editor, Chris Cosslett.

This year's ASA conference at Flock House in Bulls, was very successful both in terms of content and participation (more details elsewhere in this newsletter), and the enjoyment had by all. Though we had a relatively small group of people, discussion was lively and often heated and we both felt

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intellectually challenged and stimulated. Our thanks to Paul Lister and his team for organising such a successful conference.

Next year's ASA conference will be held in the top of the South Island – either Picton or Kaikoura. Any ideas, volunteers to organise activities, or other contributions would be very welcome.

We look forward to next year's activities, when we hope to broaden membership and regional groups, work towards a successful

1997 ASA conference and IAIA '98, meet up with members in regional activities, and continue sharing our ideas and work experiences in SIAN.

Thanks to Core Group members for their work over the year.

We hope you all enjoy your Christmas break and wish you all the best for the coming year.

NA MAUA NOA, NA NICK TAYLOR AND JULIE WARREN.

# Notes from the AGM

## Flock House, 18 October 1996

A more positive AGM was held than last year. More people attended – 20 as compared with 12 last year, and the coordinators were able to report good progress on most of the goals set for the year. Membership is now above 100 – 25% higher than last year, and there is money in the bank.

Particular mention was made of the high quality of SIAN throughout the year, thanks to Jo Lynch.

The Core Group are to employ a part-time administrative assistant for up to four hours per week. This will mean that the mail list can be kept up to date, letters answered, meetings arranged, and minutes taken and distributed promptly.

It will allow some or all of those people who have been trying to do these things to spend their ASA time more creatively, in particular working to increase Wellington membership and organising Wellington ASA meetings along the lines of the Christchurch ones.

The new Core Group/Executive for 1997 is:

**Coordinators:** Julie Warren and Nick Taylor

**Treasurer:** Ann Pomeroy

**Secretary:** Paul Lister

**SIAN Editor:** Chris Cosslett

**Plus:** Karen Johns, Gerard Fitzgerald, James Newell, Rob Harris, Melissa Stewart, Pat Shannon.

It was agreed that the 1997 AGM and Conference for ASA should be held in the top half of the South Island - Kaikoura, Picton, Marlborough and Nelson were all suggested as possible, and suitably exotic, venues. The suggested theme was *Communities in Transition*.

It was agreed that the Core Group would make the final decision on location and timing, having regard to cost, size of available facilities and suitability of location.

## From the Editor

Hello everyone. I am looking forward to receiving lots of material for SIAN over the coming year. We will be endeavouring to publish it as often as possible so if you have any material available at any time, just send it to me so I can start putting the next issue together.

My postal address is: 31 Roy Street, Newtown, Wellington, phone 04 389 9979 (home 04 389 2427) and fax 04 389 4646.

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## *T h i s i s s u e . . .*

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# Notes from the ASA Conference

## Flock House, 18 October 1996

A positive and generally enthusiastic mood from all participants and speakers made this year's ASA conference a most successful and enjoyable one. Spreading the conference over 48 hours, from early Friday afternoon through to lunch-time on Sunday gave the proceedings a more relaxed feeling, allowing more time for discussion, networking, and recovering from the heavy intellectual activity which went on far into both Friday and Saturday nights.

As always, the diversity of ASA was encapsulated in lively debate about the definition of community, the inherent conflict between national objectives and community livelihoods, and whether there should have been more focus on community development and less on central government agencies (or the other way around). But as usual, the combination of semi-formal presentations, small workshop discussions, informal networking, and the marvellous opportunity the rural setting and perfect weather offered to enjoy the company of old friends and to meet new ones left us all tired, enthusiastic, and looking forward to next year.

## Friday p.m.

The Friday keynote presentations started events off on just the right note – informal and intellectually challenging. Both Roger Blakeley and Denise Church, the CEOs of Internal Affairs and Ministry for the Environment respectively, informed, entertained and stimulated; much of what they had to say resurfaced later in the weekend. Common themes in their presentations were our ability to be involved in the forces which impact on the places we live and the people we live with; and the challenges posed by often-conflicting forces of diversity and cohesion inherent in both the social and environmental fabric of New Zealand.

