

Indian Ocean Research

Alan Lester

I am interested in the intersections between humanitarianism and colonial governance, and in discursive struggles over colonialism between humanitarians and settlers across a wide imperial terrain. My work has focused especially on the British settler colonies of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

With respect to the Indian Ocean, I am particularly interested in the package of governmental reforms recommended by the Commission of Eastern Enquiry, which toured the Cape Colony, Mauritius and Ceylon during the 1820s. Inspired by both economy and humanitarianism, the Commission represented an attempt to adapt governmentality to the specific and varied spatial contexts of Empire in the Indian Ocean region.

I am also interested in this project in my role as the University of Sussex's Global Transformations Research theme leader, seeing it as worthy of strategic investment by the university.