

Northern Research Futures Newsletter



FOREWORD

Welcome to the first Northern Research Futures Collaborative Research Network (NRF CRN) newsletter.

Northern Research Futures is a collaboration between **Charles Darwin University (CDU)**, **Australian National University (ANU)**, **James Cook University (JCU)** and the **Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS)**. The network creates a national program of collaborative social and environmental research and innovation, building on existing strengths and research relationships to establish a long-anticipated focus on issues of national importance facing northern Australia and its regional neighbours.

The CRN has been working hard since the end of 2011 to establish a research team with significant experience and expertise. Since then, research and capacity-building activities of the NRF CRN have developed into a series of research themes that simultaneously build on existing projects while extending previous work across social and nature-based disciplines.

Dr Tom Rayner, Professor Andrew Campbell, Associate Professor Allan Dale and Professor Ruth Wallace have been leading the development of these themes and were recently joined by Professor Paul Carter.

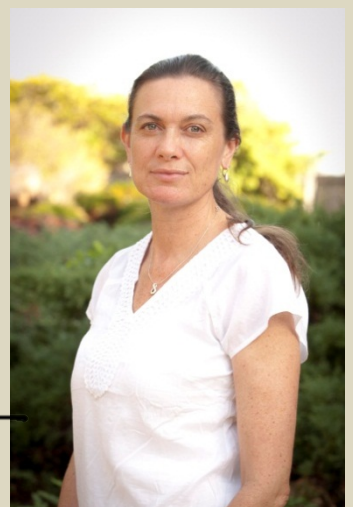
Progress has accelerated with the appointment of Dr Chris O'Brien, Dr Elspeth Oppermann, Dr Catherine Koerner, and Dr Anne Stephens as CRN Postdoctoral

Research Fellows. An additional post-doctoral position in qualitative modelling has been appointed and will be based at AIMS.

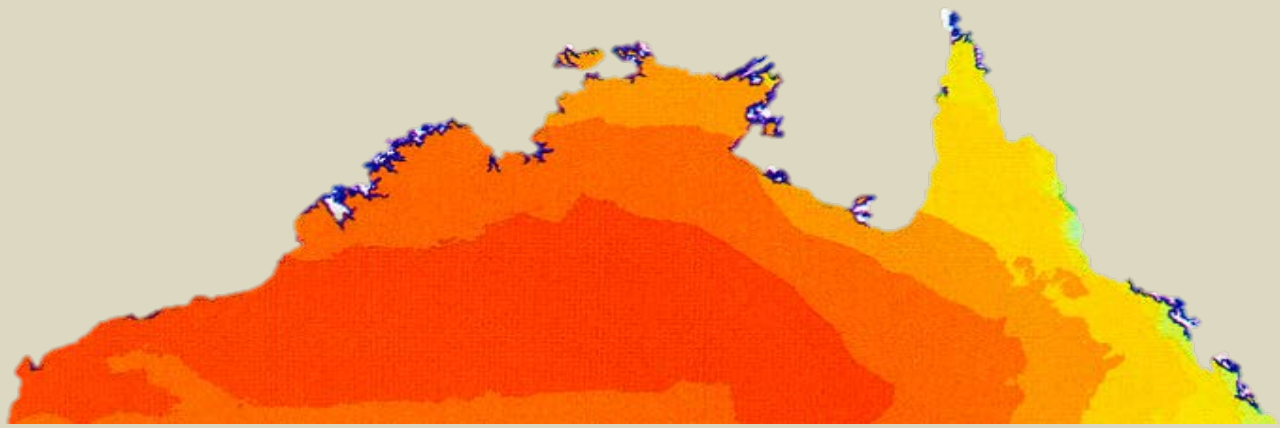
I particularly want to thank all of these people for their active support including Professor Sharon Bell, Professor Andrew Campbell, Professor Lawrence Cram, Professor Margaret Harding, Professor Chris Cocklin, Professor Sue McGinty, Mr John Gunn, Associate Professor Allan Dale, Professor Paul Carter, Dr Tom Rayner and the whole NRF CRN team.

I look forward to seeing our partnership, our team and our work grow, and the benefits it will have for Northern Australia.

Regards,



Professor Ruth Wallace
Director, The Northern Institute
Email ruth.wallace@cdu.edu.au



NRF CRN RESEARCH UPDATE

Research and research capacity continue to grow across the CRN network. The latest CRN research leaders meeting was held on 8 April 2013 and a Joint Partner Management Group meeting held on 29 April 2013.

Research themes

- Coastal marine science: ecological connectivity and qualitative modelling.
- Urban demographics and design: living with and leading change
- Changing climates: historical, contemporary and future vulnerability.

Research links across the CRN network & beyond.

The projects and personnel listed here are non-CRN collaborators working with CRN researchers on relevant projects. All of these projects are strongly aligned with key research themes of the CRN, although some are core-funded through other agencies/ funding arrangements.

- Professor Andrew Campbell & Professor Michael Douglas (Research Institute for the Environment and Livelihoods (RIEL)). Coastal marine & freshwater planning and policy for Northern Australia.
- Professor Tom Griffiths (ANU). History of Arafura Timor climate and weather.
- Dr Edward Butler & Dr Tiffanie Nelson (AIMS & North Australia Marine Research Alliance (NAMRA)). Eco genomics and coastal marine science.
- Professor Richard Kingsford & Professor Iain Suthers (University of NSW). Management of environmental flows.
- Dr Brad Pusey (Griffith University) & Dr Michael Hammer (NT Museum). Environmental DNA.

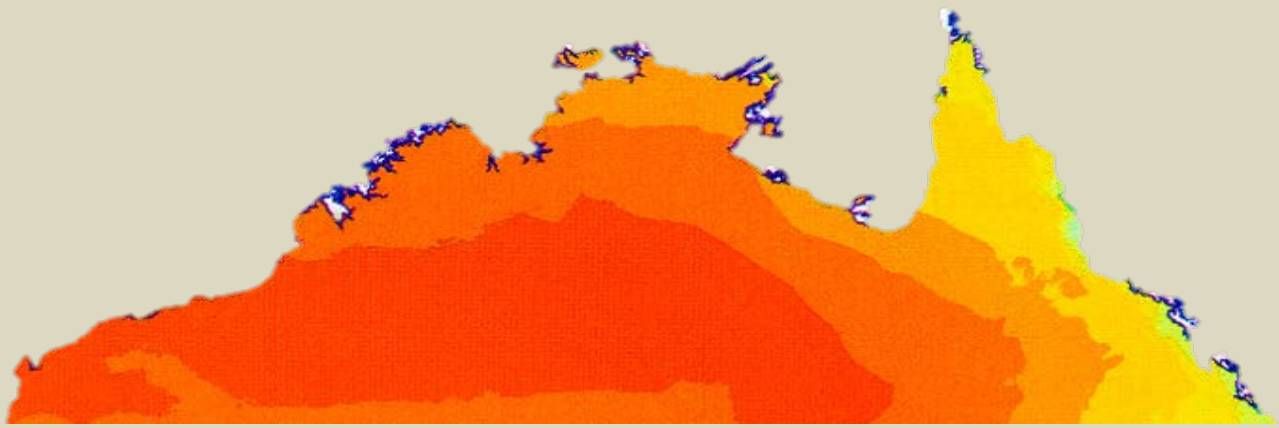
- Professor Stuart Bunn (Griffith University) & Dr Timothy Jardine (University of Saskatchewan). Stable isotopes and food web structure in Kakadu National Park.
- Dr Jason Woodhouse, Dr Mark Brown & Professor Brett Neilan (University of NSW). Microbial communities from different biomes.
- David Hancock (Gallery Two Six). Exposing Darwin Harbour: an underwater expose.

