



CLIMATE JUSTICE AND LOSS AND DAMAGE IN THE PACIFIC CONFERENCE

WEDNESDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2025
THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY



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SYDNEY
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Sydney
Environment
Institute

Climate justice and loss and damage in the Pacific conference

Explore the urgent challenges of climate justice and loss and damage in the Pacific at a pivotal conference co-hosted by the Sydney Environment Institute and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development, Professor Surya Deva. This event highlights the challenges for climate-vulnerable communities and Small Island Developing States and reflects critically on the COP 29 outcomes, especially in the area of loss and damage.

The Sydney Environment Institute in partnership with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development will co-host a conference on climate justice and loss and damage in the Pacific. It addresses the urgent challenges of climate-induced disasters and their disproportionate impact on Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Timed to reflect on the outcomes of COP 29 and the [Special Rapporteur's landmark 'Climate Justice: loss and damage' report](#) to the UN General Assembly, this event brings together leading multidisciplinary researchers, practitioners, Pacific and Australian government officials, and civil society organisations. Discussions will focus on multispecies justice, civil society responses and self-organising communities, and climate finance and debt.

This conference aims to forge long-lasting research relationships between diverse stakeholders to discover meaningful pathways for advancing equity, justice, and sustainability for the most vulnerable. A Joint Statement will be released after the event.

This event is sponsored by the Sydney Environment Institute and Gilbert + Tobin.

Venue

Nelson Meers Foundation Auditorium, Level 3 (main entrance level)
Chau Chak Wing Museum, The University of Sydney, Camperdown, 2006

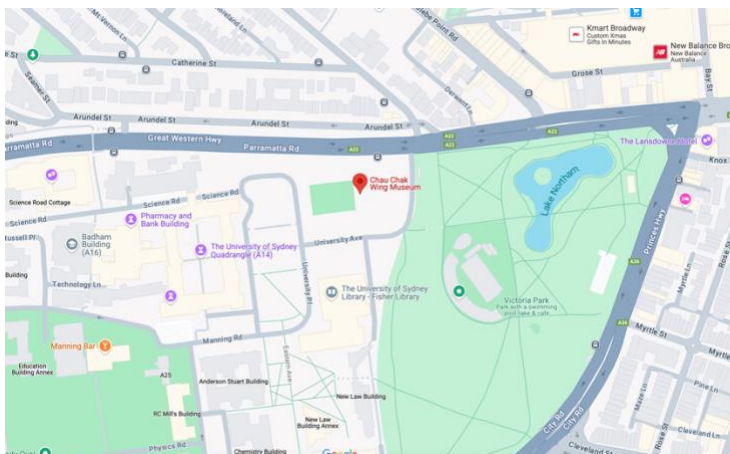
Getting to the Chau Chak Wing Museum

It's best to take public transport as parking on campus is limited and paid. Take a bus to the stop 'University of Sydney Main Gate, Parramatta Rd'.

For those staying at the [Adina Apartment Hotel Sydney Chippendale](#), it's a 15-minute walk to the venue.

Getting to the Nelson Meers Foundation Auditorium

1. Enter the Chau Chak Wing Museum (entrance on [University Place](#))
2. Walk straight past the Museum store on the right.
3. Turn left past the second double doors to find the Nelson Meers Foundation Auditorium



