



AAH Policy

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED IN RELATION TO THE AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRE SEASON 2019-20 22 May 2020

The [Australian Academy of the Humanities](http://www.humanities.org.au) (AAH) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee inquiry into 'Lessons to be learned in relation to the Australian bushfire season 2019-20' (the Inquiry).

The Academy is the national body for the humanities in Australia. Our work aims to ensure ethical, historical and cultural expertise informs discussions regarding Australia's future challenges and opportunities.

Our submission to the Inquiry specifically addresses:

- Term of Reference (g): *The role and process of advising Government and the federal Parliament of scientific advice.*

Information relevant to other Inquiry ToRs can be found in our recent submission to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements which is attached for the Committee's reference.

Submission Summary

- Current mechanisms for providing research-based advice into government are principally focused on science and technology.
- Better understanding of bushfires, community responses, resilience and rebuilding requires expertise from across the research system – cultural, social, scientific and technological.
- Limiting the advice to authorities, agencies, governments and the federal parliament to only scientific expertise risks creating silos of activity and knowledge, and leaves Australia less well equipped to prepare for future bushfires and other disasters.
- The Learned Academy structure in Australia provides an ideal mechanism for facilitating and providing advice into government – it is what these organisations are constituted to do – and each Academy has unique access to expertise in their disciplinary domains.
- The Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA), the forum which brings together the Learned Academies to collaborate on issues that require multidisciplinary expertise, is another mechanism for advice for government that demands a broader range of expertise than any one Academy alone can provide.
- Establishing a national ethics authority, modelled on those that exist internationally, could help increase community trust in the institutions that are charged with decision-making and managing the response.

AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF THE HUMANITIES

1.1 Introduction

In the aftermath of the Australian bushfire season 2019-20, and in the context of the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic, the AAH recognises the urgent need for:

1. the right research advice to reach decision-makers in a timely manner; and
2. decision-makers to have access to the full range of research needed to inform policy development.

The Inquiry's terms of reference which focusses on "the role and process of advising Government and the federal Parliament of scientific advice" risks missing the expertise from humanities, arts and social science (HASS) researchers, and Indigenous knowledges, who together constitute almost half of Australia's research system.¹

1.2 Expertise required to address bushfires and other natural disasters

The cultural and social research produced by HASS and Indigenous researchers is at the heart of addressing the challenges of disaster recovery and community resilience. These fields focus on:

- the cultural, historical and political factors that have shaped bushfire management in Australasia;
- Indigenous land use, management, and cultural burning practices;
- social, emotional and cultural impacts of natural disasters and rapid climate change;
- community recovery and resilience through cultural and creative activities;
- emergency linguistics for Australia's multicultural population;
- robust media and communications for extreme events; and
- addressing barriers to digital access, equity and safe and secure engagement with online platforms and apps.

1.3 Gaps in the mechanisms for research advice

There is currently no formal mechanism to facilitate cultural, social and ethics research into federal government and parliament. Current mechanisms are principally focused on science and technology. Through the Chief Scientist, and networks of science advisors, there are ambassadors and pathways for ensuring the best science-based advice can reach decision-makers.²

The Academy believes this presents a significant risk and a missed opportunity for the nation. While science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) research specialisations are important inputs into the process, they cannot alone solve problems of the magnitude of the bushfires – and now COVID-19. Issues which require long-term cultural change and community buy-in must be informed by expertise that resides in HASS, and custodians of Indigenous knowledges.

Our current system for advice into government and the parliament essentially cuts HASS and Indigenous research out of the direct policy pathway and is not making the most strategic use of public investment in this research.

1.4 Opportunities

1.4.1. Australia's Learned Academies

The Learned Academy structure in Australia provides an existing, independent mechanism for advice and they could be leveraged to greater effect by government.³

The Australian Academy of the Humanities, and the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, are the two constituent organisations which have direct knowledge of and access to Australia's experts across the broad disciplinary fields that cover ethical, social and cultural research. The Australian Academy of Science, and the Academy of Technology and Engineering together provide STEM advice on issues of national importance.