Communication

- CDU academic community engagement via seven formal presentations across The Northern Institute (TNI), Research Institute for the Environment and Livelihoods (RIEL), and Faculty level since late 2012 (Food for Thought seminars etc.).
- Dr Tom Rayner, chair of RIEL Communications Working Group – established RIEL Life Facebook Page and produced a video for the National Environmental Research Program (NERP) 3.1 Aquatic Food Webs of Kakadu project. <http://vimeo.com/54995775>
- Attendance at relevant government and stakeholder workshops, for example, the NT Government Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment workshop on freshwater research priorities for greater Darwin area.

Symposia/ Seminar/ Workshop

- Prof Paul Carter 'Ocean Connections' seminar at TNI's People Policy Place series on 12th April 2013.



- Dr Serena Hussain 'Reframing Refugees' part of the 'All in the same boat' Symposium series was held on June 14th at the Museums and Art Galleries of the Northern Territory. Keynote speakers were Professor Mary Crock, Sydney University and Professor James Jupp, ANU.
- In the interest of strengthening links between CDU and ANU under the CRN, Professor Tom Griffith (ANU) led a writing workshop for PhD students and early career researchers (ECRs) in Darwin on the 12th and 13th of June.
- Dr Tom Rayner and Dr Edward Butler developed '[North Australia Coastal Science Symposium](#)' a CDU-AIMS symposium around coastal marine science in northern Australia. The symposium provided a valuable forum for discussion of the past and future of integrated coastal science in the Northern Australia. The symposium was held on 2nd – 4th September.
- Prof Bruce Prideaux, Dr Andrew Taylor and Prof Dean Carson hosted the '[Urban North: Dreams and Realities Symposium](#)' at CDU on October 9 followed by a writing workshop on October 10 at The Northern Institute. It focused on urban spaces across northern Australia. The symposium may lead to a book, a special issue out of the symposium, and also perhaps possible future projects.

Development and knowledge sharing initiatives

- **Northern Futures – Northern Voices** (www.theconversation.com). Comprehensive series of articles on: research priorities for Northern

Australia; notions of climate in the Top End and 'extreme climate'; Darwin Harbour sustainability.

- **Northern Futures Writing Group** (12.30-1:30 Thursday fortnightly): This builds writing support and research capacity for the group and connects it to other researchers in RIEL and Law, building relationships for co-authorship of papers.
- **Daily 'drop-in' writing sessions** lead by Elspeth Oppermann to improve team writing outputs, plus those of TNI, RIEL etc. Adopting the Pomodoro technique of 25 min silent writing sessions in TNI Red Room, with 5 min breaks. 0830-1030 daily.

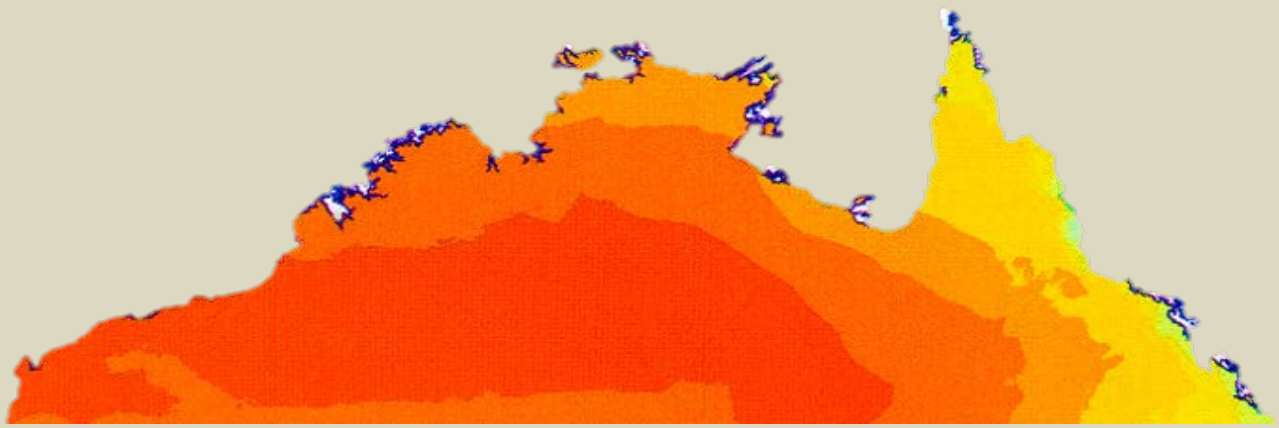
Publications (to date)

Published book

1. **Stephens, A.** (2013). *Ecofeminism and Systems Thinking*. New York: Routledge.

Books in development

1. **Hussain, S.** Title: 'Muslims on the Move?' This monograph uses 2011 Census data to explore developments in population trends within the Muslim community. The title refers to both 'movement' up the social ladder - in terms of socio-economic progress within this population, as well as physical movement - such migration and in-country dispersal, both of which tie in closely with debates on residential and social segregation.
2. Haggis, J & **Koerner, C.** Subject: In the words of Australians themselves, this book will provide a retrospective analysis of national narratives by everyday Australians on topics including Indigenous history, Australian



colonial history, Indigenous land rights, and asylum seekers. It draws upon over 100 in-depth qualitative interviews from Dr Catherine Koerner's PhD fieldwork and Dr Haggis' ARC fieldwork conducted during the Howard Coalition Government.

3. **O'Brien, C.** *A Clockwork Climate – a conversion of Dr Chris O'Brien's PhD thesis*
4. **Dale, A.** *Beyond the North-South Culture Wars: Reconciling the Recent Past and the Future of Northern Australia*
5. **Carson, D., Taylor, A.,** Ensign, P.C., Rasmussen, R.O., & Huskey, T.L. *Settlements at the Edge: Remote human settlements in developed nations.*

Book chapters

1. **O'Brien, C.** (2013). Imported understanding. In James Beattie & Emily O'Gorman (Eds.) *Climate, Science and History in Australasia*. Pan MacMillan
2. **Oppermann, E.** (2013). Why the discursive environment matters: The UK Climate Impacts Programme and adaptation to climate change. In Linda Sygna, Karen O'Brien, & Johanna Wolf (Eds.). *A Changing Environment for Human Security: Transformative Approaches to Research, Policy and Action*. Routledge
3. **O'Brien, C.** (In preparation). Rethinking Seasons. In *The cultural history of climate change – edited collection*, Publication is anticipated to be during 2014.