Roger Blakeley's presentation was based around current strategic thinking within the Department of Internal Affairs, in defining the role of community in social cohesion in New

Zealand. In Roger's view, this country lacks a long-term strategic social focus, equivalent to the Environment 2010 or the long-term economic perspective underlying the reforms of the last ten years. A vision of the social future has been treated as an afterthought to the economic focus; the social future is seen as something which will just happen as a consequence of economic restructuring, rather than something which must be positively constructed. Roger's thoughts on social cohesion, and the challenges posed to social cohesion in New Zealand by the increasing social diversity of the past decade, stimulated a highly interactive session.

Denise Church took us through a brief snapshot of the policy, institutional and operational responsibilities of the Ministry for the Environment, before focusing on some more detailed examples of issues in which the Ministry has been closely involved. She outlined the Landcare project and spoke about community involvement and the Resource Management Act.

In discussing the Act, she noted in particular the need for better community education, vocational training and citizen and business training if we are to adequately understand and address the complex problems and uncertainties facing us in the environmental area.

## Saturday a.m.

Saturday morning was devoted to presentations by representatives of three organisations which have attempted to identify community social needs and respond to them in various ways, and to develop processes for assessing the impacts of delivering social services on the communities they represent.

Wendy Walker from the Wellington City Council summarised the council's Quality of Life Report project – the process of preparing the 1996 report, an outline of some of the key indicators used to describe the quality of life in Wellington, and some of the implications of the project.

The proposed series of reports, covering economic, environmental and social quality of life measures, is intended to provide a baseline of monitoring information to inform decision making by the Wellington City Council and citizens of the city.

Grace Ng from the New Zealand Community Funding Agency outlined the philosophies and operational policies of the NZCFA, which inform the processes used to determine funding allocations from the more than \$100 million NZCFA distributes annually. Grace outlined the agency's community needs analysis methodology, the contracting process, and the partial funding model used by NZCFA. Along the way she outlined some of the difficulties of working in an area where community perceptions and expectations are often different from those of central Government, where there can be difficult conflicts in balancing the funding of established providers with the encouragement of new ones, and where the growth of community 'need' for Government funding sometimes appears to be exponential.

Margaret Brooker from the Kapiti Coast District Council outlined the recent development of the Council's community profile, needs assessment report and community plan. Key dilemmas faced along the way have included:

- how to keep the community profile dynamic and relevant;
- how to establish the relativity of the needs expressed by different elements of the community;
- how to define 'community' within such a diverse local authority area;
- how to undertake effective consultation;
- the dangers of raising expectations through a community needs assessment when the power to deliver required services rests elsewhere; and
- the tensions and difficulties inherent in changing political processes, both locally and nationally.

The session was completed by Graeme Scott from the Social Policy Agency, who challenged the Conference with some

comments and observations about the process of social policy making, the importance of outcome-focussed evaluation of programmes and policies, and the inherent social biases which we all carry in our view of the world and how social policy should act to improve it.

## Saturday p.m.

Stephen Dunstan from the Community Employment Group (CEG) outlined the operational priorities of CEG, which focuses on responding to employment needs resulting from market shocks such as closures or natural disasters, and on assisting Maori, Pacific Island peoples, rural communities and women into employment.

Evaluation of CEG initiatives was explored in small group discussions and reported back to the whole group. Issues which emerged included the coherence of government's social cohesion and employment objectives; the difficulty of measuring some of the benefits to communities of CEG work (which are less tangible than numbers of jobs created); the need to clearly define outcome measures at the beginning of a project; and the importance of defining the varied and often conflicting interests of community stake-holders.

Sylvia Allen convened a panel from Palmerston North which presented a range of perspectives on the process involved when the Palmerston North City Council applied under the Resource Management Act to remove trees from and to widen Fitzherbert Avenue. This is the major route between the city and Massey University and other institutions on the west bank of the Manawatu River. The complexity of the consultation and effect assessment process, and the extraordinary difficulties in reaching a solution to such a multi-faceted issue, were wonderfully exposed as the four panel members (a city councillor, representatives of the university and the Save the Trees citizens group, and a university lecturer who cycled Fitzherbert Avenue each day) told their stories.

