



# NCCARF Newsletter

Director's message  
Professor Jean Palutikof, NCCARF Director



## The aftermath of Copenhagen

In the last newsletter, I discussed the possibility of 'success' at the Copenhagen COP-15. I said "We can, and must, hope that the nations will leave Copenhagen having agreed in principle to reach a new arrangement to reduce emissions, and that such an arrangement should deliver the cuts in emissions necessary to avoid dangerous climate change." At the time, it seemed like a relatively modest desire.

The outcomes from Copenhagen were bitterly disappointing. Although a face-saving document in the shape of what is now known as the Copenhagen Accord<sup>1</sup> was 'noted' by the conference, in fact there was no agreement, even in principle. What did emerge was a fundamental shift in national positions and alignments:

1. Nation states, particularly newly-emerging powers such as the BASIC<sup>2</sup> countries, are no longer willing to contemplate regulation of their activities by outside agencies. Thus, there is a strong possibility that international binding agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol, which require nations to demonstrate compliance, are now of only historical interest.
2. The traditional division into developed and developing countries no longer applies. There were strong disagreements in Copenhagen between the newly-emerging powers on one hand, anxious to preserve their rights to carbon-based growth, and poorer nations likely to suffer the most severe impacts of climate change, amongst whom countries such as Bolivia and Colombia, and the small island states so vulnerable to sea-level rise, were particularly vocal.

The Copenhagen Accord proposes voluntary targets, to be set and policed at the level of the individual nation. This approach simply will not deliver the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions necessary to avoid dangerous climate change.

Where does this leave us?

- Since Copenhagen, there has been very little, perhaps no, useful activity on the international climate change policy stage. The Secretary of the UNFCCC, which runs the COP meetings and is responsible for the Kyoto Protocol, has recently resigned. International policymaking around climate change is in disarray.
- The next COP, COP-16, will be at the end of 2010 in Mexico. We may hope for agreement around a binding international agreement to replace (or extend) the Kyoto Protocol at that meeting, although this hope is becoming increasingly fragile.

The age of the international agreement may be over. Around half of all global emissions of greenhouse gases are produced by the BASIC countries together with the US, and when we add in the European Union this figure rises to 63%. Some now argue that it would be much more efficient, and more likely to succeed, if just these countries came together to hammer out an agreement.

This would leave the poorer, smaller countries without a seat at the table. In many cases these are the countries most vulnerable to climate change, most in need of adaptation and without the resources to make adaptation happen. The strength of the international process was that it gave these countries a voice, and worked to ensure continuing negotiations around the provision of aid for adaptation and technological transfer. Without it, these countries are exposed to the poorly-mitigated impacts of climate change, and left without the means to adapt.

<sup>1</sup> <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/cop15/eng/107.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Brazil, South Africa, India and China

## Abstracts close, early-bird registration extended until April 1

The Call for Abstracts for oral presentations for the NCCARF-CSIRO 2010 *Climate Adaptation Futures* Conference has now closed following an overwhelming response which saw more than 800 abstracts received from 55 countries.

**Early-bird Registration (closes 1 April).....AU\$850**  
**Full Registration.....AU\$1100**  
**Student/Concession Registration.....AU\$500**

Session chairs are now reviewing these abstracts, and invitations will be issued to the successful authors in March.

Abstracts for **poster presentations** for each of the session themes are still welcome but must be received by **March 31** via the online submission portal at [www.nccarf.edu.au/conference2010](http://www.nccarf.edu.au/conference2010)

Registrations to attend the Conference are open with the discounted early-bird rate now available until April 1.

With only 700 registration places available, delegates are advised to register soon to avoid missing out.

A variety of workshops and side events have now been confirmed, along with a range of themed post-conference field trips exploring adaptation challenges and success stories from around coastal, rural and outback Queensland.

