



Climate, Society
and Environment
Research Centre
(C-SERC)

A group of people is silhouetted against a vibrant sunset sky. The sky is filled with orange and red clouds, and the sun is low on the horizon. A large white oval is overlaid on the image, containing the text "About C-SERC".

About C-SERC

Climate change and the environment are often seen as the domain of science, but at C-SERC, we understand that they're also about people. Our Centre draws together experts from across the social sciences to explore the social, political and economic impacts and challenges facing our planet. C-SERC is about how research can pave the way to a more sustainable future.

C-SERC's home is in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Technology Sydney, and continues the legacy of the Climate Justice Centre (2015–2021). It draws together expertise across anthropology, sociology, political economy, geography, history, cultural studies, science and technology studies, communications and journalism.

Our research themes

Climate justice and energy transitions



Fisheries, maritime and coastal communities

Indigenous land and justice



This publication showcases a range of C-SERC research partnerships and demonstrates their capacity to enhance the way societies – and the people within them – interact with energy, natural resources, technology and the living environment.

See more on the back cover for how we can work with you to address contemporary environmental challenges.



City ecologies, healthy environments and urban transformations

Work, climate and environment



Climate justice and energy transitions



Climate justice is about recognising that the causes and impacts of climate change are not evenly distributed across the globe. Countries that bear the brunt of global warming tend to be those who benefit least from fossil-fuel-driven development; meanwhile, the wealthy, industrialised nations driving the crisis often fail to address their complicity in meaningful ways.

At C-SERC, these issues come to life in the climate justice and energy transitions research theme where we investigate the ongoing use of fossil fuels and shifts to renewable energy. Rather than focusing on the physical effects of climate change – global heat, ocean acidification, extreme climate phenomena, ecosystem deterioration – our work in this theme expands the conversation to explore the human side of climate change and the tools we have at our disposal to create more just and equitable climate futures.

Our research in focus

Coal Rush (Australian Research Council) Decarbonising Electricity (Australian Research Council)

These two projects investigated the role of governments, corporations and civil societies in supporting renewable energy transitions in Australia, India and Germany. The work, which led to the development of the award-winning Beyond the Coal Rush radio series, provides a crucial overview of local, national and global strategies for moving towards a coal-free future.

Immersive Climate (various partners)

How might we live through a changing climate while taking action, resisting, ensuring equity, adapting and surviving? This postdoctoral fellowship project employs co-creative practice experiments with immersive media (such as virtual and augmented reality, immersive audio) to explore how we might enable audiences to imagine and enact tangible and just climate futures.



Meet our researchers



Professor James Goodman

James is a political sociologist, economist and geographer and an expert on the sociology of climate change and decarbonisation. His research has a strong focus on social justice in relation to climate and energy issues.



Dr Jeremy Walker

Jeremy studies the ecology, energy and economics as they relate to capitalism, physics and Earth system sciences. His current research is focused on the history of neoliberal economic theory and government policy in relation to energy transition and climate justice.



Professor Noel Castree

Noel is a geographer with an interest in environmental science, social science and humanities approaches to understanding people and the planet.



Dr Julia Scott-Stevenson

Julia is a UTS Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellow and a researcher, producer and curator of interactive and immersive factual media. She uses practice-led research to explore how immersive media (virtual, augmented and mixed reality) can address the climate crisis.



Dr Jon Marshall

Jon is an ARC Future Fellow and an anthropologist who studies processes of disorder, disruption and disinformation. His research explores opportunities for communities to move towards energy sources other than fossil fuels.

Fisheries, maritime and coastal communities



The world's oceans are the site of growing tensions. Overfishing, climate change, resource extraction and other challenges are causing massive degradation of our marine environments, putting the livelihoods of coastal communities at risk.

C-SERC is a research leader in this domain, delivering projects on fisheries and aquaculture, maritime environments and societies and their associated political, cultural and economic practices. Our researchers are recognised for novel projects that address pressing sustainable development and marine conservation/restoration questions, from local challenges through to maritime security issues and global governance of the Blue Economy, with particular emphasis on Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

Our research in focus

Valuing coastal fisheries and aquaculture in NSW and Victoria (Fisheries Research and Development Corporation)

These two discrete projects delivered a robust evaluation of the contributions that seafood production makes to Australian life. The research found that fisheries and aquaculture play a significant role in sustaining the vitality of coastal areas and deliver a wealth of economic, environmental and social benefits to coastal communities and beyond. These findings provide an evidence base for policymakers and the public to support the fishing and aquaculture industries in New South Wales and Victoria.

Coral reef restoration in the Philippines (DFAT, Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research)

Restoring coral reefs has the potential to become an important part of maritime ecosystem management, but the restoration process raises a series of governance challenges. This Philippines-based project aims to improve the effectiveness of reef restoration by exploring the underpinning social, economic and political influences that shape it. This research will make an important contribution to ongoing efforts to sustain reef ecosystems around the world.