Rob Harris, a lecturer and consultant in Environmental Law and Planning, reviewed the Palmerston North trees story. He

highlighted some of the difficulties experienced by the protagonists in this case, and noted some lessons for professionals and citizens alike, who are still battling to come to terms with the new planning system. Under the Resource Management Act a high level of skill in consultation is required by all parties, and the change of focus in the law from development to effects does not yet sit comfortably, particularly with planning professionals and local authorities.

## Sunday a.m.

(After a Saturday night when the bonfire was hot, the musical entertainment hotter, and the quality of conversation and intellectual enlightenment staggering.)

The concluding Open Space session was, as last year, orchestrated to perfection by Nick Taylor. Topics covered in a variety of small group sessions included:

- the social and economic impacts of Asian migration;
- how New Zealand should commemorate Waitangi Day;
- social assessment, the ASA and Maori;
- that social assessment is essentially reformist;
- lessons from New Zealand for social assessment in Australia;
- Internet resources for social assessment; and
- how ASA can take advantage of the MMP environment.

A more detailed summary of the conference presentations is being prepared and will be distributed to all ASA members before Christmas. Non-ASA members will be able to obtain a copy by joining ASA, or by negotiating alternative terms with ASA Secretary Paul Lister.

## Dan Quayle's Quotable Quotes Corner

On the future under MMP: "We are ready for any unforeseen event that may or may not occur."

On Resource Management: "It isn't pollution that's harming the environment. It's the impurities in our air and water that are doing it."

On Political Accountability: "I stand by all the misstatements I've made."

## It's easy, it's satisfying, and it only happens three or four times a year

SIAN needs someone to take over the layout of this newsletter.

If you have a knack for making pages look great, and you don't mind committing a few hours work every three or four months,

**WE NEED YOU!!!!**

Please contact Chris Cosslett, SIAN Editor.

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## New Research Reports

Ruth M. Houghton, Alan King and Rachel Hunter. *Land Use and Community in Southland Region: A Summary of Economic and Social Changes Since 1970*. University of Otago Consulting Group, Dunedin, pp.56 + two appendices, 1996 [price not specified].

This report examines changes in the regional agricultural economy, land use industries, population, employment, and rural communities of Southland during the last two decades.

Copies may be obtained from the Otago Consulting Group, PO Box 56, Dunedin.

Tel: 03-477-7158. Fax: 03-477-6672.

E-mail: [consultnggrp@gandalf.otago.ac.nz](mailto:consultnggrp@gandalf.otago.ac.nz)

# Rural tourism for sustainable rural economic development

The Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment (CRESA), in association with Taylor Baines and Associates and Massey University, has been funded by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FRST) to carry out a two year research programme on rural tourism. The principle researchers are Julie Warren (CRESA), Nick Taylor (Taylor Baines) and Chris Ryan (Massey University).

The rural sector is important to New Zealand, both because agriculture is among the country's top four or five contributors to economic activity and, for the 85 percent of the population living in urban areas, because of its 'rurality'.

However, the economic stability of rural communities has been undermined by changing markets, the removal of subsidies, falling export prices, urban migration, the loss of jobs and services and the impacts of the globalisation of food distribution and retailing.

Rural tourism has the potential to diversify and revitalise the economies of rural (particularly Maori) communities. People in rural communities are already investing in rural tourism enterprises.

Rural tourism has developed as part of the tourism industry's diversification of its markets. Extension of the visitor seasons, spread beyond the traditional tourism routes, and development of new products have been contributing factors.

In addition to rural tourism, these new products include adventure tourism, eco- and nature tourism, cultural and heritage tourism, and event and conference tourism. Together they form an important part of the total tourism resource base.

The success of tourism development will depend on communities' capacity to anticipate and respond appropriately to problems, and to mobilise their resources effectively. These resources include skills, abilities, space, the physical and natural environment, Maori culture and heritage, the rural lifestyle, and

complementary rural economic activities. If rural communities are to take full advantage of their resources they will need information about the industry and markets, as well as infrastructural development, business and resource management advice, finance, training and other support mechanisms.

