



### Launch of the Adaptation College

The Social, Economic and Institutional (SEI-) dimensions of climate adaptation network is part of the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (NCCARF). One of the aims of the SEI-network is to build a community of future leaders who are well informed about the human dimensions of climate change adaptation, through the Adaptation College.

Sixteen participants were selected for participation in the College from a diverse variety of backgrounds. College Fellows were selected through one of three entry streams: NGO or community organisations, research institutions and local, State or Commonwealth Government agencies.

### First Adaptation College held in NT

The first SEI-network Adaptation College was held from the 27<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009 in the Northern Territory. This year's Adaptation College theme was 'vulnerability and adaptation in Indigenous Australia'. A fieldtrip to the Nauiyu Nambiyu community was

organised by one of the Adaptation College Fellows, Emma Woodward (CSIRO), with a Welcome to Country performed by Molly Yawulminy. The College was designed to provide Fellows both with structured sessions, but also plenty of opportunities for informal network-building; in common with its goal for supporting a community of future leaders in adaptation.

### The 'Fi' fieldtrip

Nauiyu community leader, Patricia Marrfurra, agreed to take the College out into the bush on a 'Fi' tour. The Fi tour is named after the Orb spider web, and the idea of 'creating something out of nothing'. Patricia and other members of her family and the community showed the Fellows the lengthy process required to create a 'dilly bag'. The ladies demonstrated how to strip the Merrepen palm, dye the resulting string with plant materials, and the weaving process. The College participants also got the chance to try traditional bush tucker. Talking to members of the community whilst trying these skills gave the Fellows a great introduction to Nauiyu and the Daly River region.

College Fellows on the 'Fi' fieldtrip with members of the Nauiyu community (image: Ian Thomas)



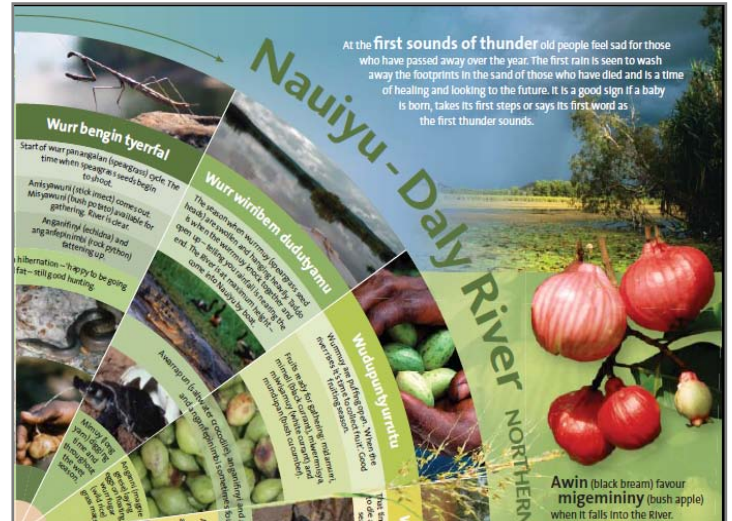


**Climate adaptation in indigenous communities: issues, challenges and opportunities**

This session was led by four of the College Fellows who work with Indigenous communities: Emma Woodward, Marcus Barber (James Cook University), Neil Collier (Charles Darwin University) and Kirsten Mclean (CSIRO).

Emma has been working in the Daly River region through the Tropical Rivers and Coastal Knowledge (TRaCK) project, documenting the significance of water and river systems to Indigenous communities. Emma's part of the project is particularly focussed on the roles water plays in Indigenous belief systems. Emma led a session where she explored the various challenges and successes of the project so far, including sharing with the College the Ngan'gi seasonal calendar developed over ten months with the Nauiyu community. The Ngan'gi calendar documents some of the traditional ecological knowledge held by the Nauiyu community.

Neil gave a brief introduction to his research, also with the TRaCK project. Neil's research attempts to incorporate indigenous social valuations of the Daly River into more traditional



Ngan'gi seasonal calendar detail (image: CSIRO /Nauiyu)

biophysical modelling. This is proving a real challenge. Neil illustrated this by explaining how one might go about accounting for aboriginal valuations of environmental services (for example, providing a replacement value for the bush tucker magpie goose), but how this still leaves other environmental values (such as the changing shape of the Daly through sediment changes) unaccounted for.