To register, submit a poster abstract or download a copy of the draft program visit [www.nccarf.edu.au/conference2010](http://www.nccarf.edu.au/conference2010) For more information and to receive regular updates email [nccarf-conf2010@yrd.com.au](mailto:nccarf-conf2010@yrd.com.au)

### Panel sessions confirmed

Along with the five plenary and 25 themed parallel sessions, a variety of panel sessions with leading climate adaptation researchers and commentators have been confirmed.

These include:

- *Financing Adaptation: international transfers and global geopolitics*, chaired by Saleem ul Huq, International Institute for Environment and Development
- *Is building resilience the answer?* Chaired by Terry Hughes, JCU
- *Providing the essential information, knowledge and skills for adaptation*, chaired by Kathy Jacobs, University of Arizona
- *Measuring the effectiveness of adaptation*, chaired by Rob Kay, Coastal Zone Management
- *Vulnerability and risk assessment for extreme events*, chaired by John Schneider, Geoscience Australia
- *Australian Case Studies: Practical adaptation - making it happen on the ground*, chaired by Jon Barnett, University of Melbourne

A final plenary session *Future directions in adaptation: needs, barriers and actions* will be held featuring:

- Chris Field Co-Chair, Working Group II, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
- Joseph Alcamo, Chief Scientist, UNEP
- Martin Parry, Imperial College (past Co-Chair, IPCC Working Group II)
- Jean Palutikof, Director - NCCARF
- Andrew Ash, Director - CSIRO Climate Adaptation Flagship

### NCCARF Seminar Series

NCCARF hosts public climate change adaptation seminars and networking events. To suggest speakers or host a seminar at your institution contact Jeannette Langan at [j.langan@griffith.edu.au](mailto:j.langan@griffith.edu.au) Where possible, previous seminars are made available for download from [www.nccarf.edu.au](http://www.nccarf.edu.au). **RSVPs:** are essential for all events to Kerry Fitzgerald 07 5552 7326 or [k.fitzgerald@griffith.edu.au](mailto:k.fitzgerald@griffith.edu.au)

#### Upcoming seminars:

**Tuesday 30 March, 4pm:**

**'Climate Services for Adaptation Planning'** Dr Chris Gordon, Deputy Director, Climate Science, The Met Office Hadley Centre, UK; and

**'The International ACRE initiative for climate services, applications and users'** Dr Rob Allan, Project Manager, Atmospheric Circulation Reconstructions over the Earth (ACRE) The Met Office Hadley Centre, UK.

**Where:** Ship Inn Function Room, Griffith University South Bank Brisbane

**Wednesday 28 April, 4pm:**

***Climate change and Australia's biodiversity: can it adapt?***

**Where:** Ship Inn Function Room, Griffith University South Bank Brisbane  
**Guest speaker:** Professor **Lesley Hughes**, Macquarie University convenes the NCCARF Adaptation Research Network for Terrestrial Biodiversity. She is among Australia's foremost researchers investigating the impacts of global climate change on species and ecosystems.

**Thursday 3 June, 4pm:**

**Where:** Ian Hanger Recital Hall, Queensland Conservatorium, Brisbane

**Guest Speaker:** Professor **Will Steffen**, Executive Director of the Climate Change Institute, Australian National University is a leading Australian climate scientist with a long career in international global change research. He served as Executive Director of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme and Executive Officer of IGBP's Global Change and Terrestrial Ecosystems project. He is an expert adviser to the Department of Climate Change.

# Funding available for settlements and infrastructure

Minister for Climate Change Penny Wong has released the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Plan for Settlements and Infrastructure, and announced funding of \$6.5 million to fund research priorities identified in the Plan.

The Plan is structured around four themes relating to the issues around, and management of, settlements and infrastructure under threat from the impacts of climate change. The themes are:

- Urban and regional planning and management
- Built environment
- Vulnerable coastal communities
- Infrastructure

It identifies and prioritises research required in each of the four theme areas.