The Learned Academies also have a formal mechanism for issues that require multidisciplinary advice: the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA), a forum which brings together the Learned Academies and their combined strength of 3000 Fellows (members elected for excellence in research and practice) to collaborate on projects that require multidisciplinary expertise.⁴ ACOLA has produced a series of reports for government on a diverse range of complex issues facing the nation, such as the development of ethical AI, the future of agriculture, smart engagement with Asia, and a framework for responsible advancement of synthetic biology.

ACOLA is well placed to act as an advisory body like its counterpart in Canada, the Council of Canadian Academies (CCA). The CCA, for example, has been tasked by government to assemble a distinguished panel to enhance the resilience of Canadian communities by better integrating climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction efforts.⁵

The Academies also work with other research sector organisations for issue-specific responses, such as the Rapid Research Information Forum for COVID-19.⁶ Dealing predominately with medical and health-related research, it also tackles societal issues like 'what motivates people to download and continue to use the COVIDSafe app' (a report led by our Academy) or the impacts of online education on learning outcomes (led by our counterpart, the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia).

1.4.2. A national ethics authority

In crises, and during recovery, it is vital that communities have trust in the institutions that are charged with decision-making and managing the response. Robust institutions underpinned by democratic values will engender greater community trust in policy solutions and actions. We point to two international models as a guide for providing independent evidence-based ethics advice and suggest that Australia has the opportunity to adapt or pursue its own model.

- a. Germany's Ethics Council, which, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, has released a report *Solidarity and Responsibility During the Coronavirus Crisis* (April 2020) with ten recommendations.⁷

- b. The UK's Nuffield Council on Bioethics, "an independent body that informs policy and public debate about the ethical questions raised by biological and medical research".⁸

¹ Turner, G., and Brass, K. (2014) Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia. Australian Academy of the Humanities, Canberra. <https://www.humanities.org.au/issue-item/mapping-humanities-arts-social-sciences-australia/>

² Chief Scientist, <https://www.chiefscientist.gov.au/>

³ Australia's Learned Academies, <https://acola.org/about-us/member-academies/>

⁴ Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA), <https://acola.org/>

⁵ CAA Appoints Expert Panel on Natural Disaster Resilience, <https://cca-reports.ca/cca-appoints-expert-panel-on-natural-disaster-resilience/>

⁶ Rapid Research Information Forum, <https://www.science.org.au/covid19/rapid-research-information-forum>

⁷ German Ethics Council (April 2020), *Solidarity and Responsibility During the Coronavirus Crisis* <https://www.ethikrat.org/en/press-releases/2020/solidarity-and-responsibility-during-the-coronavirus-crisis/>

⁸ Nuffield Council on Bioethics, <https://www.nuffieldbioethics.org/>



AAH Policy

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO NATIONAL NATURAL DISASTER ARRANGEMENTS APRIL 2020

1 Introduction

The [Australian Academy of the Humanities](#) (AAH) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements (the Commission).

The Academy is the national body for the humanities in Australia, championing the contribution humanities, arts and culture make to national life. Our work aims to ensure ethical, historical and cultural perspectives inform discussions regarding Australia's future challenges and opportunities.

Our submission chiefly addresses **the issue of decision-making, and specifically the evidence, research and expertise we need to mobilise in order to draw lasting lessons from the 2019-20 Australian bushfires**; to recover economically and socially from these unprecedented events; and to prepare for the future.

In our response we reflect also on the COVID-19 pandemic, which presents new threats to recovery and compounds existing impacts on bushfire-affected communities. Some of our comments on this unfolding crisis are pertinent to the role of communities in recovery.

