

AUSTRALIAN POPULATION ASSOCIATION

W.D. BORRIE PRIZE 2014

The Australian Population Association sponsors the W.D. Borrie Prize for the best student essay on a population-related topic to promote the study of population-related issues in all academic disciplines. Entries are accepted from students enrolled in any Australian or New Zealand tertiary institution. There are three student categories: Undergraduate where the prize is \$500 and a certificate; Honours/Masters/GradDip where the prize is \$600 and a certificate; and PhD where the prize is \$700 and a certificate. Judges are appointed to assess which essays meet the entry criteria and to determine the winner from the entries subject to entries being of a good standard.

The 2014 competition received seven entries from students from four universities: The Australian National University, The University of Queensland, Flinders University, and the University of Waikato. Two essays were received in the Undergraduate category, three essays in the Honours/Master/GradDip category and two essays were received in the PhD category. The following APA members kindly agreed to be judges: Ms Lisa Denny (University of Tasmania) and Dr Kate Golebiowska (Charles Darwin University); Dr Genevieve Heard and Dr Rebecca Kippen (University of Melbourne); Associate Professor Nick Parr and Associate Professor Fei Guo (Macquarie University).

The 2014 Borrie Prize winner in the Undergraduate category was Mr Jan Schmortte of Flinders University for his essay titled, "China's Floating Population: The Influence of the Hukou Household Registration System on Rural-Urban Migration in China". The judges of the undergraduate category were unanimous in recommending this essay for the 2014 Borrie Essay Prize in the Undergraduate Category. The judges wrote:

“This was a very well written and structured essay with an engaging style which made the essay enjoyable to read. The essay clearly links the issue of China's Hukou system with the broader national and international context and associated population implications. Drawing on a wide range of literature the author drew a succinct conclusion to the challenges of the Hukou system. As reviewers we look forward to further exploration and expansion of potential ideas as solutions to the rural urban population challenges in China”.

The winning essay in the Honours/Masters/GradDip category was Mr James O'Donnell of the Australian National University, with an essay titled, “Can cause of death groups explain sex differences in life expectancy”. The judges for this category were genuinely impressed with the standard of entries this year and encouraged all authors who submitted papers to further edit them and submit them for publication in refereed journals. The winning essay was described as the stand out submission. The judges wrote:

“This beautifully written paper addresses an important population topic which is well situated within existing mortality research. The author displays a high level of technical proficiency in a careful, original analysis using cause-of-death elimination, with results and implications clearly explained. This is an important contribution to knowledge in mortality studies”.

The 2014 winning essay in the PhD category was submitted by Ms Wilma Terblanche of The University of Queensland, with an essay titled, "Projections of Australia's very elderly population at a state and national level ". The judges were unanimous in this year's decision but said both entries were strong in terms of topic and quality of research. They wrote:

"The winning paper "Projections of Australia's very elderly population at a state and national level" demonstrates the author's ability to apply and improve techniques for projecting the elderly population in Australia. The paper also demonstrates that the improved projections of elderly population could provide more reliable information for future planning and service provision for the elderly at both the national and the sub-national levels".

Congratulations to the winners, and thank you to all the students and their supervisors who submitted essays and the judges for reading the essays.

Entries for the 2015 Competition will close on 31st January 2016. The competition rules and submission details will be available soon on the APA website.

Dr Kim Johnstone
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