The funding will be administered by NCCARF. For more information on the application process and to download an expressions of interest package visit [www.nccarf.edu.au](http://www.nccarf.edu.au). Expressions of Interest should be forwarded to

Dr Daniel Stock at [d.stock@griffith.edu.au](mailto:d.stock@griffith.edu.au) and must be received by **9 April 2010**. For more information contact Dr David Ugalde at NCCARF on 07 5552 8247, or [d.ugalde@griffith.edu.au](mailto:d.ugalde@griffith.edu.au)



Coastal erosion Image: NSW SES

## Comment invited on Primary Industries Plan

The Draft National Climate Change Adaptation Research Plan for Primary Industries is now open for public comment. Development of the Plan was coordinated by NCCARF and led by an expert writing team chaired by Professor Snow Barlow of the University of Melbourne. It identifies priority research areas needed to enhance the capacity of agricultural, freshwater aquaculture and forestry industries, associated industries and organisations, rural communities, concerned Australian residents and governments at all levels to make sound decisions about adaptation responses to climate change impacts. The Plan and feedback form are available now at [www.nccarf.edu.au](http://www.nccarf.edu.au). Comments must be received by NCCARF by 5pm AEST on **15 March 2010**. Please contact Frank Stadler on (07) 5552 7268 or [f.stadler@griffith.edu.au](mailto:f.stadler@griffith.edu.au) for further information.

## Update: National Climate Change Adaptation Research Plans

**Completed and released:** Human Health; Emergency Management, Settlements & Infrastructure

**Consultation completed:** Marine Biodiversity and Resources, Terrestrial Biodiversity; Social, Economic and Institutional Dimensions

**Open for consultation:** Primary Industries

Check [www.nccarf.edu.au](http://www.nccarf.edu.au) for updates and information on opportunities to review. Contact NCCARF to request a hard copy or summary of a completed NARP.

## Synthesis and Integrative Research news

The first of the NCCARF Historical Case Study synthesis projects *Adaptation Lessons from Cyclone Tracy* led by Professor John McAneney (Risk Frontiers, Macquarie University) is complete and undergoing peer review. When finalised it will be made available from the NCCARF website.

The next case study due for release is *East Coast Lows and the Pasha Bulker Storm* led by Professor Garry Willgoose, University of Newcastle. This project reviews the impact of the June 2007 storm that hit Australia's East Coast, causing widespread flooding and property damage that led to it being ranked as the fourth largest general insurance loss since records began.

The project will provide a whole-of-government, business and community perspective on (i) the context and impact of the storm, (ii) the adaptation measures put in place as

a result of the knowledge gained from the experience, such as changes to emergency services and social support provision, and (iii) adaptation measures being put in place following subsequent reflection on ways of better preparing for such storms, for example, in urban planning guidelines and electricity infrastructure.



Above: The *Pasha Bulker* grounded on a Newcastle beach by a severe east coast low, June 2007

## Health Challenges funding closing soon

The *Health Challenges of Climate Change* call for proposals for research to address the priorities identified in the *National Climate Change Adaptation Research Plan for Human Health* will close on **22 March**.

The call is from the National Health and Medical Research Council. For more information visit [www.nccarf.edu.au](http://www.nccarf.edu.au) or [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au)

# Adaptation Research Network News

## Marine Network hosts international workshop



The Adaptation Research Network for Marine Biodiversity and Resources will convene one of six international workshops at the ICES/PICES International Symposium 'Climate Change Effects on Fish and Fisheries: Forecasting impacts, Assessing Ecosystem

Responses, and Evaluating Management Strategies' on 26-29 April 2010 in Sendai, Japan. The 'Networking across global marine "hotspots"' workshop provides a unique opportunity for the Network to generate valuable linkages with key international leaders working in the marine adaptation field (increasing the capacity and learning opportunities of Australia's adaptation researchers). It will also highlight the role the Network and Australian researchers can play in shaping collaborative research on an international scale and raise the international profile of the Network in general.