Below we outline key issues and areas where humanities expertise stands to make a major contribution to "Australia's preparedness, resilience, and response to natural disasters, across all levels of government". It specifically, addresses the following terms of reference:

- b) Australia's arrangements for improving resilience and adapting to changing climactic conditions
- f) coordination, accountability and data sharing
- h) mechanisms for facilitating timely communication of information, of the furnishing of evidence.
- i) appropriate arrangements for information-sharing in relation to any other inquiries or reviews.

2 Recommendations for consideration

In launching this Commission, the Prime Minister asked: “what actions should be taken to enhance our preparedness, resilience and recovery through the actions of all levels of government and the community, for the environment we are living in.”¹

From the outset, this Commission has been envisaged as addressing a ‘whole of society’ agenda. As with COVID-19, recovery from major natural, ecological, health and social crises will involve all facets of Australia’s society and economy – across health, industry, education, trade, research and innovation sectors.

For Australia’s research sector, social and cultural expertise in the humanities and arts (together with the social sciences) will be key to understanding human experience and behaviour at times of disaster and crisis, both historical and contemporary. This includes:

- > developing practical actions to make Australians safer;
- > understanding the conditions that make for effective responses and resilient communities;
- > framing the questions to guide both research approaches and inform policy action; and
- > identifying opportunities to build resilience and assist recovery by developing trusted solutions with lasting social traction.

The Academy makes the follow recommendations:

1. Consider the establishment of a national ethics authority to bolster ethics-based advice into policy and planning processes at the highest levels of government.
2. Consider a formal mechanism to facilitate social and cultural research expertise into government, including Indigenous research and knowledge, akin to that provided by the Chief Scientist model for science-based advice.
3. Develop a map and register of multidisciplinary research capability relating to natural disaster response and recovery which could be mobilised both in the immediate aftermath of crises and in the mid to longer term.
4. Understand and address impacts on Indigenous communities.
5. Learn from Indigenous cultural advice and knowledge.
6. Mobilise creative and cultural stimulus for community and economic recovery – with a focus on social cohesion and connection, tourism, small business reconstruction, and opportunities for regional growth.

2.1 Maintain and strengthen democratic processes for ethical decision-making

In crises and during recovery it is vital that communities have trust in the institutions that are charged with decision-making and managing the response. Robust institutions underpinned by democratic values will engender greater community trust in policy solutions and actions.

¹ Prime Minister of Australia (20 February 2020) Media Release on the establishment of the Royal Commission, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/national-royal-commission-black-summer-bushfires-established>

We recommend to the Commission that it consider the role of a national ethics authority, akin to independent bodies internationally to bolster ethics-based advice into policy and planning processes at the highest levels of government to help build trust in policy solutions at times of crisis or disaster.

We point to two international models:

- > Germany's Ethics Council, which, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, has released a report *Solidarity and Responsibility During the Coronavirus Crisis* (April 2020) with ten recommendations.²
- > The UK's Nuffield Council on Bioethics, "an independent body that informs policy and public debate about the ethical questions raised by biological and medical research".³

Areas in which Australian humanities researchers are working and can contribute to this agenda include:

- > Ethical, inclusive and responsible decision making from individuals to institutions.
- > Public trust in collection and use of biometrics.
- > Technical, social, legal and contextual considerations of surveillance technologies.
- > Complex social and cultural modelling for mitigating risk, including existential risk.
- > Individual rights versus collective responsibilities.
- > Differential impacts of natural disaster on different social groups.

2.2 Translating research for evidence-based policy making

Australia needs research capabilities for the immediate, mid and longer term to address national disaster response, recovery, planning and community responsiveness – with capacity to contribute to immediate crisis-management through to multidisciplinary and multi-sector solutions for pro-active planning and recovery.

To be durable and adaptable these health, economic and social recovery efforts require the mobilisation of the entire research sector – not siloed along disciplinary lines. This matters from a policy perspective because research framed by different disciplinary inputs, social, cultural, scientific and medical, results in more holistic responses that better anticipates risk or negative or consequences of a particular course of action. Important work is being led by humanities and social science researchers through the Bushfires and Natural Hazards CRC, for example, but this has yet to be more broadly integrated into policy processes.⁴

One avenue for co-ordinating multidisciplinary research advice on national disaster response, recovery and resilience that could be harnessed by government is the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA).⁵ ACOLA is the forum which brings together the Learned Academies to collaborate on horizon scanning projects that require multidisciplinary expertise.

