



# The Indigenous Peoples' Knowledges and Rights Commission of the International Geographical Union

La Commission aux Droits et Connaissances des Peuples Indigenes



## 2010 Report on the Indigenous Peoples' Knowledges and Rights Commission

Produced by Commission Chair, Brad Coombes, 17 January 2011

The commission was formed in 2006 with three main goals: to create a network amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous geographers; to encourage and mentor young academics, particularly Indigenous scholars; to encourage and foster geographic research for and with Indigenous communities.

### 1) Membership

The Commission's steering committee has been stable for several years now, but we continue to experience difficulty in securing membership from South or Central America. We hope to address that problem during the IGU Regional Conference at Santiago de Chile.

#### a) Commission Steering Committee

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## b) Commission membership

On the basis of individuals who are registered with our list-serv, the Commission's membership is currently 154 – an increase of 27 on the previous year.

Aotearoa/New Zealand	29
Australia	37
Austria	1
Canada	9
Finland	2
Ireland	2
Israel	1
Indonesia	1
Norway	3
South Africa	1
Sweden	2
Taiwan	7
United Kingdom	7
United States	52

## 2) Meetings

### a) Taumutu Marae, near Christchurch, New Zealand, July, 2010

This meeting consisted of a three-day pre-conference and was held immediately before the joint conference of the Institute of Australian Geographers and the New Zealand Geographical Society. The gathering was advertised to IPKRC members and all members of those national organisations, so many were in attendance who had not previously engaged with the IPKRC. 42 individuals stayed at least one night, with several others visiting during the day. At the end of the meeting, 21 new members joined the IPKRC list-serv. The number of graduate students who attended was a particularly rewarding aspect of the pre-conference and, accordingly,

several of our discussion sessions were dedicated to aspects of PhD scholarship and the ethical dimensions of research with Indigenous peoples.



The pre-conference followed the general principles of *hui* (gatherings) and *marae* (sanctified land, often associated with a meeting house). It commenced with a *whakatau* (less formal welcome) on Friday night and, when more of us had gathered, a formal *powhiri* on Saturday morning. Several Ngai Tahu representatives talked to the group during the three days. Because of the proximity of the marae to Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere, discussions focused on land use change around the lake, the history and cultural impacts of associated environmental degradation, and comanagement of the lake which was instigated in 2005 when the bed of the lake was transferred to Ngai Tahu ownership. Some members of our group harvested *tuna* (eels) from the lake with the assistance of local residents, whilst others visited restoration projects alongside lake tributaries. On the last day, we visited the recently constructed offices for Ngai Tahu, where Mark Solomon, the Chair of Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu, spoke about Maori economic development before other presentations on the use of GIS in land claims settlement and relationship building for environmental enhancement.

The attendees thank Garth Cant, who has longstanding connections to the marae, and the many locals who facilitated our stay at Taumutu.

### **b) Santiago de Chile, November 2011**

The Steering Committee of the IPKRC intended that their annual meeting for 2011 would be at the Arctic Centre in Finland. However, that meeting will be cancelled because of unresolved organisational difficulties. Instead, several members of the IPKRC listserv have notified their interest in a meeting prior to this year's regional conference of the IGU in Chile. There have been promising discussions with Pehuenche organisations, with the likelihood of a field trip to consider Indigenous concerns about hydroelectric development along the Alto Bio Bio.

## **3) Networking**

### **a) Collaborations with other Commissions and Task Forces**

The last major collaboration was with the IGU's Islands Commission in 2007. The Commission's meeting in Saskatoon, 2009, was a joint gathering of geographers and statisticians who have research interests in Indigenous affairs.

### **b) Collaborations with other international bodies**

Our commission has observer status with the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. As is evident in the report on the 2010 meeting, we have collaborated with a number of national geography organizations including the Association of American Geographers and its Indigenous Peoples Specialty Group, the Canadian Association of Geographers, the New Zealand Geographical Society, and the Indigenous Issues Study Group of the Institute of Australian Geographers.

### **c) Cooperative efforts with the ISSC and ICSU**

None to date.

## **4) Publications**

A book is soon to be published which is derived from presentations at the Saskatoon meeting of 2009. *"Indigenizing Modernity" – Indigenous Urbanization in International Perspective*. Eds E Peters and C Anderson. UBC Press.

The Commission has a new website: <http://www.indigenousgeography.net/ipkrc.shtm>