Program | Wednesday 12 February 2025

| Time (AEDT) | Item |
|-----------------|--|
| 8.45 – 9.00am | Registration |
| 9.00 – 9.45am | Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncle Michael West, Welcome to Country Professor Rosemary Lyster, Sydney Law School, University of Sydney Kirsten Andrews, Vice-Principal (External Engagement), University of Sydney Kristin Tilley, Ambassador for Climate Change, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Professor Surya Deva, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development |
| 9.45 – 10.40am | Keynote address <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Honourable Prof. Biman Prasad MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Fiji Ilona Millar, Partner, Gilbert + Tobin Associate Professor Siobhan McDonnell, Crawford School of Public Policy, The Australian National University Professor Rosemary Lyster (Chair), Sydney Law School, University of Sydney |
| 10.40 – 11.10am | Morning tea |
| 11.10 – 12.15pm | Session 1: Multispecies justice, loss and damage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr Scott Webster (Chair), Sydney Environment Institute, University of Sydney Professor Danielle Celermajor, Sydney Environment Institute, University of Sydney Associate Professor Ed Couzens, Sydney Law School, University of Sydney Professor Rosemary Lyster, Sydney Law School, University of Sydney |
| 12.20 – 1.35pm | Session 2: Civil society organisations and self-organising communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professor David Schlosberg (Chair), Sydney Environment Institute, University of Sydney Venaisi Uluilakeba, Coordinator of Pasifika Network on Loss and Damage Lavetanalagi Seru, climate justice activist and Grants Associate at Global Greengrants Fund Ulaiasi Tuikoro, Fijian climate activist Dr Rebecca McNaught, University Centre for Rural Health |
| 1.35 – 2.30pm | Lunch |
| 2.30 – 3.35pm | Session 3: Climate finance and debt, loss and damage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associate Professor Kate Owens (Chair), Sydney Law School, University of Sydney Finau Sogo, Manager, Pacific Resilience Facility Dr Magalie Masamba, law and policy advisor Dr Julia Dehm, La Trobe University |
| 3.35 – 3.45pm | Closing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professor David Schlosberg, Sydney Environment Institute, University of Sydney |
| 3.45 – 4.00pm | Afternoon tea |
| 4.00 – 4.30pm | Drafting the Joint Statement (<i>speakers only</i>) |

Speaker details

Welcome

Uncle Michael West is an Aboriginal man of the Gamilaroi Nation and a Cultural Representative of the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council. He is the Director of the NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce, Director of Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, and Co-Chair of the National Sorry Day Committee.

Rosemary Lyster is the Co-Theme Lead of the Climate Disaster and Adaptation Research Theme at the Sydney Environment Institute. She is a Professor of Climate and Environmental Law in the University of Sydney Law School and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law. In 2024, Rosemary was appointed a member of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development's Academic Circle supporting his mandate. Rosemary's special area of research expertise is Climate Justice and Disaster Law. Her publications include Rosemary Lyster and Robert M. Verchick (eds.) *Climate Disaster Law* (Edward Elgar: 2018) and *Rosemary Lyster Climate Justice and Disaster Law* (Cambridge University Press: 2015). Rosemary has been selected by the Australian Financial Review as one of the 2018 '100 Women of Influence' in the Public Policy category.

Kirsten Andrews is the Vice-Principal (External Relations) at the University of Sydney. The role is the University's strategic lead for externally facing activities, with responsibility for industry, government and community engagement, marketing and communications, media and public relations, museums and cultural engagement, events and student recruitment, admissions and mobility. Kirsten joined the University of Sydney in 2013 as Head of Media and PR before becoming Director of Media and Government Relations. She then spent three years as Chief of Staff to the Vice-Chancellor. Prior to joining the University, Kirsten held senior positions in government and the not-for-profit sector, including at the National Heart Foundation, as Chief of Staff to a federal minister, and Deputy Director of Communications to the Premier of New South Wales.

Kristin Tilley is Australia's Ambassador for Climate Change and plays a leading role in Australia's international climate diplomacy, with a focus on engaging with the Pacific and Southeast Asia. Prior to taking up this appointment in November 2022, Kristin held several senior positions in the Australian Government, including as head of the Office of Supply Chain Resilience in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and leading the Government's work on waste and recycling, including designing and implementing Australia's ban on the export of waste. Kristin has spent more than two decades working on international and domestic environment and climate change policies and programs, including as a senior adviser to Australia's Climate Change Minister.

Surya Deva is a Professor at the Macquarie Law School and Director of the Centre for Environmental Law and B&HR Access to Justice Lab at Macquarie University. Deva is an internationally recognised scholar in the field of business and human rights. He served as a member of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights (2016-22). Deva has advised UN agencies, governments, national human rights institutions, multinational corporations, trade unions and civil society organisations on issues related to his expertise.

Keynote address

The Honourable Prof. Biman Prasad MP is the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji and Minister for Finance. Prof. Prasad is an accomplished international scholar publishing on economic development, trade and environmental issues, contributing significantly to the debate on social and economic issues in the Pacific region. He was the Dean of the Faculty of Business and Economics at the University of the South Pacific during 2007-2011. He has also advised for international organisations such as the Asian Development Bank, UNESCAP, CLGF, Food and Agricultural Organisation, the World Trade Organisation, AusAID and governments in the Pacific region. He also held the position Professor of Economics and the Chair of the Oceania Development Network, a regional network supported by the Global Development Network. He is the Leader of the National Federation Party.