² German Ethics Council (April 2020), *Solidarity and Responsibility During the Coronavirus Crisis* <https://www.ethikrat.org/en/press-releases/2020/solidarity-and-responsibility-during-the-coronavirus-crisis/>

³ Nuffield Council on Bioethics, <https://www.nuffieldbioethics.org/>

⁴ This is a program of work led by Dr Jessica Weir who is based at the Institute for Culture and Society at the University of Western Sydney, see <https://www.bnhrcc.com.au/research/policy-economics-hazards/232>

⁵ Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA), <https://acola.org/>

ACOLA's counterpart in Canada, the Council of Canadian Academies (CCA), has been asked by their government to assemble a distinguished panel to explore opportunities to enhance the resilience of Canadian communities by better integrating climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction efforts.⁶

In the longer term a register of multidisciplinary research capability across these broad research priorities would provide a baseline of system-level advice which could be mobilised both in the immediate aftermath of crises and in the mid to longer term. Earlier this year, the AAH compiled advice for Office of the Chief Scientist on 'Mapping Australia's Research and Technology Capability Relevant to Bushfire Response, Resilience and Recovery' where we recommended broadening the map of capability to incorporate research expertise in areas where comparative approaches would be instructive. This would include natural disaster and hazards, climate change, water management, and responsiveness to extreme events.

The Academy would also point to a significant gap in facilitating timely policy advice to ensure that a relevant range of knowledge is drawn on and embedded in disaster management policy and practice. Australia does not have a formal mechanism to coordinate social and cultural research expertise into Government (unlike the role played by Chief Scientists for the science and technology advice or Chief Medical Officers for medical advice). **We therefore recommend the Commission consider a formal mechanism for providing social and cultural expertise, including Indigenous research and knowledge, in coordination with science-based advice into government.**

2.3 Humanities in a crisis – priorities for recovery

Our Academy is developing a comprehensive database of expertise relevant to disaster management and recovery so that we are better placed to advise governments on the expertise at their disposal in disaster planning and recovery. Areas of focus for humanities researchers include:

1. Cultural, historical and political factors that have shaped bushfire management in Australasia
2. Social, emotional and cultural impacts of rapid climate change
3. Human adaptation to climate change and natural disaster
4. Indigenous land use, management, culture burning practices
5. Frameworks for community recovery and resilience, including the role of arts and culture
6. Digital engagement and well-being for young people
7. Use of media and communications for extreme events, including digital access and equity.

At Attachment A, we have outlined some of this research expertise in more detail.

One immediate priority we wish to draw attention to the Commission is the impact of the 2019-20 bushfires on Indigenous Australians.

⁶ CAA Appoints Expert Panel on Natural Disaster Resilience, <https://cca-reports.ca/cca-appoints-expert-panel-on-natural-disaster-resilience/>

A recently released working paper from ANU demonstrates that Aboriginal people were among those most impacted by the 2019–2020 bushfires. Strategies for effective post-bushfire response must address the distinctive experience of these communities.⁷

Indigenous cultural knowledge needs to be at the forefront in community-led responses to recovery, and in providing leadership on environmental and cultural solutions, including cultural burning practices.

The Academy would also draw the Commission’s attention to another area of research and practice that is given less attention than its impact warrants, **the role of cultural workers in building (and re-building) social cohesion and connection and helping people make meaning of their experiences, which is vital to recovery and resilience.**⁸

The importance of creative and cultural industries to economic recovery in regional areas (often hard-hit by bushfires and other natural disasters) also warrants closer attention.

