

### *General Comments*

I thought these essays were very good. Each had strengths in at least some areas, and some were of very high quality. I would have liked to give each student a commendation, but that would defeat the purpose. In any case, they are each to be congratulated for entering.

For the most part, the choice of topics was good. Most, although not all, lent themselves to geographic analysis. This was not always recognised, however, and, despite the students all making an attempt to write about fundamental geographic concepts, in some instances opportunities to highlight these using the cases in point were missed entirely – a case of not seeing the wood for the trees.

Visually, all essays were presented well, with good use of images and graphs. The latter were generally used appropriately, although there were instances of the wrong type of graph being used. Several used GIS – a number of them with greater sophistication than I would have expected at this level.

Less impressive were the standard of writing in some cases and the structure of the essay in others. Some did not impress on both counts. Some were well-structured, with a logical flow, leaving the reader in no doubt as to what was being said; disappointingly, others came across as assemblages of photocopied and downloaded material with text interspersed. Crucially, meaningful introductions were often absent. Just about all had spelling and typographical errors that are not really acceptable in this word-processing era; some had many.

Use of analytical techniques was good, with sieve analysis a particularly useful tool. Bipolar analysis was useful in some instances. Every essay showed a strong emphasis on use of the internet as a source of information. Given the subject matter chosen, this was often appropriate, at least initially, but the information thus derived is somewhat bland and sterile. It was there for public consumption, and doesn't really inform deeper analysis. I would like to see greater recognition that this is the case. It was good, therefore, that all essays involved some degree of primary data acquisition. This was somewhat simplistic and naïve in most cases, perhaps not surprisingly. Perhaps it could be reinforced that 'consultation' need not necessarily simply involve doing a questionnaire or survey. Some students used interviews to great effect, and all could have designed their questionnaires to more effectively derive more interesting data. With respect to the surveys, I was surprised to see that in many cases respondents were named.

On the whole, I was impressed by the standard, and certainly by the effort put in by these students. The essays do not suffer by comparison with undergraduate work, and these students should all be considering geography or a related discipline at tertiary level.