However, people in rural communities are currently having to make investment decisions in the absence of appropriate information about the rural tourism industry. Our intention is that our research findings will fill some of the information gaps. In the first year of the programme we will:

- (i) develop a database on the distribution of rural tourism; and
- (ii) survey individual rural tourism operators to identify the opportunities for and barriers to individual sustainable business development.

Future research will concentrate on sustainable development at a community level. Beginning in the first year of the programme, and continuing throughout the second, we will be conducting community case studies of rural tourism development.

Tourism comprises a wide range of activities across several industries that supply goods and services to both tourist and non-tourist markets. Host communities, especially in rural tourism and Maori rural tourism, are important to the tourism resource base because of their 'rurality', culture and skills. They are also important because their amenities and services form the tourism infrastructure.

These case studies will allow us to analyse the relationships between the components of rural tourism and the implications of these for sustainable development.

We will keep you posted as the research proceeds. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact any one of the researchers.

JULIE WARREN

# Sustainable tourism in New Zealand

Brian Human, Churchill Travelling Fellowship

A member of the panel interviewing me for a Churchill Fellowship on sustainability and tourism last January asked, “Why New Zealand?” Remembering the bitter London street outside I wanted to answer, “Because it’s as far as possible away from here.” Then the discretion of a career planner got the better of me – out came the prepared answer.

But it was a good question and my answer must have been convincing. First, tourism is vital to New Zealand as the largest single earner of foreign exchange. Second, New Zealand is in the world’s fastest growing tourism region and you have the ambitious target of three million visitors annually by the year 2000. Third, you are blessed with a sensitive and varied environment. Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, you recognise the issues tourism poses – New Zealand receives more visitors per head of population than the UK – and are making them the subject of debate and action. So not only is the sustainable development of tourism essential, the conditions may exist to make it a reality through creative forward planning.

I have four objectives for the Fellowship: to develop my understanding of and contribution to sustainable tourism; to identify good sustainable tourism practice; to promote cooperation between practitioners in New Zealand and the UK; and to raise awareness in New Zealand about UK tourism issues.

An underlying theme will be the investigation of a model of sustainability in tourism, which has four elements: objectives, processes, products and implementation. (A fifth objective is to have a good time, but that’s not for domestic consumption!)

I want to assess aspects of the New Zealand tourism industry, to understand the existing and expected pressures, to see the steps being taken to make it more sustainable and the consequent social, economic and environmental implications.

In particular I plan to look at:

- good practice in destination-visitor management;
- integrated public tourism policy, particularly the relationship with land use and transport planning; and
- public involvement in tourism planning and management.

So sometime over the two month visit I will drop in on Auckland, Napier, Christchurch, Queenstown and points south and west. I think I shall be at home in Queenstown, from where I can hear rumblings of discontent at the number of visitors – Cambridge, a city of 110,000 people, gets 3.4 million visitors a year, or almost exactly your total population!

(Brian Human is Assistant Director of Planning at Cambridge City Council.)

# Internet Home Page

## Purpose of this Column

The Internet is a new medium which is being used by an increasing number of ASA members. The purpose of this section of SIAN is to provide a forum for the exchange of information about Internet resources of interest to ASA members.

This issue adds to last issue's summary of mail list servers, and also focuses on the Web. Note that an excellent master list of NZ list servers relevant to social science is held on the NZ Social Science Electronic Lists page at "<http://www.massey.ac.nz/~NZSRDA/nzsortigs/elists.htm>".

If you know of Internet resources or services that you think would be of interest to ASA members, please drop a line to Nick Taylor ([n.taylor@chch.planet.org.nz](mailto:n.taylor@chch.planet.org.nz)) or James Newell ([jnewell@mera.actrix.gen.nz](mailto:jnewell@mera.actrix.gen.nz)).

## Mail list updates

The following are new mail list servers which have come to our attention or have been established since the last issue of SIAN.

### GOVTEVAL

This is a mail list server of great interest to those involved in social assessment. GOVTEVAL is an unmoderated global electronic discussion group open to anyone involved or interested in issues relating to public sector program evaluation. GOVTEVAL is based at the National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN), Malaysia, on a joint basis with the Program for Public Sector Evaluation, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), Australia.

