

Physical Landscapes and the Geosphere (ACNA 4007)

Anthropocene: To what extent is human change deliberate or accidental?

Activity Outline:

This practical exercise is designed to develop an awareness of the apparent dichotomy between deliberate and accidental influences of humankind on environmental change.

Background

Many authors have identified this dichotomy.

- Accidental: e.g. acidification of rivers due to afforestation
- Deliberate: e.g. tree clearance for motorway development

However, are the differences between these concepts not always evident? In addition, does it matter if a human action is accidental, but is detrimental? We need to consider these and many other related questions, not just from the view of the conservationist, but also other influential actors in the environmental change domain. The following exercise should help us to consider some of the relevant issues and debates.

Instructions

- In pairs, list at least 10 deliberate and accidental causes of environmental change.
- Are there any that are difficult to categorise? Why?
- **For each cause, note their characteristics, impact, scale and potential solutions.**
- Discussion

2. Panel discussions

- For any one of these **accidental** impacts, devise an argument to present to a panel of politicians and business representatives highlighting: why, how, when, if, they should change legislation/practice to deal with this problem. You need to construct an argument that will appeal to this type of audience.
- For any one of these **deliberate** impacts, devise an argument to present to a panel of politicians and business representatives highlighting: why, how, when, if, they should

change legislation/practice to deal with this problem. You need to construct an argument that will appeal to this type of audience.

3. Present your arguments to the panel (AF and the rest of the group) next week.

4. Discussion

What are the principal considerations this practical identifies?