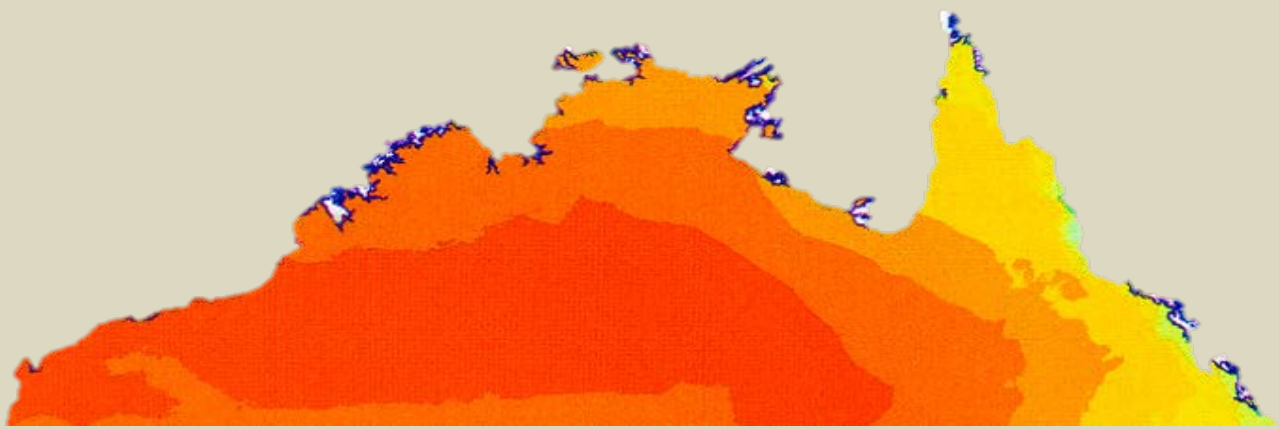
Journal articles

Published

1. Ocock, J.F., Rowley, J.J.L., Penman, T.D., **Rayner, T.S.** and Kingsford, R.T. (2013). Amphibian Chytrid Prevalence in an Amphibian Community in Arid Australia. *EcoHealth* 2013:1-5. DOI: 10.1007/s10393-013-0824-8
2. **Zander, K.K.**, Petheram, L. and Garnett, S.T. (2013). Stay or leave? Potential climate change adaptation strategies among Aboriginal people in coastal communities in northern Australia. *Natural Hazards*. 67: 2. DOI 10.1007/s11069-013-0591-4
3. **Zander, K.K.**, Parkes, R., Straton, A. & Garnett, S.T. (2013). Water Ecosystem Services in Northern Australia—How Much Are They Worth and Who Should Pay for Their Provision? *PLoS ONE*. 8: 5. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0064411
4. **Zander, K.K.** (2013). Understanding Public Support for Indigenous Natural Resource Management in Northern Australia. *Ecology and Society*. 18: 1. DOI: 10.5751/ES-05267-180111

Submitted and in review

1. **Hussain, S.** (In review) Understanding Ethnic Clustering in Schools: Consequences for Community Cohesion. *International Journal of Intercultural Studies*
2. **Hussain, S.** & Read, J. (In review) Islamic Schools in the United States and England: Implications for Integration and Social Cohesion. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*
3. **Hussain, S.** (In review) 'Kurdish First': Exploring debates on Identity Salience Among Recent Migrant Refugee Communities. *Social Identities: Journal*



for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture

4. **Hussain, S.** (In review) Missing From the 'Minority Mainstream': Pahari Speaking Diaspora in Britain. *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*
5. Woodhouse, J. N., Chilton, A. M., Garby, T. J., Yasar, S. A., Brown, M. V., **Rayner, T. S.** And Neilan, B. A. (In review). Core microbial populations associated with cyanobacteria from various geophysical environments. *Environmental Microbiology*.
6. **Koerner, C.** (2013). Learning the past to participate in the future: Regional discourses of Australian colonial history, *Journal of International Critical Indigenous Studies*.
7. **Koerner, C.** & Haggis, J. (2014). White limits of Multiculturalism, *Critical Race and Whiteness Studies eJournal*
8. **Rayner, T. S.**, Kingsford, R. T., Suthers, I. M. and Cruz, D. O. (In review). Are entrenched alien species undermining restoration of native fish using environmental flows? *Ecohydrology*
9. **Koerner, C.** 'Learning colonial history' submitted to the *Educational Review*
10. **Stephens, A.**, Cullen, J., Massey, L. & Bohanna, I. (In review). Will DisabilityCare Australia improve the lives of those most in need? Effective service delivery in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*.

In draft

1. **Koerner, C.** & Haggis, J. (unpublished) White Australian identities and Indigenous Sovereignty. Target journal: *Race & Ethnicity*

2. Haggis, J & **Koerner, C.** Entering the moment of Impossibility: Indigenous Sovereignty and the White Subject in Critical Race Theory (target: high ranking international journal to be identified).
3. **Koerner, C.**, Hussain, S & Haggis, J "They don't fit in: young people and social cohesion" (target: International social policy journal).
4. **Rayner, T. S.** and Kingsford, R. T. Under-accounting of instream barriers in the Murray-Darling Basin.
5. **Oppermann, E.** (in preparation). Climate change: from spectre to suture or sacrifice? The role of the supplement in policing the choice between transition and transformation. Target journal: *Theory Culture and Society*

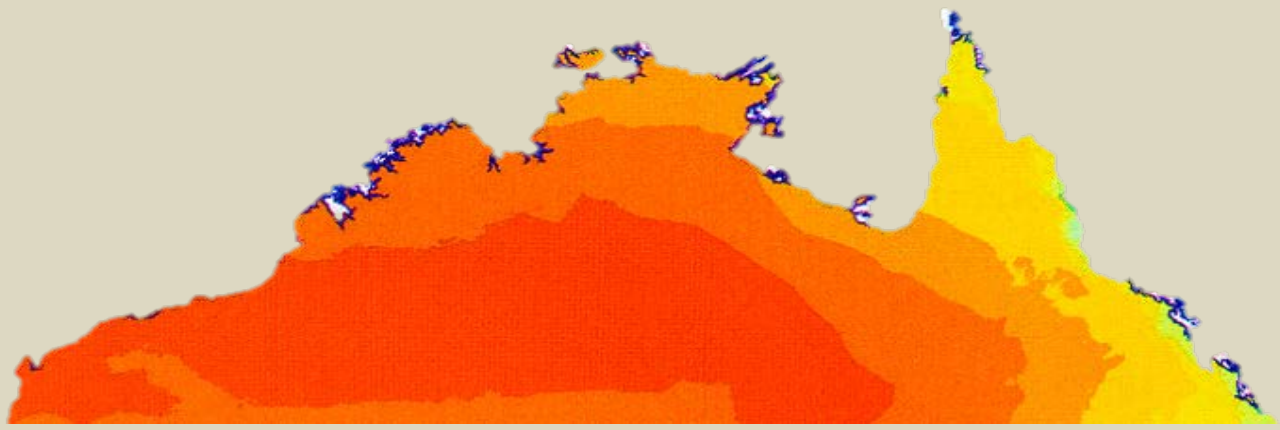
SELECTED PROJECT UPDATES

Ocean Connections

Professor Paul Carter

The rapid and unequal development of Australia's northern coastlines raises social, environmental and legal issues. Informed regional governance capacity is essential to the preservation of unique cultural and environmental ecologies. In the context of rapidly changing economic opportunities and strategic priorities, the Northern Territory is under pressure to reconnect to its oceanic neighbourhood, and to design the interfaces that will optimize sometimes conflicting goals of biodiversity, employment, amenity and sustainability.

'Ocean Connections' project lead by Professor Paul Carter aims to build an effective dialogue between three areas of



research interest and expertise that rarely talk to one another. These are Indigenous understandings of saltwater systems or simply for coastal peoples 'country'; non-Indigenous or cross-cultural science relating to coastal and offshore ecosystems – an immense oversimplification of a spectrum of intermediate amphibious land/water bodies and their non-human communities; and fragile environment design with a particular focus on climatically appropriate public space design that responds to the imperative to develop new tropical coast infrastructure. It pursues a transdisciplinary understanding of the cultures of fragile environments in the context of major infrastructural investments currently affecting Darwin Harbour.

The methodology of the project combines anthropological, ecological, cultural and creative perspectives. Its argument is that in practice these disciplines have artificially separated habits of care that integrate all these dimensions. To give the project manageable parameters, a triangular conversation is proposed between Indigenous knowledges of place, ecological understandings of place coming out of the biophysical sciences and urban design and planning.