Here we would point to the research being led by Professor Stuart Cunningham AM FAHA, an Australian Cultural and Creative Activity Population Hotspot Analysis.⁹ In regional Queensland, for example, creative industries are bigger employers than both mining and agriculture. A report on Central West Queensland found “a very professional, resilient and sustainable tourism ecosystem which effectively links cultural and creative activity with heritage, science and cultural infrastructure as well as traditional industries such as agriculture.”

The report also found innovative responses to economic downturn caused by natural disasters, such as the emergence of creative microbusinesses through ‘farm wives’. Many ‘farm wives’ met their partners at university, then moved onto the partner’s family farm after graduating. Many of these women have never used the skills they acquired at university. With drought, women have re-activated their university training or their creative business ideas in order to generate off-farm income.”¹⁰

In the UK, there has been a strategic investment in a range of creative industries clusters through their industrial strategy.¹¹ Australia has yet to capitalise on the potential of digital capabilities in distribution, performance and exhibition in the cultural and creative industries.

We have attached a list of Fellows of our Academy and other humanities researchers whose expertise bears directly on this inquiry. The Academy would be pleased to facilitate connection to its Fellowship and broader networks of humanities, arts and cultural researchers in Australia and internationally.

⁷ Williamson, B, Markham, F & Weir, JK (2020), *Aboriginal Peoples and the Response to the 2019-2020 Bushfires*, <https://caep.cass.anu.edu.au/research/publications/aboriginal-peoples-and-response-2019-2020-bushfires>

⁸ Kate Fielding, ‘Cultural workers can roll up sleeves to heal our charred communities’, *The Australian*, 20 January 2020. [A New Approach](#) (ANA) is an independent think tank championing effective investment and return in Australian arts and culture. Funded by three philanthropic organisations: [The Myer Foundation](#), the [Tim Fairfax Family Foundation](#) and the [Keir Foundation](#). The Academy of the Humanities is the lead delivery partner.

⁹ See <https://research.qut.edu.au/dmrc/projects/australian-cultural-creative-activity-a-population-hotspot-analysis/>

¹⁰ See <https://research.qut.edu.au/creativehotspots/wp-content/uploads/sites/258/2020/04/Report-Central-West-FINAL-19-8-1.pdf>

¹¹ See <https://creativeindustriescusters.com/> The Arts and Humanities Research Council administers this program which is designed to accelerate R&D. The Story Futures cluster <https://creativeindustriescusters.com/clusters/storyfutures/> has mapped a ‘Gateway Cluster’ outside London and has focus is on connecting this infrastructure and building SME capability. See more here <https://www.storyfutures.com/about> and ‘R&D on demand’ here <https://www.storyfutures.com/creative-cluster/innovation-opportunities/help-on-demand>

ATTACHMENT A

Humanities expertise areas

There is important research being undertaken across all humanities fields from core humanities (history, philosophy, literature, archaeology) through to interdisciplinary work of humanities in connection with social sciences and technological and natural sciences.

Select examples of research capability in the humanities and affiliated research fields includes multi-disciplinary research clusters led by humanities, arts and social sciences (HASS) researchers:

- > Australian Research Council (ARC) Centre of Excellence for Biodiversity and Heritage (<https://epicaustralia.org.au/>)
- > University of Wollongong's Australian Centre for Culture, Environment, Society and Space (ACCESS), founded by Professor Lesley Head FAHA FASSA (<https://www.uow.edu.au/social-sciences/research/access/>)
- > Sydney Environment Institute (<http://sydney.edu.au/environment-institute/>), founded by former President of the Academy, Professor Iain McCalman AO FAHA (<https://sydney.edu.au/arts/about/our-people/academic-staff/iain-mccalman.html>)
- > Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University (<https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ics/home>) – whose work on community resilience and sustainability is profiled in the ARC's Impact Study 'Circles of Sustainability', see <https://dataportal.arc.gov.au/EI/Web/Impact/ImpactStudy/804>.
- > Young and Resilient Centre <https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/strategic-research-initiatives/young-and-resilient12.html> and Intergener8 Living Lab <https://www.intergener8-livinglab.com/>
- > We would also point to the role of research communities in documenting and archiving the human experience of extreme events. For example, in New Zealand, following the Christchurch earthquake, humanities practitioners at the University of Canterbury developed CEISMIC (<http://www.ceismic.org.nz/about>), a collaborative, open-access archive which provides federated access to a broad range of material gathered by [leading New Zealand cultural and educational institutions](#). The data portal/archive provides a “single place to understand, remember and research the Canterbury earthquakes of 2010 and 2011; a place where other communities can learn from our experiences”. Oral histories and testimonies are invaluable research collections for preparing for future extreme events.

