

Sustainability Research Centre Newsletter

The impact of engaging communities for change



Specialising in applied research, SRC founding member, Associate Professor Dr Claudia Baldwin focusses on engaging communities for change. In 2018, with the benefit of research grants, her research supported local people in our own region to progress toward sustainability.

Using collaborative methods of research and partnering with local organisations has increased the impact of Dr Baldwin's research. Research affiliates immediately benefit from these studies. For example, the Queensland Seafood Industry Association is implementing the community engagement strategy developed as a result of investigating social acceptance of SEQ's wild catch commercial fishing industry. Maleny Neighbourhood Centre used research findings from a study on age-friendly co-housing for Maleny seniors to develop potential co-housing designs. Country Noosa used Dr Baldwin's research to develop concept papers to guide development of collaborative sustainable rural enterprise opportunities in the Noosa Biosphere Reserve's Hinterland.



Summer 2018

Inside this issue

HDR excellence..... 2

*USC-Brock PhD sustainability scholarship..... 3

*Social licence to fish..... 3

*Innovative co-housing solutions..... 3

Collaborations with the Cambodian Government... 4

*Research to inform a Rural Enterprise Plan for Noosa Biosphere Reserve hinterland..... 5

Recent publications..... 6

** Articles courtesy of Cindy Peger, a recent visiting Science Journalist intern at the SRC.*



Sustainability Research Centre: Transforming Regions

AAA representation

HDR student, Kate Greenwood presented at the joint AAA/NZAA conference. During the conference, she was nominated to become the Queensland Representative for the Australian Archaeological Association (AAA) that was passed at the AGM.

She is aware that people share an interest in the close association between archaeology and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in their research and suggests she may be able to offer assistance in this as part of her new role.

Kate is hoping to push for more recognition of Indigenous rights whilst in the role.

Professor Patrick Nunn launches new book

Patrick Nunn's new book, *The Edge of Memory* (London, Bloomsbury Sigma), was launched at the Brisbane Writers Festival in September 2018. He was also interviewed on 'Conversations with Richard Fidler' and 'A Matter of Fact with Stan Grant'. Pictured to the right, Patrick is seated at the book launch with Suzy Wilson.

Excellence in HDR Leadership award

PhD student, Francisco Gelves-Gómez, with other HDR student representatives at USC, received the "Excellence in HDR Leadership" award. The award was presented by the Associate Deans of research Professor Marion Gray and Associate Professor Brent Moyle, recognising Francisco's work and efforts to develop and support the HDR community and research culture at USC.

Francisco said that he was honoured to receive the award and looks forward to continuing his work in 2019. He also invites all HDR students in the SRC to become active members of the HDR community at USC.



Francisco (second from the left) is pictured with the other awardees (Dale Mitchell, Angela Hinz, Sam van Holsbeeck and Jessica Levick-Hayes) and the new Dean of Graduate Studies, Associate Professor Brent Moyle

Pictured to the right, HDR student, Jack Koci received the Research Celebration Award for Emerging Talented HDR student in the category of Arts, Business and Law in November 2018.



USC-Brock PhD Sustainability Scholarship awarded to Lisa McIlwain



PhD student Lisa McIlwain has been awarded the USC Brock PhD scholarship in Sustainability. The scholarship, in response to ongoing collaboration between the University of the Sunshine Coast and Brock University (Canada), was developed to enable research on sustainability issues affecting both the northern and southern hemispheres. Lisa's research will explore opportunities to strengthen social-ecological resilience as a strategy of climate change adaptation, under a supervisory panel of Associate Professor Claudia Baldwin from the SRC, and Professor Gary Pickering from the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre at Brock University.

Originally from Belzig, Germany, Lisa is relocating to the Sunshine Coast from New South Wales where she has been living and working recently. This is not Lisa's first academic experience in Australia. During her Bachelor studies in Geographical Science at the Freie University Berlin, she completed a CSIRO traineeship at the eco-science precinct in Brisbane, and returned to Brisbane in 2016 for an exchange semester at the University of Queensland during her Master studies in Environmental Policy and Planning.

Her PhD research will focus on social change as a vehicle to build adaptive capacity in all sectors of society and aims to identify ways to reduce vulnerability without compromising sustainable transition.

