

THE WRAP:NEWS

INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURES VOL.9 NO.2 FEB10

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New postgraduate researchers step up



This month we welcomed six new students to our postgraduate program with an induction morning designed by students who started with us last year.

This year's intake brings some highly talented students from diverse backgrounds including the visual arts, contaminated land remediation, media studies, educational pedagogy, international aid, and legislative and policy framework development into the ISF program.

Their research topics range across the broad spectrum of the field of sustainability.

However, the common thread will be the need to work across multiple disciplines to address complex societal problems. This year's intake brings our total student number to the largest it has ever been (24 students) which can only further enliven the activities designed to support them including an annual residential retreat, GAS groups (groups for accountability and support), workshops and seminars.

The research done by our postgraduate students sits beside the contract research done by our staff for external clients. Our goal is to create an integrated community of scholars across postgraduates and research staff. We do this through the supervisory relationship, co-authoring of research papers and our weekly Roundtables where staff and students present ideas of mutual interest and discuss them together.

The students joining us this year and their topics:

Johannes Behrisch (Masters candidate) Implementing sustainability principles into the design of electric and electronic equipment.

Richard Cuskelly (PhD candidate) Risk communication between local government and Australian communities.

Welcome to The Wrap

Our monthly newsletter for clients, research partners and others who are interested in the Institute for Sustainable Futures.

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THINKK: a kangaroo think tank for UTS

Whilst we have great affection for the kangaroo as an Australian icon and one of the animals featured on our coat of arms, there are many other perceptions of this unique species.

The kangaroo is also regarded by many as a pest that needs to be managed through culling, indeed approximately two to six million kangaroos are killed annually, the largest annual terrestrial cull on Earth, for pet food and human consumption. More recently there is an emerging view that they are a resource to be exploited for the benefit of the environment. Others have expressed concern about the collateral impact in terms of animal welfare as a result of the suffering of kangaroos, pouch young and young at foot as a consequence of cull practices.

This is therefore a contested issue, and in research terms, a 'wicked problem', requiring analysis across a number of dimensions and using a range of disciplines. Such problems are common in sustainability, and the Institute for Sustainable Futures is therefore pleased to announce the establishment of a Kangaroo think tank (THINKK) at UTS to address the issue.

THINKK is supported by a generous donation from the Sherman Foundation and is a new and innovative think tank established to undertake independent research on kangaroos in Australia. It aims to reconnect the Australian community to kangaroos in a sustainable landscape and promote the wellbeing of kangaroo populations, to include their perspective. THINKK will explore the potential for sustainable coexistence, non-lethal management, environmental sustainability and the implications of the cull and of the exploitation of kangaroos as a resource.

The Institute will bring its expertise in multi-stakeholder engagement to the process

to provide insight into stakeholder values and drivers – including those of farmers, local, state and federal government, indigenous communities, conservation organisations, animal protection organisations and land management entities. Preferred scenarios and visioning for the future will be developed with key stakeholders to develop effective strategies and policies that can meet the needs of farmers and natural resource managers while also ensuring a high standard of animal welfare. Comprehensive stakeholder engagement is vital to ensure the best outcomes for stakeholders, the wider community and all species of kangaroos and wallabies. One of the objectives of the Think Tank will be to develop policy recommendations, based on sound science, and to empower policy makers to look at alternative management practices. This will help build a reputation for sustainable co-existence with our unique and incredible wildlife.

The outcomes of the research will be presented through publications, a web presence and associated published resources, and the engagement of key stakeholders through workshops and policy recommendations.

The think tank will be governed by a Research Advisory Committee comprising of macropod experts, Dr Dror Ben-Ami and Dr Daniel Ramp, and sustainability experts from ISF, Professor Stuart White and Dr Roel Plant. Expert advisors, macropod expert Dr David Croft and pioneering animal welfare expert Christine Townsend, will inform and refine THINKK's research priorities and content. A part time policy Research Fellow will conduct research and write papers to be published on the website and in peer reviewed journals. Advertising for a part-time research fellow will commence shortly. Research grants and philanthropic support will be sought to sustain the think tank and its research.