Ilona Millar is a partner in Gilbert + Tobin's Banking + Projects group, specialising in Global Climate Change. She has over 25 years' experience advising on climate law and finance, including the

development of law and policy and its implementation by both governments and the private sector. This experience extends to complex multi-jurisdictional transactions as well as the development of innovative responses to climate change and sustainability problems. Ilona's particular focus is advising on the legal aspects of international and domestic climate change policy, carbon markets and emissions trading. She has worked extensively on the development of carbon contracts, carbon funds and carbon transactions in both the compliance and voluntary markets. Ilona also advises on regulatory issues associated with climate-related risk disclosure and the development and implementation of climate and ESG strategies, policies and plans.

Siobhan McDonnell is an Associate Professor and ARC DECRA Fellow at the Crawford School of Public Policy at The Australian National University. Siobhan is a lawyer and anthropologist who works on climate justice, disaster, resettlement, gender and land rights issues with Indigenous people in Australia and the Pacific. Since 2019 she has been a lead negotiator on climate change for Vanuatu, Fiji and Palau on issues of loss and damage and mitigation. In 2021 Siobhan drafted and launched the Loss and Damage facility for the Pacific at the Glasgow COP. Siobhan has run land cases for Indigenous groups, and in 2014 the Vanuatu government passed land reforms and Constitutional amendments she drafted to support better Indigenous land rights. Dr McDonnell's current ARC project focuses on working alongside Pacific researchers to conduct a collaborative ethnography of Conference of the Parties processes. Since 2023 she has also developed and been leading a climate alumni program to support Pacific Islander and Indigenous Australian students attend Conference of the Parties meetings. In 2023 Dr McDonnell drafted Vanuatu's National Relocation and Resettlement framework.

Rosemary Lyster is the Co-Theme Lead of the Climate Disaster and Adaptation Research Theme at the Sydney Environment Institute. She is a Professor of Climate and Environmental Law in the University of Sydney Law School and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law. In 2024, Rosemary was appointed a member of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development's Academic Circle supporting his mandate. Rosemary's special area of research expertise is Climate Justice and Disaster Law. Her publications include Rosemary Lyster and Robert M. Verchick (eds.) *Climate Disaster Law* (Edward Elgar: 2018) and Rosemary Lyster *Climate Justice and Disaster Law* (Cambridge University Press: 2015). Rosemary has been selected by the Australian Financial Review as one of the 2018 '100 Women of Influence' in the Public Policy category.

Session 1: Multispecies justice, loss and damage

Scott Webster is researcher at the Sydney Environment Institute, currently leading a project that seeks to understand how universities support their communities through shock disaster events. He also held multiple positions at the Institute including Postdoctoral Research Fellow and Research Administration Officer under the Climate Disaster and Adaptation research theme. His research is broadly centred on connection to place: its meaningfulness, the knowledge and interventions it enables, and the suffering and injustice caused when these connections are ruptured. Scott has investigated how Australian communities self-organised before, during and after the 2019-20 bushfires and 2020-22 floods. He also explores the 'killing of memory' (memoricide) as a phenomenon that bears both everyday and more-than-human dimensions.

Danielle Celermajer is a Professor of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Sydney, Deputy Director – Academic of the Sydney Environment Institute and lead of the Multispecies Justice project. Her professional life has been characterised by moving between organisations whose principal focus is human rights or more broadly justice policy and scholarship, and seeking a greater integration between these dimensions of justice work. In recent years, she has turned her attention to questions of how institutions could be transformed to support the relational flourishing of all Earth beings, or multispecies justice. Dany's books include *Sins of the Nation and the Ritual of Apology* (Cambridge University Press 2009), *A Cultural Theory of Law in the Modern Age* (Bloomsbury, 2018), and *The Prevention of Torture: An Ecological Approach* (Cambridge University Press, 2018) and most recently, with other members of the multispecies justice collective, *Institutionalising Multispecies Justice* (Cambridge University Press 2025). With her multispecies community, she lived through the Black Summer fires, writing about the killing of everything or "omnicide." *Summertime: Reflections on a Vanishing Future* (Penguin Books, 2021), the creative non-fiction book she wrote from that experience asks us to look around – really look around – to become present to all Earth others who are living and dying through the loss of our shared home.