Innovative co-housing solutions to a local housing crisis: helping older Australians 'age in place'

As part of a project run by Maleny Neighbourhood Centre and funded by a Queensland Government age-friendly community grant, Dr Baldwin explored the complexities of co-housing as one solution for an affordable housing shortage in Maleny. Few would be aware that the picturesque hinterland town faces a genuine housing crisis.

In conjunction with local Maleny resident and PhD candidate Kelli Dendle, Dr Baldwin worked with local seniors, community support workers, legal and financial professionals, and design and construction experts to identify needs for, and acceptability of, low-cost co-housing options to support aging in place in Maleny.

She found potential co-sharers need to be engaged in co-housing arrangements early to have some control over decision making, including with whom they live. Design considerations were important, but social, legal, and financial matters relating to entering, maintaining and leaving a co-sharing commitment were of greater concern to seniors, with compatibility, security and affordability the most significant. Residents want a secure home for the long term, but co-housing development is complex and in Maleny it faces numerous challenges.

Maleny Neighbourhood Centre used the information to develop four design options incorporating either a new build construction or a retrofit modification of an existing dwelling.

Dr Baldwin says that co-housing could be of tremendous social benefit to people aged 50 and over in this South East Queensland community, but the research is applicable to regional and rural communities throughout Australia.

Social Licence to Fish - investigating the social acceptance of SEQ's wild catch commercial fishing industry

Associate Professor Claudia Baldwin worked with the Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSEA) to investigate the social acceptance of South East Queensland's coastal wild catch commercial fishing industry. The Fisheries Research & Development Corporation (FRDC) funded project, aims to improve industry engagement with the broader community and in turn, improve SEQ's wild catch fishing industry's Social Licence to Operate.

Working with commercial fishers in three case study areas (Gold Coast, Moreton Bay and Tin Can Bay), Dr Baldwin and research assistant Sarah Connor, used the *Photovoice* research technique to understand why the industry has a low level of approval and acceptance within the community. Dr Baldwin says, *Photovoice* is a particularly engaging and innovative research method, effective for gaining insight into deeply held values. It has been used in a range of contexts to create a shared vision, develop a consensus among participants and enable dialogue so that people better understand each other's perspectives. In this case, it is providing empowering opportunities for commercial fishers to 'show and tell' their stories about an often misunderstood industry.

A photographic exhibition, combining photos taken by SEQ's commercial fishers with captions expressing their views and concerns was displayed in each of the fishing communities participating in the project. Themes included quality seafood, sustainability, professionalism and skills, and community and family. Dr Baldwin said she was impressed with the effort made by commercial fishermen over the past decades to improve sustainability and professionalism of the fishery.

In addition to providing opportunities for commercial fishers to express their views, the project elicited stakeholder perspectives on SEQ's wild catch commercial fishery. The research showed that better communication and engagement would enable the industry to demonstrate its commitment to ensuring the sustainability of our marine resources.



Unsure of what the future holds, but more women are becoming involved in the industry



Overseas tourists are enthusiastic about the quality of our fresh sustainability caught seafood

Continuing collaborations with the Cambodian Government

For 10-years the SRC has been working with Ministries of the Royal Government of Cambodia on research and capacity building projects. These have usually been funded by the Cambodian Government, the Asia Pacific Network for Global Change Research and various Australian Government grant sources. The relationships developed have enabled 5 HDR studies and the opportunity for more than 40 undergraduates to gain international research experience in Cambodia.

Research informed policy in Cambodia

In December 2018, Professor Bill Carter with Adjunct Professor Noel Scott conducted a two-day workshop in Battambang for the Cambodian Ministry of Tourism on research to inform policy. The introductory workshop drew on case studies presented by Noel and Bill as well as from researchers from the University of Battambang, the Royal University of Phnom Penh and the School of Economics (STIESIA) Surabaya, Indonesia. The more than 100 participants were from the provincial departments of tourism. Pre-workshop assessment of needs highlighted the capacity building requirements of the Ministry. Nearly half of the participants thought there was no need for new or clarified policy, and around 20% thought there was no additional research needed to assist them in their work role. Thirty per cent thought research to inform tourism planning was a priority, but nearly a quarter indicated no need for additional research.