Objectives of GOVTEVAL are:

- to bring together practitioners, users of evaluation, academics and researchers in public sector program evaluation from across the world to exchange and share their experiences and views;
- to provide subscribers with an effective global network with which to enhance and promote public sector program evaluation

on a cross-national basis;

- to promote the detailed and practical analysis of public policy issues and problems related to public sector program evaluation, and to provide assistance to resolve them;
- to facilitate research and development of cross-cultural issues in program evaluation.

To subscribe, send the message: "subscribe govteval [yourfirstname] [yourlastname]" to "listserver@jaring.my".

## New IAIA list servers

Three new IAIA list servers have been established since the last issue of SIAN. The three mail list servers are IAIA\_NEWS, IAIA\_RESEARCH and IAIA\_STRATEGIC.

### IAIA\_NEWS

This is a list server which all IAIA members should join. It is not a discussion group but rather a simple means by which information about IAIA can be quickly and efficiently distributed to its members. IAIA\_NEWS has been set up to facilitate the electronic dissemination of news within IAIA. The big advantage is that this will mean much earlier dissemination of news. It will remove the need for multiple postings of e-mail, because all news will be posted on this list server and not through the discussion groups as happened previously. When this group has sufficient subscribers, IAIA\_ALL will be decommissioned. To subscribe, send a message containing "subscribe" in the subject line to "IAIA\_NEWS-request@listserv.csu.edu.au".

### IAIA\_RESEARCH

This list server was established following agreement at the IAIA'96 meeting in Estoril, Portugal, that a discussion group was desirable to continue the discussion held on research and methodology issues in impact assessment. Topics to be covered include:

- research projects (proposed or underway) that could be integrated with other projects through the sharing of methodologies,

- findings etc;
- ideas for joint research, especially involving international comparative case studies;
- new approaches and methodologies (especially evaluation criteria) for determining the effectiveness of, and improvements in, impact assessment practice;
- the findings of research projects that warrant early dissemination;
- discussions and debates about cutting-edge issues emerging from the research literature (e.g. how important is it to quantify impact predictions, how integrated can impact assessment become and what will the consequences be?).

To subscribe, send a message containing “subscribe” in the subject line to “IAIA\_RESEARCH-request@listserv.csu.edu.au”.

### **IAIA\_STRATEGIC**

This list’s objective is to facilitate and promote efficient professional interchange around strategic environmental assessment (SEA) issues. The discussion group was created as a result of discussions in Estoril, and as a possible precursor to establishing a section on SEA within IAIA. The list server will have a broad discussion of many aspects of SEA.

To subscribe, send a message containing “subscribe” in the subject line to “IAIA\_STRATEGIC-request@listserv.csu.edu.au”.

### **IAIA\_SIA NEWS**

This group is of central interest to those involved with SIA. A great deal of discussion has taken place since August on “human rights and impact assessment”. Another subject discussed has been the tension between professional discussion of SIA and commercialism.

To subscribe, send a message containing “subscribe” in the subject line to “IAIA\_SIA-request@listserv.csu.edu.au”.

## **About the Web**

The Web has evolved from attempts by a group of scientists at CERN (the European Centre for Nuclear Research) to develop more

effective means of sharing information via the Internet. The initial text-based generation of the Web was called Lynx. The first generation of GUI (graphical user interface) Web browser was called Mosaic. From this starting point, a range of hypertext browsers have now been developed, e.g. Netscape and Microsoft Access.

The way it works is that you run a “client” application on your computer (e.g. Netscape) that allows you to access information held on any server in the world, linked using the right protocols to the Internet. The Web allows you to access information held on the Internet, virtually regardless of its source format. The “hypertext” principle means that part of the content of the information held on any server can be an automatic look-up to information held on another server. Through this feature, information held on computers world-wide is being linked together in new ways all the time.

The range of information types available on the Web has expanded rapidly. Images are now used extensively, and video and sound elements are also starting to proliferate among web sites. Quite a number of newsletters are now provided for direct access or to download from the Web. Most of the world’s major magazines or newspapers are now also on the Web.