The approach is to focus on different local knowledges and to explore their commonalities and differences with a view to identifying regional practices of saltwater care. The method is case-based, dependent on the cooperation of communities: the object is not to centralize and generalize local philosophies and practices of environmental sustainability but to put them in touch with one another.

The first seminar was held on Friday 12th April 2013 at TNI People-Policy-Place Seminar. The aim of the seminar was to set out the philosophical background, the methodology,

and the ambitions in terms of tasks, research partners and the plan.

Future of Northern Australia: Governance system and policy

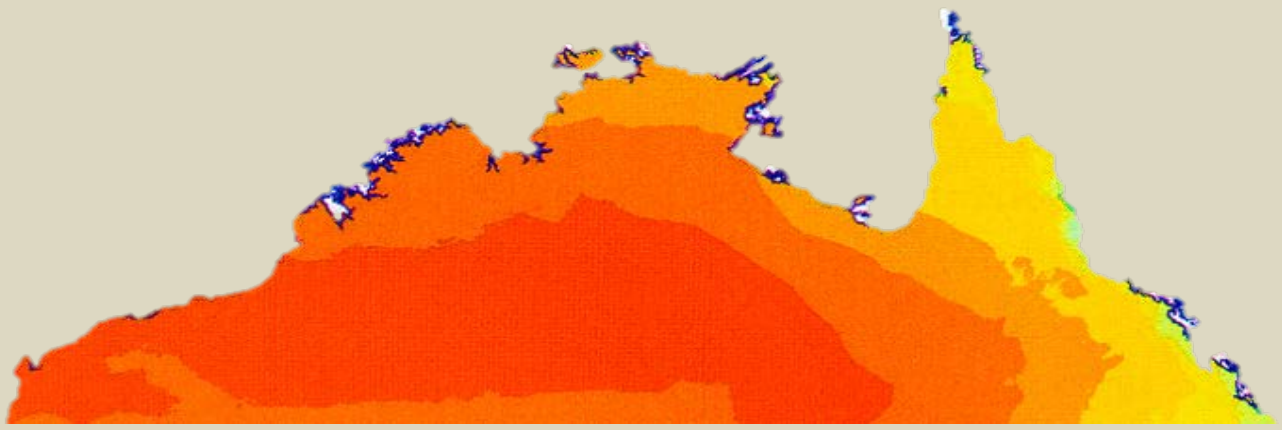
Associate Professor Allan Dale

During the first couple months with the CRN, Associate Professor Allan Dale has started to build bigger narrative about the governance of northern Australia and future of the north. The aim is to start a public discussion/ debate about some of those issues and a way to raise a profile of CRN.

The first document emerging is a monograph focused on facing challenges to the future governance of northern Australia. It explores how to significantly inject some health into the governance system.

A book is in progress about some of the big issues affecting northern Australia. It tries to bring together academic discussion in a narrative style conversation. It deals with three main areas, three big tensions in the relationship between Southern Australia and Northern Australia. The three big tensions are the resource exploitation agenda, the resource preservation agenda, and the third is the Indigenous empowerment agenda. How to break away from quite a dysfunctional policy between mainstream Australia and Indigenous communities of northern Australia? The book aims to tell stories around those big themes and get those big agendas forward around how to possibly take advantage of these tensions and reconcile the future of northern Australia.

The aim is to get a bigger debate about governance going and to make sure it's academically sound. The book has been written in first draft and is currently in discussion about how to expand it into a discussion within the wider CRN network. It is



anticipated that the book will be submitted to the publication by end of financial year.

In relation to the broad Indigenous development agenda, in the past couple of months the JCU's CRN team have been working to get the foundation for setting a solid research agenda around that issue.

Dr Anne Stephens has been appointed as a new CRN post-doctoral at JCU. JCU is still in the process of appointing a PhD.

Associate Professor Allan Dale had been approached in February in the context of North Australia Ministerial Forum to take on a review being done by the expert panel on the issues concerning tenure across all of northern Australia. The intended focus is on the impact of tenure on investment. Investors could be from large corporates right through to traditional owners investing in home ownership to secure their future. There is opportunity to link this back to the CRN.

Coastal Marine Science

Dr Tom Rayner

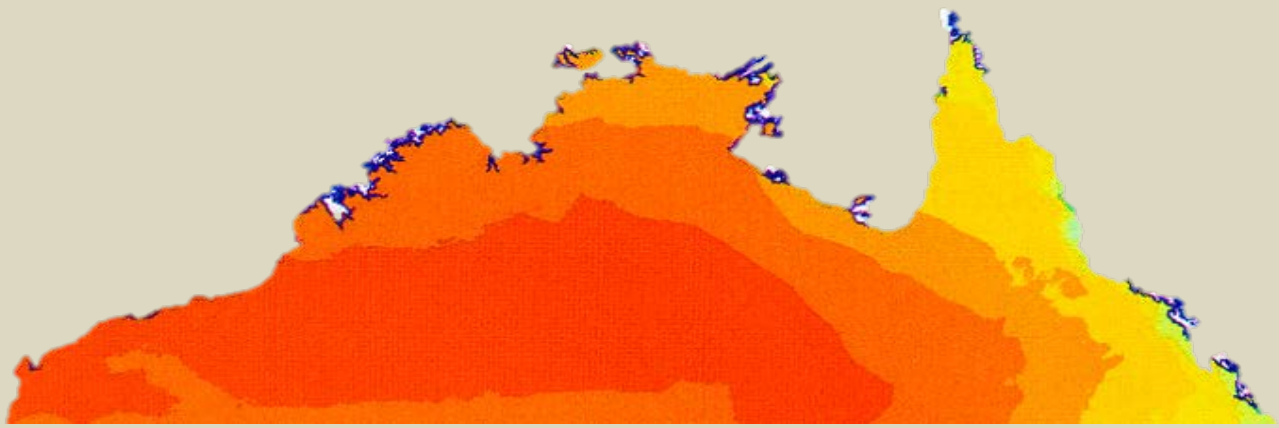
The CRN provides an opportunity to explore the connections between the physical and social sciences. North Australia's diverse coastal ecosystems provide an ideal setting for this work because there is a rich heritage of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and a developing body of conventional Ecological Knowledge. Projects are emerging through the CRN that draw on existing traditional knowledge about the interactions between seasons, plants, and animals, and yet explore some of the biophysical mechanisms driving environmental signals some of us have known about for centuries!

Can bacteria be used to reconstruct food webs?

One of the projects that has emerged from the CRN is a joint project between CDU and AIMS funded by the North Australia Marine Research Alliance (NAMRA) and led by Dr Tom Rayner. This study is based on the hypothesis that bacteria in the environment and in the guts of animals have distinctive signatures that allow us to track where animals have been and who has eaten who – in other words reconstruct food webs.

To test this, environmental and fish gut samples are being taken at specific locations in various billabongs in Kakadu National Park. DNA is being extracted from these samples and the entire bacteria communities are being sequenced to identify particular species and their abundance. These bacterial communities will be compared between samples to see if there are distinct communities in different places and in fish and other biota. If in fact bacteria in guts of prey turn up in their predators it will be possible to reconstruct food webs.

This project has links to a project in the National Environmental Research Program that recently hosted a student from the USA on a National Science Foundation exchange program. This project is but one of a suite of projects that seeks to use modern molecular tools to address questions about the impact of pollution, to measure biodiversity and to understand the movement of organisms.