Kirsten described her work with the University of Queensland Boilerhouse team working on regional social resilience with communities in Far North Queensland. She described her work as occurring at three scales; at the level of individuals, communities, and regionally. Some insight into participant-driven, empowering methodologies was given in a description of both photovoice and film-making projects.

Lastly, Marcus described how in his anthropological research, he sought to understand how culture can act as a basis for increasing adaptive capacity. He illustrated his thoughts with ethnographic insights from the Yolngu people, north-east Arnhem Land.

Workshop discussion at the Leadership Centre, Daly River





Exploring the Nauiyu Nambiyu community

### **Key issues in the social dimensions of adaptation**

The College discussed some of the wider issues around the social, economic and institutional aspects of climate adaptation on the final day. The session was introduced by Jennifer Cane (DSE). In contrast to the previous research-focused discussions, Jen provided a policy-based perspective examining the challenges of government involvement in adaptation. This led to a wide-ranging discussion exploring the science-policy interface.

Perspectives were also offered from Fellows in other sectors. Melanie Bainbridge (WALGA) and Jennifer Harrison (City of Mandurrah, WA) discussed funding issues in local government, and brought up the prospect of litigation and liability around climate adaptation. Jess Fritze (VCOSS) presented her thoughts from an NGO standpoint, highlighting the key role such organisations take in political and media advocacy. Andrew Sullivan (DPIPWE) provided insights on public engagement, policy and research from his background as a fishery manager. Andrew highlighted how the industry

is well-defined, has a clear and committed group of stakeholders and a committed public – which helps lead to effective decision making: something that could be borne in mind for climate adaptation decisions.

### **Next steps for the Adaptation College**

A guiding principle in the design of the Adaptation College has been the reflexive leadership of the College process through its Fellows. The last session focused on expectations and aspirations for the College process. Innovative ideas such as an 'ideas shop' run for, and by, Fellows to provide specific adaptation problem-solving advice were suggested.

The next College will be held in Sydney, November 2010. Due to enthusiasm from the Fellows in attending the international NCCARF conference in Brisbane, June 2010, an additional network lunch will be held after the main conference on July 2<sup>nd</sup> with invited speakers from the main conference. We hope to see you there!

The College provided Fellows with lots of opportunities for time out and informal network-building





### Adaptation College Fellows \*

**Melanie Bainbridge** Climate Change Coordinator, Local Government Authority (WA)

**Marcus Barber** Lecturer, James Cook University (QLD)

**Edward Boydell** Honours student, Australian National University (ACT)

**Alison Browne** Research Fellow, Curtin University (WA)

**Kim Byrnes** Climate Change Project Manager, Peel-Harvey Catchment Council (WA)

**Jennifer Cane** Adaptation Science & Information Team Manager, Department of Sustainability and Environment (VIC)

**Neil Collier** Post-doctoral Fellow, Charles Darwin University, (NT)

**Carol Farbotko** Post-doctoral Fellow, University of Wollongong (NSW)

**Jess Fritze** Climate Change Policy Analyst, Victorian Council of Social Services, (VIC)

**Jennifer Harrison** Senior Climate Change Officer, City of Mandurah (WA)

**Kirsten Maclean** Senior Research Fellow, University of Queensland (QLD)

**Naomi Rakela** Manager Environmental Services, Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council (WA)

**James Smith** Health Promotion Strategy Unit, Department of Health & Families (NT)

**Andrew Sullivan** Scalefish Manager, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (TAS)

**Kate Wood** Adaptation Policy and Services Acting Manager, Department of Sustainability & Environment (VIC)

**Emma Woodward** Researcher, CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems (NT)

\* Correct as of December 2009

### SEI-Network Convenor

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University of Melbourne

### SEI- Network Co-Covenors

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Melbourne University

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University of New South Wales

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North Australian Indigenous Land and  
Sea Management Alliance

### SEI-Network Postdoctoral Fellow

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