Meet our researchers



Professor Kate Barclay

Kate is internationally recognised for her research on the social and economic impacts of fisheries and aquaculture, as well as the governance and globalisation of tuna resources in the Pacific Islands.



Associate Professor Michael Fabinyi

Michael is an expert in the social, political and cultural elements of marine resource use and management in Asia, with a particular interest in how these activities impact lower-income communities.



Dr Nicholas McClean

Nick has a background in applied anthropology in natural resource management and conservation. He specialises in working collaboratively with communities, policy makers, industry partners and Indigenous organisations.

Indigenous land and justice



Australia's First Peoples have been the stewards of our country's natural world for more than 60,000 years. Today, we face the increasingly destructive impacts of climate change, driven in large part by decades of government policy that ignores the land and water rights of Indigenous communities in favour of damaging resource extraction. Sustainability experts are now advocating for Indigenous-led land care solutions that acknowledge the critical role of Country in achieving sustainability gains.

At C-SERC, we are committed to making a meaningful contribution to this shift through the production of research that has real potential to drive change. First Nations scholars and non-Indigenous researchers work with communities in Australia and beyond to amplify Australian Aboriginal voices in climate and environmental policy.

Our research in focus

The Aboriginal land estate in NSW: opportunities for economic activity (Australian Research Council)

This placed-based ethnographic study examines how NSW Aboriginal Land Councils can create benefit for their communities through strategic approaches to land management. The research considers the economic possibilities for the Aboriginal land estate and how it might be leveraged in response to climate change.

Meet our researcher



Professor Heidi Norman

Heidi is an award-winning researcher and a recognised authority on Aboriginal political history. Her multi-faceted research draws on anthropology, political economy, cultural studies and political theory to amplify the role of Aboriginal people as Australia's rightful landholders.

Work, climate and environment



When a tornado hit an Amazon warehouse in 2021, killing six workers, we gained a chilling insight into the realities of how climate change can affect our working lives. And this is just the beginning: as environmental change ramps up – wild weather, raging bushfires, longer heatwaves – workplaces are increasingly facing the impacts of rising temperatures and exposure to extreme weather, leaving many at risk of work-related illness and injury.

Our research in this theme seeks to address these issues through strategic partnerships with trade unions, government bodies and think tanks. These projects emphasise the importance of environmental change-related workplace health and safety, informing policy changes that will protect those most at risk.

Our research in focus

Heat at Work (United Workers Union)

Heat in the Streets (City of Sydney)

These two projects explored the growing challenge of workplace heat in indoor and outdoor workplaces. By expanding our understanding of workplace heat and how it affects the lives and livelihoods of individual workers, we can help unions, businesses and government agencies act to mitigate its future impacts.

Meet our researchers



Dr Elizabeth Humphrys

Elizabeth is a political economist and an expert on the economic impacts of climate change on worker health and safety. She is committed to making workplaces safer and more equitable through policy and strategy development.



Professor James Goodman

James is a political sociologist, economist and geographer and an expert on the sociology of climate change and decarbonisation. His research has a strong focus on social justice in relation to climate and energy issues.



City ecologies, healthy environments and urban transformations

The majority of the world's population now live and work in cities. In the face of climate change and ecological erosion, civic engagement and ecological stewardship activities will play a crucial role in preparing our urban environments for an uncertain future. C-SERC research highlights the power of building connections to local environments to sustain and reimagine the way we live in cities.

Our research in focus

The Green Square Atlas of Civic Ecologies (City of Sydney, 107 Projects)

This project mapped civic ecological activity in Green Square, Australia's largest urban renewal project, through the stories of 11 civic ecologies champions who live and work in the area. This work shines a light on the critical importance of community-level environmental action in addressing the contemporary climate crisis.

Water Stories (City of Sydney, City of 107 Projects)

Water Stories is an interactive exploration of the history of water in Green Square. By mapping, materialising and activating the history of what is now a densely populated urban area, the research reveals the importance of water management practices over time and their ongoing role in shaping social and environmental change.

Meet our researchers



Associate Professor Ilaria Vanni Accarigi and Associate Professor Alexandra Crosby



Ilaria (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences) and Alexandra (Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building) are frequent research collaborators. Their transdisciplinary approach enables the design and delivery of innovative projects that reveal new insights into the relationship between people and the urban environment.



Climate, Society and Environment Research Centre (C-SERC)

Work with us

C-SERC researchers partner with government and intergovernmental agencies, NGOs, unions, Aboriginal land councils and organisations across the fishing and conservation industries to deliver impactful research projects with the power to shape the future.

We'd love to hear from you

Contact C-SERC researchers to find out about our seminars, education programs and collaborative research opportunities.

Are you interested in postgraduate research with us? Explore our **doctoral program** or view our **application guidelines**.