Knowledge partnerships

The CRN has facilitated new linkages and new ways of thinking about the nexus between traditional knowledge and science. This shift in thinking is captured in a Knowledge Partnerships project involving Linda Ford, and Karen Gibb from CDU and Ann Fleming from the Darwin Aquaculture Centre, NT Government. John Prior is Linda's Research Assistant for the Goulburn Island projects and is currently working on conference papers, publications and grant applications on behalf of the Yagbani Aboriginal Corporation.

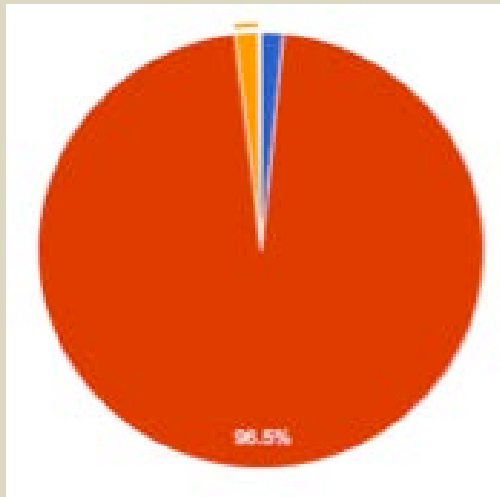


Figure provided by K. Gibb from a project funded by Department of Land Resource Management (DLRM), NT Government.

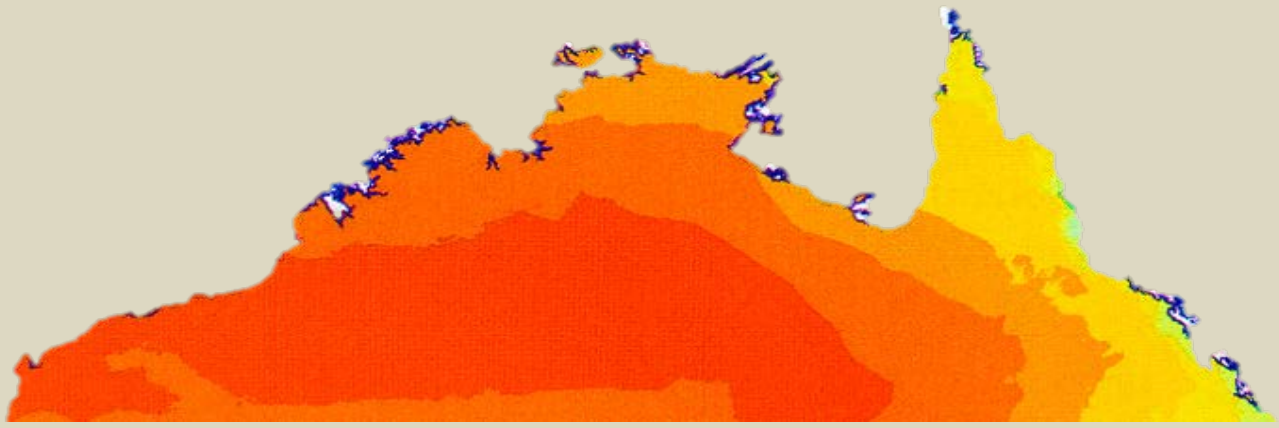
Many people ask why focus on bacteria? The pie chart shows the relative dominance of bacteria (the red section) measured from sediment in Darwin Harbour. Based on sheer numbers and diversity, eukaryotes or higher organisms (the orange slice), represent but a small component of our environment and bacteria-driven processes drive just about everything!

Environmental DNA

A spin-off from the NAMRA project has seen development of a new line of enquiry in environmental DNA. This cutting-edge technique involves filtering a cup of water collected from sites of interest, extracting DNA from the water and sequencing that DNA to identify the fish species present. The technique has potential for large-scale uptake in biosecurity and threatened species management across Northern Australia.

A Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) funded project still underway has shown that oysters around Goulburn Island accumulate metals and while this is a world-wide phenomena, the characteristics of accumulation are different in the pristine waters of north Australia compared to those in populated areas. We seek to help manage this phenomena using both traditional and science knowledge. In partnership with the local Aboriginal Corporation Linda and John are strengthening their network to explore traditional cues used to signal good times to collect and eat oysters. These traditional environmental cues e.g. water colour, will be presented as a poster and might also include other knowledge such as who can eat what when.

In parallel this project will explore the mechanisms involved in metal accumulation and the focus will be oyster diet as the route for metal accumulation. This will be a PhD for Julia Fortune who is currently employed by the CRN to consolidate the research project and submit it for funding. The traditional cues for good eating will include times of the year and these will be used in the science



research to determine if good eating equals safe eating. At the end of the PhD project the research team will be able to populate the traditional good-eating poster with science knowledge about safe-eating.

This will be one of the few times that traditional ecological knowledge will direct and inform science research and we expect this will give rise to a suite of projects. For example there is a view that it might not be good to eat shellfish during periods of intense bird nesting which makes sense if the water being filtered by oysters is full of faeces and their payload of bacteria.

Chasing the Winds

Dr Chris O'Brien

Chasing the Winds is a project lead by CRN post-doctoral researcher Dr Chris O'Brien. It is part of the CRN climate and weather theme.

A wealth of weather and climate data exists for parts of northern Australia. Created by government agencies whose remit has literally been delineated by borders, the weather and climate of north Australia has been boxed in by boundaries. Weather, however, flits through atmospheric space. Climate sprawls across time and space, its girdles around the globe slowly inching away from the equator in this the Anthropocene. Neither is bound by borders.

In the case of northern Australia this situation is problematic. So much of north Australia's weather comes from the Arafura/Timor and the broader Maritime Continent to the north and northwest. Its climate is defined by the very fact that for 5 to 8 months of the year (and this varies from year to year) wet air from the north either blows or seeps across the Top End. As things stand, the weather and climate history of North Australia is

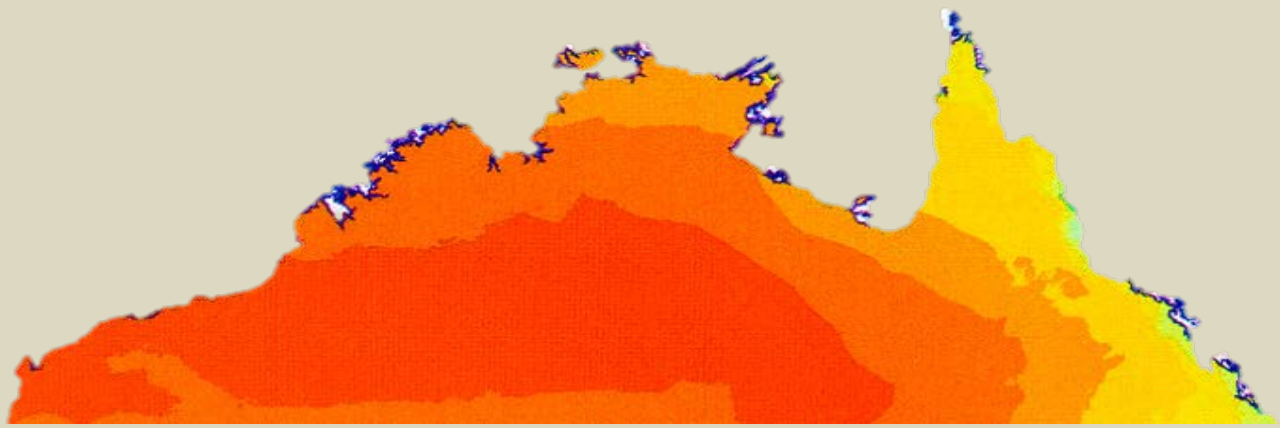
artificially excised from its proper spatial context. Chasing the Winds endeavours to correct this.