## Settlements and Infrastructure Network hosts third early career researcher event



Following on from the successes of the May and November 2009 forum/workshops for early career researchers from across the nation held at UNSW, the Network will host its third Early Career Researchers Forum and Workshop on 19-21 April at Griffith University,

Gold Coast. The Call for Abstracts is now open online and closes 22 March. For more information or to apply see <http://www.nccarf.edu.au/settlements-infrastructure/>

## Human Health Network hosts grant workshops



The Network for Human Health hosted and coordinated information workshops in Adelaide and Townsville in January to help researchers understand how the 'Health Challenges of Climate Change' Special Initiative for NHMRC project grants will work

this year. More than 50 participants joined the workshops including researchers, policy makers and practitioners from the public and private sector. Past successful grant recipients who were familiar with NHMRC process presented at the workshops, including guest speakers Professor Mark Forwood (Griffith), Professor Alan Baxter (JCU) and Assoc Professor Keith Dear (ANU). Presentations from the workshops will be available on the Network website [www.nccarf.edu.au/humanhealth](http://www.nccarf.edu.au/humanhealth)

The Network will host this year's Australian Academy of Science Fenner Conference on the Environment *Science Healthy Climate, Planet and People - co-benefits for health from action on climate change* at ANU on 23-24 June. For more information see [www.nceph.anu.edu.au/Fenner2010/](http://www.nceph.anu.edu.au/Fenner2010/)

## Terrestrial Biodiversity Network honours and post-graduate grants open



The Network will award 10 honours/masters research grants in 2010 for projects that focus on adaptation to climate change, each valued at up to \$7000. Also available are 10 PhD student collaboration travel grants of up to \$3000 to enable students to visit and

collaborate with national and international laboratories and research centres. Visit the website <http://hosting2.arcs.org.au/terrestrialbiodiversity> for more information and an application form. Applications close 1 April 2010.

## (Terrestrial biodiversity network cont'd)

With the pending release of the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Plan for Terrestrial Biodiversity and the resulting funding to be announced, the TB Network is working to link researchers, stakeholders and agencies nationally with similar "areas of research priority". Once a researcher submits an online form on "NARP aligning research interests", available on the website, the Network will provide contact details of others wishing to collaborate in the same area of research. This process is aimed at facilitating potential research partnerships for NARP funding.

## Social, Economic & Institutional Network



The SEI Network Adaptation College is progressing well. The next event is planned for Sydney in November. In addition, 15 members of the College will attend the NCCARF Climate Adaptation Futures Conference on the Gold Coast in June.

As well as attending sessions and networking with colleagues working in diverse areas of climate adaptation, College participants will also have the opportunity to talk to international adaptation experts such as Neil Adger (UK), Susi Moser (USA), and Emma Tompkins (UK) in an additional lunchtime workshop.

## Primary Industries hosts first event



The Adaptation Research Network for Primary Industries is up and running, and has now held its first management committee meeting and node leader meeting in Melbourne to plan network activities and directions. The six Network nodes have

now been finalised to include: 1. Farming Systems 2. Soil Management 3. Water Management 4. Plant Adaptation to Climate Change 5. Animal Health, Production and Biosecurity 6. Regional, Social and Economic Adaptation and Assessment.

The Network is now working to develop a new website.

## Summer scholarships awarded in water



This summer four research students conducted valuable research into the future biological and cultural effects of climate change on Australia's freshwater bodies and water sustainability practices. This research, funded by the Water Resources and

Freshwater Biodiversity Adaptation Research Network's 12 week Summer Scholarship scheme, provided a valuable opportunity for these students to continue their research, and significant information to help explore future methodologies in water and climate change research.

- Melissa Klampt, Monash University: "Predicting climate change impacts on the iconic monotreme: the platypus, *Ornithorhynchus anatinus*"
- Ben Taylor, USQ: "Extension of Taylor's Hyetology Index – Increasing the accuracy of national rainwater harvesting reliability estimates"
- Janelle Albertson, University of Adelaide: "Do low nutrients from low inflows constrain metabolism in the lower River Murray?"
- Michael Sammonds, University of Melbourne: "Predicting current and future distributions of riparian plant species in Victoria using boosted regression trees."

