Research Seminar

‘The Costs of Stopping Deforestation’.

By: Dr Colin Hunt, Visiting Fellow, Griffith Asia Institute

Even though deforestation in tropical developing countries releases large quantities of greenhouse gases, the Kyoto Protocol does not include mechanisms for forest conservation. Nevertheless, deforestation and forest degradation has now taken centre-stage as the developed countries, having failed to convince their own electorates to bear abatement costs, have pledged large sums to stop it. It is in the interests of both donors and recipients that the costs of abatement are matched by compensation payments.

The seminar examines the abatement in greenhouse gas emissions achievable in Papua New Guinea (a heavily-forested tropical country) by the reduction in deforestation and forest degradation (REDD), and the opportunity costs of doing so. Its methodology takes advantage of recent modelling of the emissions from deforestation in PNG and integrates this with financial models developed by the author for the logging and palm oil industries. Indonesian results are also drawn upon to support an argument that the opportunity costs of REDD have been systematically underestimated.

The analysis also helps to achieve a fuller understanding of the complexity of designing and implementing policies for REDD that not only adequately compensate for a country’s opportunity costs but do so in a way that improves the welfare of regional communities.

Colin’s background is in agricultural economics, and the first part of his professional career was in agricultural research, administration and consulting in Africa, Australia, Asia and the Pacific; he has specialised in ecological economics for the last 20 years. For his PhD he studied the ecological sustainability of growth in the Cairns region. Involvement in the Pacific region intensified during his teaching years in the graduate school at National Centre for Development Studies, in RSPAS, ANU. He consolidated his research interests in the region while principal economist at the National Research Institute in Papua New Guinea. Since returning to Australia he has concentrated on the economics of both marine and terrestrial conservation. Recent work culminated in 2009 with Carbon sinks and climate change: forests in the fight against global warming, published by Edward Elgar.

→ Thursday 29 April 2010
→ N72 Room -1.18
→ Nathan campus
→ 12.30 -1.50pm

To RSVP, please contact Natasha Vary on (07) 3735 5322 or n.vary@griffith.edu.au no later than 5.00pm Tuesday 27 April 2010.