The Web is a living system that is improving itself continuously all the time. It is probably useful to think of it as a self-organising system that is evolving as a sort of central nervous system of humanity. It is more than a communications system. It is transforming the global mental / social / political landscape on an invisible level – some people refer to it as “cyberspace”. Where it will lead is hard to imagine. It has evolved amazingly fast and has far-reaching possibilities, many of which have yet to be conceived of.

The Web is an indexed system with a range of tools available to help you use it. Web search engines are a particularly important feature of the Internet. These provide means of searching for sites on particular subjects or which contain key words of interest to the Web user.

# On the Web

Some sites that may be of interest to ASA members include:

## **The International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA)**

(<http://IAIA.ext.NoDak.edu/IAIA>)

## **NZ Social Research Data and Information Centre**

(<http://www.massey.ac.nz/~NZSRDA/>)

This site provides an archive of information on NZ social science organisations, typically providing a brief summary of each organisation and its purpose. It often lists things like newsletters, and conference and AGM details, etc. These resources can often be down-loaded. The site also provides links to a range of other social science sites.

## **Social Sciences Virtual Library**

(<http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVL-SocSci.html>)

This keeps track of leading information facilities for social science on an international level.

## **WeNet: Waikato Educational Network Web Page**

(<http://servius.waikato.ac.nz/education/WeNet/>)

This was established to provide support to Waikato schools in accessing Internet resources. The aim of this site is to develop and provide resources and information for students and teachers, while encouraging schools to use the Internet more efficiently to enhance the learning environment. It is a service provided by the Media Centre, School of Education, Waikato University.

This site provides links to a whole range of educational information of interest to school children, teachers and parents. There are parts of the site that list schools and their Internet sites.

Other parts list school projects, many of them international. Educational resources of interest on the Web are also listed. Many of these resources can be down-loaded.

## **NZ Government Web Pages**

(<http://www.govt.nz/>)

This is a set of web pages on the NZ Government. You can, for example, look at the provisional Census results on the Statistics NZ web pages. You can find out about legislation, the work of parliament or election results, from this page.

## **Some Other Sites**

The Early Childhood Development Unit (ECDU) has a well constructed and informative web site (<http://www.ecdu.govt.nz/>).

Copeland, Wilson & Associates provide a useful education web page at “[www.cowa.co.nz](http://www.cowa.co.nz)”.

Most international organisations are easily reached through their web sites. For example, the UN is at “[www.un.org](http://www.un.org)”, UNDP at “[www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)”, OECD at “[www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)”, the World Bank at “[www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)”, and the Asian Development Bank at “[www.asiandevbank.org](http://www.asiandevbank.org)”.

A “gopher” (file retrieval) for USAID is at “[gopher://gopher/info.usaid.gov/](http://gopher://gopher/info.usaid.gov/)”.

There is a lot to be said for learning by playing on the Internet. The search engines are well worth trying out to see how effective they are at locating information of particular interest to you. Group workshops involving hands-on instruction and sharing of experience are worth organising. For example, ASSR held such a session in mid-November. Unfortunately I was unable to attend but I will try and get a report from that workshop for the next issue of SIAN.

Happy net surfing.

JAMES NEWELL (JNEWELL@MERA.ACTRIX.GEN.NZ)

# Publications

## New Zealanders of Asian Origin

RAJ VASIL AND HONG-KEY YOON. INSTITUTE OF POLICY STUDIES, VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON, WELLINGTON. ISBN 0-908935-05-6, SOFT BOUND, 60PP, 1996.

Asian immigration was a major issue in the media earlier this year. Both politicians and members of the public expressed concerns about the negative effects of increasing numbers of immigrants on housing prices, on funding for schools with significant proportions of Asian pupils on their rolls, and on access to the public health system.

When fears about foreign ownership of land and other resources became linked to this debate, the underlying xenophobia of many New Zealanders was revealed. Public discussion eventually focused on the issue of racism rather than on the question of the appropriate level of immigration to this country.

While several political parties did present detailed policies in their manifestos, immigration did not appear to be a significant issue during the election campaign. Nonetheless, with NZ First likely to hold the balance of power in a coalition government, this issue is bound to re-emerge in the media during the coming year.