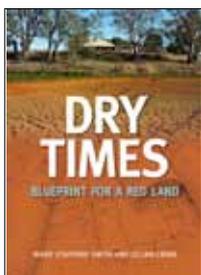
# What's new in climate adaptation publishing



## *Australia's Biodiversity and Climate Change*

Will Steffen (lead author)  
CSIRO Publishing, Australia  
ISBN: 9780643096059 - AU \$69.95  
This book provides an important reference for policy makers, researchers, students, environmental NGOs, NRM managers and private landholders interested in biodiversity conservation.

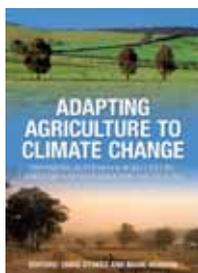
It explores new challenges for management policy development and institutional design, building on a detailed analysis of the interactions between a changing climate and Australia's threatened biodiversity.



## *Dry Times*

Mark Stafford Smith and Julian Cribb  
ISBN: 9780643095274 - AU \$49.95  
CSIRO Publishing, Australia  
*Dry Times* provides new insights into how desert environments and institutions work and the effects on people living in them. It shows that the desert offers solutions to the challenges of living with uncertainty, teaching us new ways to live, manage

scarce resources, and cope with climatic extremes, isolation and lack of water and energy. These are lessons relevant to cities and entire nations as resource scarcity and climate change intensify.



## *Adapting Agriculture to Climate Change*

Chris Stokes and Mark Howden (Eds)  
CSIRO Publishing, Australia  
ISBN: 9780643095953 - AU \$59.95  
A fundamental resource for primary industry professionals, land managers, policy makers, researchers and students. With contributions from more than 30 authors the book presents climate change implications and adaptation options for key industries.



## *Adaptive Governance and Climate Change*

Ronald D Brunner and Amanda H Lynch, American Meteorological Society Publishing  
ISBN 13: 9781878220974 - US \$35.00  
This book provides a political and historical analysis of climate change policy, shows how adaptive governance has worked in communities and makes the case for

adaptive governance as a complementary approach in the climate change regime.

## Adaptation Research Network contacts:

**Terrestrial Biodiversity** co-convened by Assoc Professor Stephen Williams (JCU), and Professor Lesley Hughes (Macquarie). Contact: [stephen.williams@jcu.edu.au](mailto:stephen.williams@jcu.edu.au) / [lhughes@rna.bio.mq.edu.au](mailto:lhughes@rna.bio.mq.edu.au)

**Water Resources & Freshwater Biodiversity** convened by Professor Stuart Bunn (Griffith). Contact: [s.bunn@griffith.edu.au](mailto:s.bunn@griffith.edu.au)

**Marine Biodiversity & Resources** convened by Assoc Professor Neil Holbrook (UTas). Contact: [neil.holbrook@utas.edu.au](mailto:neil.holbrook@utas.edu.au)

**Human Health** convened by Professor Tony Capon (ANU). Contact: [tony.capon@anu.edu.au](mailto:tony.capon@anu.edu.au)

**Settlements & Infrastructure** convened by Assoc Professor Ron Cox (UNSW). Contact: [r.cox@unsw.edu.au](mailto:r.cox@unsw.edu.au)

**Primary Industries** convened by Professor Snow Barlow (Melbourne) Contact: [s.barlow@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:s.barlow@unimelb.edu.au)

**Emergency Management** convened by Professor John Handmer (RMIT). Contact: [john.handmer@rmit.edu.au](mailto:john.handmer@rmit.edu.au)

**Social, Economic & Institutional Dimensions** convened by Assoc Professor Jon Barnett (Melbourne). Contact: [jbarn@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:jbarn@unimelb.edu.au)

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