Dana nails it



Postgraduate student Dana Cordell has just completed her thesis under a co-tutelle agreement with Linköping University in Sweden. This has required her to meet the requirements of both university systems including the Swedish ritual of 'Spikning' (Nailing) her thesis to the tree of knowledge.

Dana explains: "After 20 boxes of my thesis books were delivered last week the Dean signed a book declaring it 'nail worthy' and I then proceeded to literally nail my thesis to 'the tree of knowledge' in the foyer of the university central administration building. What a fantastic feeling as the nordic wrought iron nail pierced the skin of the book and the sound of hammer hitting nail echoed through the corridors." The thesis is now declared public for anyone to scrutinize before the Public Defense at the end of February.



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Copenhagen: the wash up



Jenny Kent at the UTS/UNSW booth displaying the reports from WWViews Australia. see [Oct09 Wrap](#) for more.

Jenny Kent, a PhD student at ISF researching climate change and responsibility, writes about her experience as one of two UTS delegates accredited to attend the formal proceedings of COP15 climate talks as well as the rich mix of civil society and cultural events that were drawn to Copenhagen for two weeks from 7th-19th December 2009.

The number and diversity of NGOs taking part in Copenhagen from across the world was one of the stand-out features. Apart from the formal proceedings (many of which take place in closed sessions), there were hundreds of side events held within the Bella Center itself as well as exhibition space to showcase the climate change work and interests of governments and NGOs alike. Some of these areas were also hothouses for both formal and informal action throughout the two weeks. CANA International, the largest international ENGO amused crowds each day with their fossil of the day award; the Climate Justice fasters were blogging from the Bella Center; and there was an extremely active youth presence, including the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, that were utilizing their skills in social networking and online advocacy to bring issues to light through spot actions and live video streaming.

The outcome of COP15 is seen as largely disappointing to the research, environment and general communities I believe. The Copenhagen Accord which was 'noted' at the final plenary represents a non-binding politi-

cal agreement, thereby falling well short of the stated intentions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as well as the call for a fair, ambitious and binding treaty from civil society groups. The Accord was 'noted' as the UNFCCC process requires unanimous agreement which could not be reached.

A number of developing countries, including Tuvalu strongly disagreed with the content of the Accord and more specifically the process in which it was presented and discussed. The Accord has some provisions which could potentially lead to higher emission reduction commitments from both developed and developing nations but there is no compulsion on countries to sign onto the Accord, provide targets or to commit to them.

A significant feature of the Accord is the commitment to funding from developed countries to assist developing nations in adaptation and mitigation. Short-term financing approaching \$30 billion dollars for 2010-2012 has been promised, ramping up to US\$100 billion per year by 2020. This result on financing is probably the most promising outcome of the climate talks, provided countries actually put the money on the table! Other outcomes related to red-light issues such as LULUCF (land use, land change and forestry) and REDD (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation) although progressed during the talks will also await agreement at the next COP scheduled for Mexico in November-December this year.

So in summary COP15 in Copenhagen was an anti-climax, leaving most of the pressing issues in securing a binding global agreement to reduce the risk of catastrophic climate change until the next meeting in Mexico late this year.

For more about Jenny's thoughts on Copenhagen see her blog at: <http://greenpublicsphere.wordpress.com>

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Judith Friedlander (Masters candidate) Media strategies in sustainability and climate change.

Tania Leimbach (Masters candidate) Cause and effect: education for the seventh generation.

Danielle Murphy Durland (PhD candidate) Re-envisioning participation: operationalising the voices of the poor.

Wilhelmus Van Deur (PhD candidate) The role of and strategic environmental assessment and environmental impact assessment in the sustainable management of contaminated land in the Asia Pacific region.