The following list includes a selection of humanities researchers whose expertise directly relates to the Commission's Terms of Reference. Please note that the list is not exhaustive.”

Professor Warwick Anderson FAHA FASSA FAHMS FRSN

A historian of science, medicine and public health, focusing on Australasia, the Pacific, Southeast Asia and the United States. He works on race, human difference, and citizenship in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Relevant publications include: “American Exceptionalism Subtracted”, in Judith Smart and Joy Damousi (Eds.), *Contesting Australian History: Essays in Honour of Marilyn Lake*, (pp. 204-216), Monash University Press, 2019; *The Cultivation of Whiteness: Science, Health and Racial Destiny in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, 2002. See <https://sydney.edu.au/arts/about/our-people/academic-staff/warwick-anderson.html>

Dr Valerie Attenbrow FAHA

A Principal Research Scientist at the Australian Museum. Her research interests are Australian Aboriginal archaeology and prehistory focusing on subsistence, land and resource use patterns and stone tool technology, particularly in south-eastern Australia during the Holocene. These interests, as well as human responses to climate change and the impact of natural disasters, are reflected in her publications. See <https://australianmuseum.net.au/get-involved/staff-profiles/val-attenbrow/>

Professor Alison Bashford FBA FRSN FAHA

Research Professor in History and Director of the New Earth Histories Research Program at the University of New South Wales (UNSW): <https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/our-research/research-centres-institutes/research-networks/new-earth-histories-research-program>

Her work connects the history of science, global history, and environmental history into new assessments of the modern world, from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. She has recently focused on the geopolitics of world population, presented in two books: *The New Worlds of Thomas Robert Malthus: Re-reading the Principle of Population*, with Joyce E. Chaplin (Princeton University Press, 2016) and *Global Population: History, Geopolitics and Life on Earth* (Columbia University Press, 2014). See <https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/our-people/alison-bashford>

Professor Ken Gelder FAHA

A Professor of English and Theatre Studies at the University of Melbourne. He is Chief Investigator on the Australian Research Council funded project Eco-colonial Australian Literature and the Shaping of Australia’s Environmental Consciousness: <https://dataportal.arc.gov.au/NCGP/Web/Grant/Grant/DP170100355> See <https://findanexpert.unimelb.edu.au/profile/12929-ken-gelder>

Professor Tom Griffiths AO FAHA

A research leader in Australian social, cultural and environmental history, and comparative global environmental history (<https://history.cass.anu.edu.au/people/tom-griffiths>). Tom’s work on Victorian bushfires was profiled in the inaugural edition of the Academy’s journal *Humanities Australia*, see <https://www.humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/AAH-Hums-Aust-01-2010-Griffiths.pdf>

Professor Lesley Head FAHA FASSA

A geographer whose research examines human-environment relations. Her Australian Laureate Fellowship focused on cultural environmental research and “the missing link in

multidisciplinary approaches to sustainability”. See <https://findanexpert.unimelb.edu.au/profile/70857-lesley-head>

Professor Chris Healy FAHA

An internationally respected scholar in the fields of cultural studies and media, public history and memory studies, as well as a distinguished historian of Australian colonial and Aboriginal history. He is Chief Investigator on a project funded by the Australian Research Council entitled Remaking the Australian Environment Through Documentary Film and Television:

<https://dataportal.arc.gov.au/NCGP/Web/Grant/Grant/DP190101178> See <https://findanexpert.unimelb.edu.au/profile/16491-chris-healy>

Mr Darryl Kickett

Recipient of an Australian Research Council Discovery Indigenous project called ‘Healing People: Novel Nyungar Perspectives’, which “aims to investigate means of biodiversity conservation and human resilience in a global hotspot by advancing collaborations between Aboriginal environmental and cultural knowledges and Western science and humanities”:

<https://dataportal.arc.gov.au/NCGP/Web/Grant/Grant/IN200100039> See <https://staffportal.curtin.edu.au/staff/profile/view/darryl-kickett-78cf4423/>

Emeritus Professor Iain McCalman AO FRHS FRSN FASSA FAHA

An author, historian, and social scientist and a highly respected and award-winning professor of history and the humanities at the University of Sydney. McCalman has published numerous books and journal articles. His latest book, *The Reef: A Passionate History, from Captain Cook to Climate Change* was published in Australia and the USA. Beyond his research, he has been an historical consultant and narrator for the BBC, ABC, and other TV and film documentaries. His interest areas include the history of western environmental and cultural crises; scientific voyaging, ethnography, and environmentalism. He is currently the co-director at the Sydney Environment Institute: <http://sydney.edu.au/environment-institute/> See

<https://www.sydney.edu.au/arts/about/our-people/academic-staff/iain-mccalman.html>

Professor Ann McGrath AM FASSA FAHA

Distinguished Professor in the School of History at the Australian National University where she holds the 2017 Kathleen Fitzpatrick Laureate Fellowship. Between 2003-18, she occupied the post of inaugural Director of the Australian Centre for Indigenous History. McGrath is a historian of deep history, gender, colonialism, Indigenous relations and intermarriage in Australia and North America. Her current Australian Research Council funded project explores Indigenous landscapes of national and international significance:

<https://dataportal.arc.gov.au/NCGP/Web/Grant/Grant/LP100100427> See <https://history.cass.anu.edu.au/centres/acih/people/professor-ann-mcgrath>

Professor Heidi Norman

A leading researcher in the field of Australian Aboriginal political history. Her current Australian Research Council-funded project examines the ‘The Aboriginal land estate in New South Wales’ and aims to investigate Aboriginal economic activity via the first extensive place-based ethnographic study of New South Wales (NSW) Aboriginal Land Council. It examines approaches to managing lands for economic development and community benefit, especially the leveraging of communal land holdings for economic advancement as the return of land to the NSW Aboriginal community will escalate from 2017”,

<https://dataportal.arc.gov.au/NCGP/Web/Grant/Grant/IN180100025> See
<https://www.uts.edu.au/staff/heidi.norman>

Professor Jeremy Moss

A Professor of Political Philosophy at the University of New South Wales (UNSW). His current research focuses on climate justice, the ethics of renewable energy as well as the ethical issues associated with climate transitions. Professor Moss is Co-Director of the Practical Justice Initiative and leads the *Climate Justice* Research program at UNSW. He chaired the UNESCO working group on Climate Ethics and Energy Security. See <https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/our-people/jeremy-moss>

Dr Timothy Neale

Working on projects to identify how knowledge practices – Indigenous, non-indigenous and otherwise – are mobilised and transformed in relation to environments in peri-urban, rural and remote Australia. See <https://www.bnhrcc.com.au/news/blogpost/tneale/2019/coexisting-combustion-future-bushfire-management> and
<https://dataportal.arc.gov.au/NCGP/Web/Grant/Grant/DE190100233> See
<https://www.deakin.edu.au/about-deakin/people/tim-neale>