This workshop was the final for the year and adds to the ASEAN funded Interpreting Natural and Cultural Heritage, Towards Quality Guiding and Satisfied Tourists held in Siem Reap from 6-9 March 2018 and the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation funded Training-Of-Trainers Workshop on the ASEAN Community-Based Tourism Standard, Level 1: Establishment

and Community-based Assessment held in Siem Reap from 8-12 May 2018.

Sustainable tourism in the Kep Archipelago

In September 2018, Professor Bill Carter and four students, as part of SUS310 (Sustainability Problem Solving), worked with a counterpart team from the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), led by Mr Khun Kakda, to develop guidelines for sustainable tourism in the Kep Archipelago, Cambodia. Funding was provided through the Australian Government's New Colombo Plan and the Cambodian Ministry of Tourism. The research involved an asset inventory and stakeholder surveys that focused on waste management and the capacity of the local community to transition to a tourism economy.

Solid waste management is problematic with no collection service for the fisher communities living on the islands. This is exacerbated by huge amounts of plastics, probably emanating from the Mekong River, deposited on the beaches with each high tide. Sensible environmental regulations to ban burning of plastic has a perverse outcome. Without a waste collection service, plastic is added to beaches and island communities just don't care! There is evidence of depression in island communities about the futility of any stewardship actions and lack of pride in their island homes.

Fishers are receiving around USD600 per year. Around 25% of fisher families have a member who has migrated to the cities or Thailand for work; most are women. Catch is lower than 5-years ago and smaller in size and diversity. Butterflyfish <10cm are in bulk sales. Reefs are dominated by massive corals (almost exclusively), with low fish numbers and diversity, probably the result of sediment and nutrient loads and overfishing. There were no reported sightings of whale shark and dugong in the last 5-years (although regular before this). Dolphin sightings are reported to be rare.

Pictured to the right:
The USC-RUPP Team heading
out to inventory island assets
and interview the fishing
community.



Pictured to the left:
Strand litter on Koh
Pou, Kep Province,
Cambodia.



Research to inform a Rural Enterprise Plan for Noosa Biosphere Reserve hinterland

Noosa Shire was proclaimed Queensland's first Biosphere Reserve in 2007. Funded by a Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation Big Ideas grant to Country Noosa, Dr Baldwin investigated innovative collaborations to support the region's economic and social development and the sustainable use of its natural resources.

UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program is designed to deal with one of the most important questions the world faces today: How can we reconcile the conservation of biodiversity, the quest for economic and social development and the maintenance of associated cultural values? (UNESCO Seville). There is no single model for running these voluntary, co-operative reserves; each has its own local system of governance. However, an integral aspect is supporting 'Science for Sustainability' through working in partnership with local communities to pursue integrated sustainable development.

From a series of community workshops organised by Country Noosa, and a land use survey developed by Dr Baldwin, she found a genuine commitment among Noosa's Hinterland residents to sustainable land use and collaborative approaches to low key development. She found that many residents are interested in sharing knowledge, labour and equipment. The need for physical assistance is the greatest constraint to expanding their rural enterprise, ahead of technical training, cost and finance issues and receiving land management and production advice.



Visiting GIS academic, Dr Jeff Hamerlinck from University of Wisconsin, also worked on the project, updating rural land use data and mapping.

Country Noosa's next step is to use the information to develop an environmentally and economically sustainable rural enterprise plan for the Noosa Hinterland to support new business opportunities. There is real potential for co-operative models of land management and resource sharing to enhance opportunities for local people. Dr Baldwin concluded that, 'Rural residents are well-positioned to build on Biosphere Reserve principles'.

Community workshop in Cooroy

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The Sustainability Research Centre

Our niche area for the Sustainability Research Centre (SRC) is societal adaptation – more specifically, understanding the social dimensions of environmental change.

We contribute knowledge to a range of sustainability issues such as coastal management, climate change, and water resources management (recognised as significant at local through to international scales).

The SRC includes over 70 researchers (including over 40 PhD students): <http://www.usc.edu.au/research-and-innovation/sustainability-and-environment/sustainability-research-centre/research-students>

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