Ed Couzens is an Associate Professor and Lecturer in Environmental Law and International Law at the University of Sydney Law School. His main research interests are in biodiversity protection of both marine and terrestrial environments, as well as the complex management of alien invasive species and governance of migratory species. His work also examines the practicalities of integrating international environmental conventions within the legal frameworks of individual nations, bridging global ideals with local impact.

Rosemary Lyster is the Co-Theme Lead of the Climate Disaster and Adaptation Research Theme at the Sydney Environment Institute. She is a Professor of Climate and Environmental Law in the University of Sydney Law School and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law. In 2024, Rosemary was appointed a member of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development's Academic Circle supporting his mandate. Rosemary's special area of research expertise is Climate Justice and Disaster Law. Her publications include Rosemary Lyster and Robert M. Verchick (eds.) *Climate Disaster Law* (Edward Elgar: 2018) and *Rosemary Lyster Climate Justice and Disaster Law* (Cambridge University Press: 2015). Rosemary has been selected by the Australian Financial Review as one of the 2018 '100 Women of Influence' in the Public Policy category.

Session 2: Civil society organisations and self-organising communities

David Schlosberg is Professor of Environmental Politics, Director of the Sydney Environment Institute and Co-Theme Lead of the Climate Disaster and Adaptation Research Theme. His work focuses on environmental, ecological, and climate justice; environment and everyday life; and climate adaptation planning and policy. David has worked extensively with local and state governments on just adaptation and resilience planning, the social impacts of climate change, and community-based food systems and policy.

Venaisi Uluilakeba is the Coordinator for the Pasifika Network Loss and Damage where she leads efforts to address the effects of climate change on Pacific Island communities. In this role, she coordinates regional initiatives, advocating for the protection of vulnerable Pacific nations and ensuring that they receive adequate support for loss and damage caused by climate-related disasters. She works closely with stakeholders at national, regional, and international levels to implement policies that align with the needs and priorities of Pacific peoples. With a deep personal commitment to addressing the impacts of climate change, Venaisi has been actively involved in promoting solutions that can mitigate the adverse effects on Pacific Island nations. Her passion for environmental sustainability and social justice drives her work in advocating for policies and actions that help build resilience against the growing challenges of climate change.

Lavetanalagi (Lagi) Seru is a climate justice activist whose work of over a decade has spanned the areas of youth development, climate change, gender, human rights, and social inclusion in disaster risk reduction. He currently works at Global Greengrants Fund and previously held the role of Regional Coordinator for the Pacific Islands Climate Action Network. He has years of experience in climate policy development, campaigns, movement building, and strategy development. He is engaged with many social movements and civil society networks on climate change in the Pacific and globally.

Ulaiasi Tuikoro is an Entrepreneur and a HR and IR officer by profession but engages in consultation works with Fiji Fishing Industry Association (FFIA) and a few other NGO along the line of Youth and Children Advocacy on Climate Mobility, Human Rights and Environmental Defender and Political Activism. He assisted in representing the Pacific Youth Council to COP 27, 28 and COP 29 through his community work with Greenpeace Australia Pacific (GPAP). He is also an Administrator of the KATO Secretariat, an initiative of the regional CSO to the regional community in creating a Pacific Community Climate Fund as an outcome approach of the Kioa Climate Emergency Declaration Finance Mechanism. Most recently Ulaiasi has been serving as the General Secretary of the National Youth Council of Fiji after the MYS and UNODC assisted in the reviving the NYC after being dormant for 8 years. He has also just been appointed as the Interim Executive Director of Transparency International Fiji Chapter aka CLCT-Integrity Fiji, Co-Founder of Climate Custodian and a Coordinator - Admin and Finance Officer for the First Nation (Fiji) Resources Foundation that is hosting the National Consultation of Voluntary Carbon Market Framework Project in Fiji this week.