Professor Catherine Rigby FAHA

Director of the Research Centre for Environmental Humanities at Bath Spa University and Adjunct Professor at Monash University (Melbourne). Her expertise within the Environmental Humanities lies primarily in environmental literary studies, along with ecophilosophy, and ecology and religion. Rigby's influential work *Dancing with Disaster: Environmental Histories, Narratives, and Ethics for Perilous Times* (2015) examines the calamitous impacts of climate change that are beginning to be felt around the world today. See <https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/our-people/kate-rigby/>

Professor Libby Robin FAHA

An historian of science and environmental ideas. She is Emeritus Professor at the Fenner School of Environment and Society at the Australian National University. Professor Robin has published widely in the history of science, international and comparative environmental history, museum studies and the ecological humanities. *Boom and Bust: Bird Stories for a Dry Country* (2009) winner of the Whitley Medal for Australian zoology 2009, and *Future of Nature* (2013). Robin is a Co-convenor of Australian Environmental Humanities Hub: www.aehhub.org See <https://researchers.anu.edu.au/researchers/robin-ladq>

Professor Lynnette Russell FASSA FAHA

An anthropological historian, Professor and Director of Monash Indigenous Studies Centre and Deputy Director of the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Australian Biodiversity and Heritage <https://epicaustralia.org.au/team/professor-lynette-russell/> She has published widely in the areas of theory, Indigenous histories, post-colonialism and representations of race, museum studies and popular culture. See <https://research.monash.edu/en/persons/lynette-russell>

Professor Julian Thomas FAHA

Director of the new Australian Research Council (ARC) Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society. Director of the Technology, Communication and Policy Lab at

Digital Ethnography Research Centre and the Director for the Enabling Capability Platform for Social Change at RMIT. He is a researcher in digital media and the internet, including media, communications and information policy and the history of communications technologies. Relevant publications include the *Australian Digital Inclusion Index* (2016), *Internet on the Outstation* (Institute of Network Cultures, 2016), and *The Informal Media Economy* (Polity, 2015). See <https://digital-ethnography.com/team/julian-thomas/>

Distinguished Professor Sean Ulm FSA MAACAI FAHA

Professor of Archaeology at James Cook University and Deputy Director of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Australian Biodiversity and Heritage. Ulm's research focuses on persistent problems in the archaeology of northern Australia and the western Pacific where understanding the relationships between environmental change and cultural change using advanced studies of archaeological and palaeoenvironmental sequences are central to constructions of the human past. His work is credited for recasting the nature of coastal occupation models from the Holocene period by integrating accurate climate models with forensic analysis of coastal sites. Ulm is highly regarded for his coordination of multidisciplinary expertise in the investigation of the prehistoric coastal record. See <https://research.jcu.edu.au/portfolio/sean.ulm/>

Associate Professor Thom Van Dooren

Associate Professor and Australian Research Council Future Fellow (2017-2021) in the Department of Gender and Cultural Studies and the Sydney Environment Institute at the University of Sydney, and a Professor II at the Oslo School of Environmental Humanities, University of Oslo. His research is based in the broad interdisciplinary field of the environmental humanities, with particular grounding in environmental philosophy, cultural studies, and science and technology studies. His Australian Research Council funded project – Inhabiting Landscapes of loss in the Anthropocene – aims to explore the cultural, political and ethical dimensions of biodiversity loss in three of the world's 'extinction capitals' in an age of mass extinction: <https://dataportal.arc.gov.au/NCGP/Web/Grant/Grant/FT160100098> See <https://www.sydney.edu.au/arts/about/our-people/academic-staff/thom-van-dooren.html>

Dr Jessica Weir

Dr Jessica Weir investigates human-environment relations, justice, societal norms and public sector governance. Her research practice seeks to resituate humans within their environments, and more-than-humans within cultural and ethical domains. Dr Weir's research is in dialogue with human geography, Indigenous studies, decolonial studies, the environmental humanities, and science and technology studies. She is currently leading and co-leading two projects funded by the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre (BNHCRC): <https://www.bnhcrc.com.au/research/policy-economics-hazards/232> See https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ics/people/researchers/dr_jessica_weir