This study has three strands:

1. A physical history: what happened? When did it happen? Are there any patterns across time? Across space?
2. Stories about the stories: how were the data produced? How was it understood? How were weather and climate understood? What was emphasised? Neglected? How did this shape people's understanding of atmospheric fluxes?
3. Philosophical Issues: What assumptions about weather and nature do the study and storytelling about weather/climate, reveal? How did worldviews and prior knowledge shape subsequent knowledge and understandings?

Chasing the Winds is about crossing boundaries and forging new connections. Crossing state lines, national borders, the arbitrary demarcations between humanities and sciences. The two principal collaborators are Professor Karen Edyvane of CDU, now also with the National University of East Timor, Professor Tom Griffiths, Historian at ANU and the University of Copenhagen.

The principal output during this Postdoc will be the conversion of Dr Chris O'Brien's PhD Thesis 'A Clockwork Climate' into a scholarly book. Dr O'Brien also planned a smaller work on the Cyclone History of the Northern Territory that will draw both on his PhD research and this project for submission by mid-2014 and publication in time for the 40th anniversary of Cyclone Tracy.



His book chapter, *Imported Understandings*, will be published late this year in *Climate, Science and History in Australasia*, edited by James Beattie and Emily O’Gorman and published by Pan Macmillan. Also plan other publications in 2014/2015 based exclusively on findings of *Chasing the Winds*.

Dr O’Brien has been invited to contribute an essay to an edited collection titled *Cultural History of Climate Change*, based on a paper he gave concerning ideas of time, weather and climate at a conference of the same name last August. Publication is anticipated to be during 2014.

Heat Stress: from adaptation to transformation?

Dr Elspeth Oppermann

‘Heat stress: from adaptation to transformation?’ led by Dr Elspeth Oppermann is an enquiry into existing adaptations to heat stress in the Darwin and wider Top End region. It considers current and short-term adaptations and how these might enable or undermine more substantial or transformative responses to climate change.

In Darwin, approximately 75% of days throughout the year present significant heat stress to humans, including an average of 75 days a year (between 1982 and 2006) where heat stress levels present ‘serious danger’ on the Humidex heat and discomfort index.

The existing exposure of outdoor labourers to heat stress, such as in mining, construction and agriculture, means that these sectors may exhibit substantial adaptations to heat stress, but in the context of climate change may also have substantial vulnerabilities. This makes them a unique group to engage with in understanding current adaptation knowledges and practices, and the potential for future adaptation.

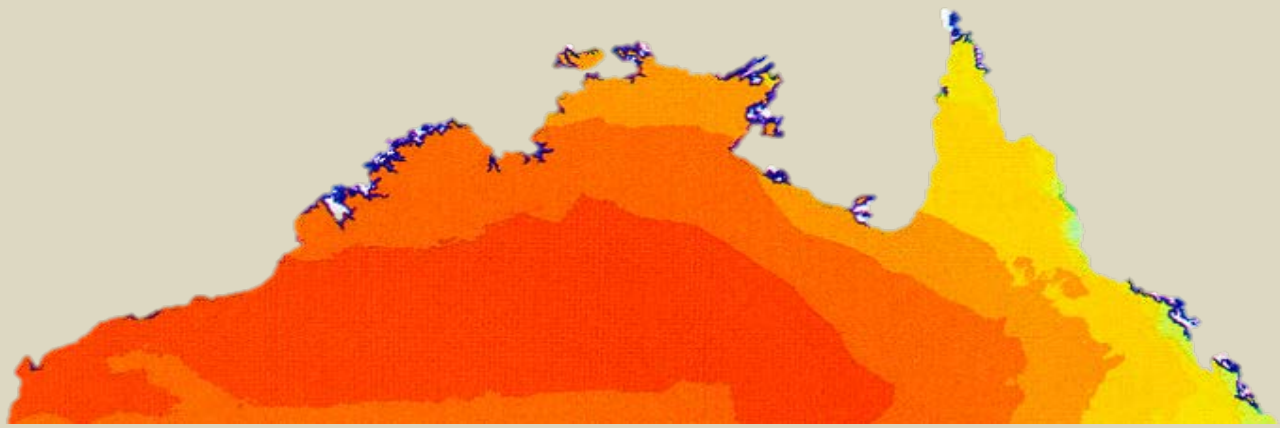
At an empirical level, this research project engages with daily and seasonal practices of adaptation to heat stress that are already in place, and what level of vulnerability and adaptive capacity result. It will also examine the failures to adapt that are already causing exposure to heat stress and knock-on-effects in labour availability, efficiency, and hospitalization rates, all of which tie into changing costs of production and infrastructure and food reliability/security.

At a theoretical level, the sense of already living at the limits of human comfort make Darwin a unique environment in a First World context, where the level of exposure and impact on western lifestyles and working conditions becomes tangible and therefore a unique opportunity for engagement with the radical transformations that are likely to become common across the globe.

The primary objective is to establish focus groups with outdoor workers, across a range of industries. The project may take in operations in Broome, Nhulunbuy and Roper Bar, as well as these offer even more extreme climatic conditions. These relationships will be established over the coming months, with focus groups to begin during the next ‘build up’ to the wet season when heat stress is most extreme (October-November).

Where there is interest, these focus group companies will become stakeholders in a smaller project sharing best practice, and this will lead to a second phase of research in future scenarios are explored in order to build which adaptive capacity.

Dr Elspeth Oppermann received a Law, Business and Arts (LEBA) Faculty small grant award to pursue a pilot project on heat stress in labour intensive industries in the top end, which will enable her to develop a unique methodological approach to heat stress



practices with Dr Matt Brearley from the National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre (NCCTRC). She will also be working with Dr Kerstin Zander who received another LEBA Small Grant award for a heat stress survey in the Top End.

On the first of October 2013, Dr Oppermann submitted a project outline covering heat stress vulnerability to the Bushfires and Natural Hazards CRC, together with Prof. Mary Finlayson and Dr Matalena Tofa from the Centre for Health and Wellbeing, Dr Kerstin Zander from TNI, Dr Matt Brearley from the NCCTRC, and Drs Liz Hanna and Lyndall Strazdins from ANU. She is also currently part of a NHMRC partnership application together with Professor Tord Kjellstrom and Drs Hanna and Strazdins (ANU), Brearley (NCCTRC) and Zander (TNI).

National Disability Insurance Scheme Project

Dr Anne Stephens

Dr Anne Stephens has been working in the community development sector for several years. Two of those years are with the Cairns Institute.

Dr Anne Stephens has diverse interests in community development. With JCU colleague Dr India Bohanna from the JCU School of Public Health, Dr Anne Stephens has developed a Planning and Assessment Framework for DisabilityCare Australia, to assess care and support needs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living with an acquired brain injury. Drs Stephens and Bohanna continue to work with non-government partners to develop training and education resources, and a culturally

acceptable, reliable and validated toolkit for assessment of ABI with Indigenous populations.

Dr Stephens is working with Indigenous Adult Education and Training College, Wontulp-Bi-Buya College, based in Cairns, to evaluate the impact of their community development training programmes on individual and community wellbeing. The College continues to expand its programmes and reach across Australia with funding for suicide prevention recently awarded by the federal government.