This book makes a significant contribution to the debate about immigration. It discusses the countries of origin of Asian immigrants, their ethnic groupings, the concepts of bi-culturalism and multiculturalism, state-building and its relationship to New Zealanders of Asian origin, and the participation of immigrants in our national life.

One of the book's strengths is that both its authors are New Zealanders of Asian origin. Raj Vasil from India is a political scientist at Victoria University, while Hong-key Yoon from Korea teaches geography at the University of Auckland.

The authors highlight the great diversity of

Asia. They identify four distinctive regions – East Asia, South-east Asia, South Asia and West Asia. Most immigrants to this country come from the first three of these regions. Some of the fastest growing economies in the world are found in East Asia and South-east Asia. Several of the world's major religions originated in these regions. They have a rich cultural heritage with a great variety of languages and lifestyles.

Vasil and Yoon also examine the Asian component of New Zealand's population. They note that Asians made up 57 per cent (28,890) of the 50,893 persons whose applications were approved for residence here in 1995. Between 1986 and 1991 there was a dramatic rise in the number of people of Asian origin residing in New Zealand, from 53,832 to 99,075 persons, a growth of 84%.

The authors point out that because Asian migrants today come from almost all countries of the continent, and because of the sharp ethnic distinctions between these countries, they do not constitute a single Asian community.

They explain that "Immigrants from Asia will never be in a position to threaten the paramountcy of the Pakeha and the primacy of their values, language, culture and way of life," (pp.11-12) and thus New Zealanders have little to fear from their presence here. They describe the major religious affiliations, the regional distribution, highest educational qualifications and occupations of people of Asian origin in New Zealand.

During their discussion of bi-culturalism and multiculturalism, Vasil and Yoon maintain that there is a general acceptance in New Zealand of the different ethnic identities, languages, cultures, and religions of people of Asian origin when compared with many similar societies. Furthermore, they argue that Asian people in this country enjoy unrestricted freedom and opportunity to maintain and improve their lifestyles and languages.

While their thesis regarding the current state of ethnic relations in this country may essentially be true, they need to recognise that the long history of anti-Asian prejudice in New Zealand

may yet disturb this blissful picture of ethnic tolerance.

Vasil and Yoon acknowledge that the issues of state-building with regard to Maori have not been resolved satisfactorily; that many Maori are alienated and have difficulty identifying fully with the New Zealand state. They anticipate that this problem of state-building will eventually become significant for New Zealanders of Asian origin as their numbers grow and they begin to raise questions about their role and status in society.

They argue that the sooner both Maori and Pakeha are willing to accept Asian immigrants as New Zealanders of equal worth, and the sooner the issues of state building with regard to Asian immigrants are resolved, the more Asian people will mix freely in the wider society.

The final section of the book focuses on the participation of Asian people in everyday New Zealand life. According to Vasil and Yoon, there is a significant difference in this level of participation between those born locally and those who have arrived more recently. The former group are mainly of Chinese and Indian descent and most of them regard New Zealand as their home. More recent immigrants from Asia, however, have not adopted New Zealand citizenship, as they receive almost all the rights of citizens through their permanent resident status.

The authors explain that the pace at which minority ethnic groups, particularly immigrants, adapt to the way of life of the host community is influenced by three factors. These factors are: the duration of their stay in the country they have adopted; the differences between them and their host community in terms of language, culture, religion etc; and the degree of acceptance of them by the dominant ethnic group. Adapting to a new way of life requires the cooperation of the dominant ethnic group and this is not always forthcoming.

“Often immigrants from Asia do not know what exactly to do to integrate into New Zealand society and adapt to its way of life. The Pakeha are not a great help in this regard.

Most Pakeha find it extremely difficult to spell out to immigrants from Asia in specific terms the things that the latter should do” (p.50).

*New Zealanders of Asian Origin* is a timely reminder to all of us that we live in a multicultural society. Through immigration and demographic statistics, a few personal accounts of Asian people and some penetrating analysis, Vasil and Yoon provide a good overview, to acquaint policy makers and interested citizens with the process of Asian immigration to this country. They also remind us of the opportunity we have to develop rich and meaningful cross-cultural relationships with the Asian people who dwell in our midst.