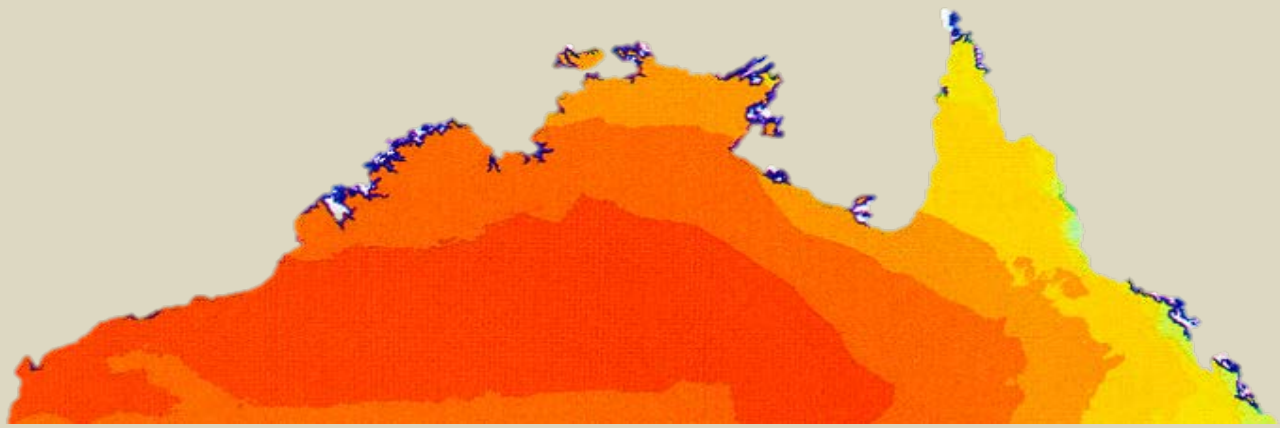
Dr Stephens is working with medical officers and staff of primary health clinics in communities on Cape York geared towards ameliorating infant abusive head trauma through a brief parenting intervention and curbing family violence.

She was recently appointed to the inaugural board of Foodswell, trading as the Remote Indigenous Gardens Network (RIG), a non-governmental organisation (NGO) focussed on food security for remote communities which will soon expand the very successful NT based EduGrowGardens competition to Cape York and the Torres Straits.

National narratives about asylum seekers in Australia

Dr Catherine Koerner

Dr Catherine Koerner has been working on two areas of research during the 6 month CRN Post-Doctoral position, within the River Country theme and re-framing the national narratives about Refugees who seek asylum in Australia by boat from Indonesia.



Dr Catherine Koerner's outputs during her CRN post-doc are 5 journal articles (2 in draft, 2 accepted and under review, 1 final draft completed), a book in development, a symposium, a co-editor of a special edition international journal, and an abstract accepted at Native American Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) 2013 Conference in Canada.

One of the findings from Dr Catherine Koerner's PhD research is a gap in Australian understanding of refugees who come to Australia by boat. This area of research seeks to reframe National narratives about asylum seekers who come to Australia across the seas from Indonesia. Ultimately it seeks to contribute rigorous, empirical social research findings to regional solutions on refugees including Indonesia, Malaysia and Australia.

Dr Catherine Koerner organised the first symposium, '*All in the same boat: National Symposium Series on Asylum Seekers who come to Australia by boat 2012-2013*', with the help of Katrina Britnell and the TNI Administrative team. Dr Serena Hussain and Dr Catherine Koerner are the Coordinators of the Series. The full day symposium was attended by over 150 people throughout the day. The event is available online at the TNI website.

In addition, the 6 month CRN Post-Doctoral Fellowship has provided Dr Catherine Koerner, as an early career researcher, the opportunity to explore future research directions. The second area of research on refugees has gained interest and support from Indonesian partners (GadjahMada University (UGM), Binus University, & University of Mataram (UNRAM)), International NGOs (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Office for Migration), and from Flinders University of South Australia.

Regional partnerships have been developed in the context of the *Australia in the Asian Century White paper*, and the CRN objectives on the movement of people in the northern region.

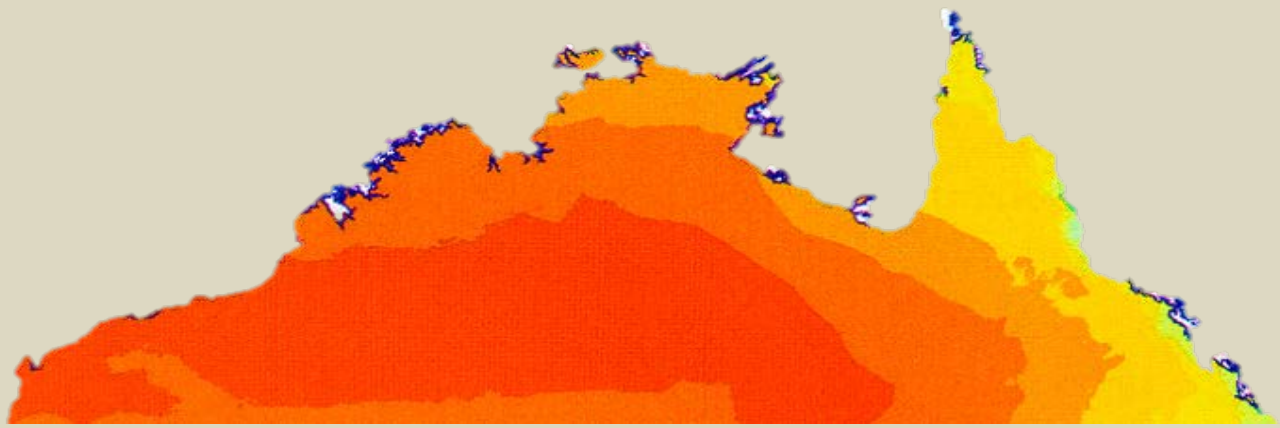
Dr Catherine Koerner provided teaching in Qualitative Social Research Methods at the Department for International Relations, graduate student seminars at UGM, Yogyakarta and Binus University in Jakarta to build capacity with Indonesian partners.

The three universities along with UNHCR and IOM (International Office of Migration, Jakarta office) wish to build research collaboration in the area of social policy that focuses on migration issues with refugees seeking asylum in Australia, located in Indonesia. A partnership to undertake sociological empirical research with the view to contribute to regional solutions was identified by these universities as an unmet priority. The partners identified oceans as a form of transport and communication not as a barrier or border. Oceans are seen as a point of connection.

Islamic community in the NT & International migrants

Dr Serena Hussain

The Office for Multicultural Affairs commissioned a project to explore the experiences of Muslims living in the NT. As a result of global events such as 9/11 and those closer to home, like the Bali Bombings, Australia's Muslim population have increasing come under focus in relation to social integration and inclusion. The research conducted by Dr Hussain demonstrates how in many respects the NT can be highlighted as an example of 'good practice' both in terms of policy for the social inclusion of



minority faith groups; as well as from within the Islamic community itself. The Islamic Society of the NT has long invested in developing an open dialogue with other communities in the Territory. In addition, they are one of the most ethnically diverse religious bodies in the country and prioritise the membership on women on the management committee. One of the greatest strengths of living in the NT identified by in-coming Muslims from interstate and overseas was the sense of community, inclusion and camaraderie experienced in both Darwin and Alice Springs. A report produced for the project entitled 'Engaging with Muslims in Australia's Northern Territory' will be available online in the coming months.

Dr Hussain is currently developing a research proposal exploring the 'Migration & Mobility of International Migrants'. The research aims to investigate the experiences of international migrants coming to the NT. A large qualitative study will explore issues related to retention of new migrant communities, with a focus on both the inclusion and integration of migrants, and the consequences of increased international migration for local communities.