This book can be obtained from the Institute of Policy Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, PO Box 600, Wellington.

REVIEWED BY WAYNE McCLINTOCK.

# Wanted

## Dead or alive

### Books, Reports, etc for review purposes

Your reward is bringing your work to the attention of fellow professionals!!!

We are always looking for relevant material to review.

Anyone wanting research reports or publications reviewed in this newsletter should send them to

**Wayne McClintock.**

His postal address is: 54  
Parnwell St, Burwood,  
Christchurch 9, and he can be  
contacted by phone at  
(03) 383 3784, or by e-mail:  
[w.mcclintock@chch.planet.org.nz](mailto:w.mcclintock@chch.planet.org.nz)

# Blackboard

## **Socioeconomic Inequalities and Health Conference**

December 9-10 1996 at Wellington School of Medicine. **Contact:** Christine Parnell, Conference Secretariat, Health Services Research Centre, PO Box 600, Wellington. Tel: 04-496-6565. Fax: 04-496-6568. e-mail: christine.parnell@vuw.ac.nz

## **UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific: Regional Conference and Workshops**

December 10-13 1996, Pattaya, Thailand: Professional Development of Environmental Managers: a Vision of the 21st Century. **Contact:** NETTLAP, UNEP/ROAP (Bangkok). Tel: 0062-2-2881-801 or -2882-125. Fax: 0066-2-280-3829 or -288-1000. e-mail: nettlap.unescap@un.org or pradhan.unescap@un.org or contact: Sue Usher, Executive Officer, The Royal Society of NZ, Wellington. Tel: 04-472-7421.

## **Institute of Australian Geographers and NZ Geographic Society: Joint Conference**

January 28-31 1997: Islands, Culture, Economy and Environment. **Contact** Les Wood, Dept. of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania, GPO Box 252C, Hobart 7001, Tasmania, Australia. Tel: 0061-2-202-489. Fax: -202-989. e-mail: IAG97@geog.utas.edu.au

## **International Sustainable Development Research Conference 1997**

April 7-8, (International Sustainable Development Research Network in association with ERP Environment): Manchester Conference Centre, UK. **Contact:** ERP Environment, PO Box 75, Shipley, West Yorkshire BD17 6EZ, UK. Tel: 0044-1274-530-408. Fax: 0044-1274-530-409.

## **IAIA '97: 17th Annual Meeting**

28-31 May 1997, New Orleans, USA: Reflections on Water: Learning From History and Assessing the Future. **Contact:** Rita Hamm, IAIA Executive Office, NDSU-IBID, Hastings Hall, PO Box 5256, Fargo, ND, USA. Fax: 1-701-231-1007.

## **Armidale International Conference on Sustainability of Rural Systems**

July 5-12 1997 at University of New England, NSW: Sustaining Rural Systems in the Context of Global Change. **Contact:** Prof. Tony Sorenson or Roger Epps, Dept. of Geography and Planning, UNE, Armidale, 2351, Australia. Fax: 0061-67-733-030. e-mail: igu97@metz.une.edu.au

## **Geographical Education Conference 1997**

July 6-9 (NZ Geographical Society) at University of Waikato: Differences, Directions, Dimensions. **Contact:** David Vincent, Conference Coordinator, Dept. of Geography, University of Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton. Tel: 07-856-2889. Fax: 07-838-4633. e-mail: peace@waikato.ac.nz

## **New sub-group established**

The first meeting of the ASA bicultural sub-group was held on 2 December at Te Puni Kokiri, Wellington. This group originated from a discussion group on Maori and Treaty issues at the ASA conference in Bulls.

The objective of the group is to address issues of relevance to Maori within the context of the ASA, and to work to involve more Maori in the ASA.

Contact: Cath Boswell at TPK (04) 494 7058, or James Barnes at (04) 472 0299.

SIAN is compiled and published by members of the Association for Social Assessment (Inc.) and distributed **free** to SIA Network members.

Its aim is to encourage **contact** and **sharing** of information between all those interested in social assessment in New Zealand. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their various employers or the Association.