Together with Dr Catherine Koerner, Dr Serena Hussain visited Indonesia earlier this year in order to develop regional partnerships in the context of the CRN objectives on the movement of people in the northern region. During the trip Dr Hussain provided teaching in Qualitative Social Research Methods at the Department for International Relations, graduate student seminars at UGM, Yogyakarta and Binus University in Jakarta in

order to strengthen capacity of Indonesian partners. Dr Koerner and Dr Hussain plan to build upon a partnership to undertake sociological empirical research with the view to contribute to regional solutions on asylum seekers entering Australia via Indonesia. This was highlighted by the Indonesian universities as an unmet priority.

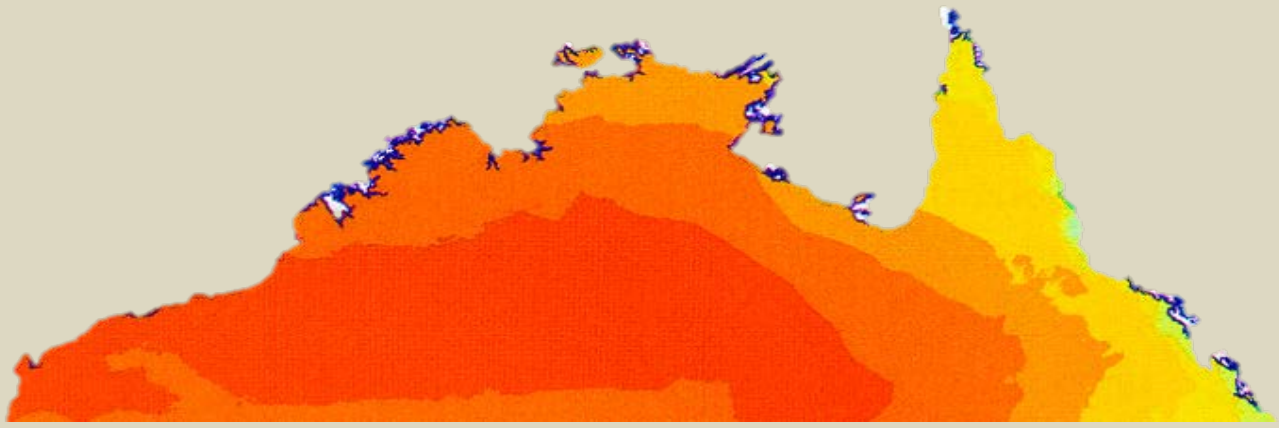
Dr Hussain has had papers accepted for presentation at four international conferences this year. These include the Fourth Asian Conference on Arts & Humanities (Osaka, Japan), the 2013 Global Summit on Education (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), and the First International Conference on Kashmiri Languages (Pakistan). She has been invited to present a paper at the 7th Global Conference on Multiculturalism, Conflict & Belong, at Oxford University.

BOOK LAUNCH



From left: Professor Sue McGinty, Dr Anne Stephens and Senator Larissa Waters.

Dr Anne Stephens, a Senior Researcher at The Cairns Institute at James Cook University, officially launched *Ecofeminism and Systems Thinking* (Thursday 11 July), with Greens



Senator Larissa Waters attending as a special guest. Dr Stephens said the innovative book, the product of a 10-year study, combined critical systems thinking and ecofeminism.

"This is the first time that the methodology of critical systems thinking has been used in conjunction with ecofeminism," said Dr Stephens.

"Some people get a bit nervous about the word 'feminism', but I used eco-feminism, a particular school of feminist thinking.

"It helps us describe and understand why our society acts as it does towards both the environment and social communities in all Western nations."

Dr Stephens said that the principles for good design presented in this book can help project designers to think about gender, marginalised people and places, planning and design, and actions to bring about better outcomes for both the environment and how we live with it.

"The principles ask us to think about projects or practices, and reflect on what could be done differently, better and more inclusively," she said.

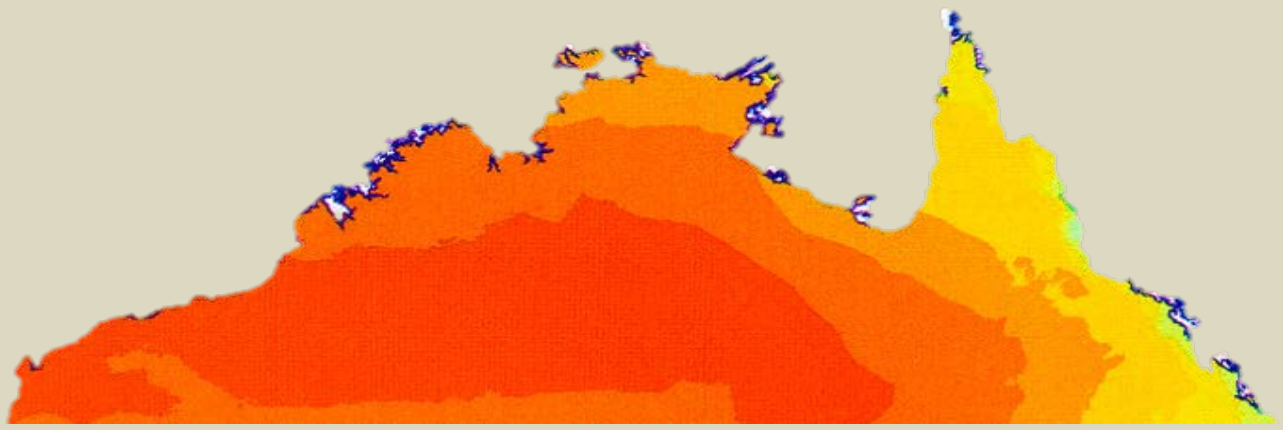
"If you plan more rigorously at the outset, by not overlooking any of these aspects, then your project will be more acceptable and sustainable.

"This might be a development activity, implementing a public health program, social or business enterprise, education program, community development activity, or awareness campaign.

"It will help create outcomes for people and the environment without having to compromise one against the other."

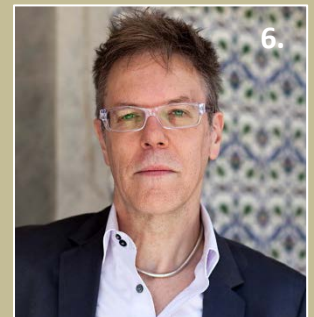
Ecofeminism and Systems Thinking, published by Routledge, is available through Amazon or Angus Robertson online: www.angusrobertson.com.au/book/eco-feminism-and-systems-thinking/39353302/

This story is from a 10 July Media Release by Gavin Broomhead, The Cairns Institute, James Cook University.



NORTHERN RESEARCH FUTURES TEAM

The NRF CRM team 1. Professor Ruth Wallace
2. Professor Andrew Campbell 3. Professor
Allan Dale 4. Dr Tom Rayner 5. Dr Anne
Stephens 6. Professor Paul Carter 7. Dr
Kerstin Zander 8. Dr Catherine Koerner 9. Dr
Chris O'Brien 10. Dr Elspeth Oppermann



The newsletter is produced by The Northern Institute for the NRF CRN project.

For more information please visit the website www.cdu.edu.au/the-northern-institute/collaborative-research-network-program or contact The Northern Institute via email thenortherninstitute@cdu.edu.au

This project is supported through the Australian Government's Collaborative Research Networks (CRN) program.



Australian Government
Department of Education