Rebecca McNaught is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University Centre for Rural Health in Lismore. She currently volunteers as co-leader of the South Golden Beach Community Resilience Team

and is a Plan C board member. Rebecca previously worked across the Asia, Pacific and Middle East regions as a climate and disaster advisor to the Red Cross and United Nations. Her research focuses on disaster and climate change resilience in the Pacific Islands and the Northern Rivers, NSW. Her two sons drive her determination to seek solutions to the global climate emergency.

Session 3: Climate finance and debt, loss and damage

Kate Owens is an Associate Professor in Environmental Law at the University of Sydney Law School and Director of the [Australian Centre for Climate and Environmental Law](#). She is also the Co-theme Lead of the [Transformative Governance](#) research theme at the Sydney Environment Institute. Kate is an expert in climate, environmental and water law and governance. Her research focusses on how legal frameworks can foster inclusion, innovation, and cooperation to drive large-scale decarbonisation, climate adaptation and equitable water reallocation. Kate's work integrates theories of experimentalism, innovation, deliberative democracy, justice, risk, and regulation to explore these complex issues, which she approaches from international, transnational, and national perspectives. Kate has been awarded a 2023-24 University of Sydney Research Accelerator Prize for her latest research agenda, which explores how legal and governance frameworks can drive and amplify experimentation to achieve the scale and coordination essential for broadscale decarbonisation. Her monograph, [Environmental Water Markets and Regulation: A Comparative Legal Approach](#) (Routledge/Earthscan), was published in 2017. Before joining the University of Sydney in 2015, Kate practised for a number of years in leading commercial law firms in Australia and New Zealand and State Government, specialising in environmental and planning law.

Finau Soqo is the General Manager of the Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF), the first Pacific-led, owned and managed regional climate and disaster financing facility for communities at the very front-line of the climate crisis. The PRF is designed helps vulnerable Pacific communities exposed to climate change and disaster risks, particularly women and girls, children, the elderly and people with disabilities. The PRF is a Pacific Leader-endorsed climate initiative under the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and is being established by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, overseen by the Forum Economic Ministers Meeting (FEMM). It is a self-sustaining financial model that allows the Pacific to invest in small high-impact projects to make communities disaster-ready, and will be the first International Financial Institution to be collectively owned by Pacific Governments. Ms Soqo has over 20 years of experience in Financial Institutions and the Finance Sector. She was a Central Banker, then held the position of Acting Chief Investment Officer and Board Secretary for Fijian Holdings Limited, before becoming an international banker with ANZ for 11-years, in Fiji, Melbourne, Manila, and was the Country Head for ANZ Kiribati in 2016-2019 as the first woman in the senior position.

Magalie Masamba is a legal and economic policy consultant specializing in sovereign debt, global economic governance, and climate finance. She is an advocate for equitable debt solutions for developing countries, focusing on how financial systems and international law can support sustainable and just economic development. She is an Extraordinary Lecturer at the Center for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, where she contributes to academic research and policy discussions on economic governance and human rights. Magalie is also a Senior Fellow at the African Debt Justice Network (AfSDJN), where she contributes to initiatives aimed at amplifying African perspectives in global financial negotiations. Beyond her research and advocacy work, she serves as a Non-Executive Director on the Board of the Cubango-Okavango River Basin (CORB) Fund, supporting transboundary water governance and conservation efforts in Southern Africa.

Julia Dehm is an ARC DECRA Fellow and Associate Professor in the School of Law, La Trobe University Australia. Her research addresses urgent issues of international and domestic climate change and environmental law, natural resource governance and questions of human rights, economic inequality and social justice. Her books include *Reconsidering REDD+: Authority, Power and Law in the Green Economy* (Cambridge University Press, 2021), *Locating Nature: Making and Unmaking International Law* (edited with Usha Natarajan), *Power, Participation and Private Regulatory Initiatives: Human Rights under Supply Chain Capitalism* (edited with Daniel Brinks, Karen Engle and Kate Taylor) and *Becoming a Climate Conscious Lawyer: Climate Change and the Australian Legal System* (edited with Nicole Graham and Zoe Nay). She was previously a consultant to the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing assistance and a 2023 Member of the School of Social Science, Institute for Advanced Studies, Princeton.

Closing

David Schlosberg is Professor of Environmental Politics, Director of the Sydney Environment Institute and Co-Theme Lead of the Climate Disaster and Adaptation Research Theme. His work focuses on environmental, ecological, and climate justice; environment and everyday life; and climate adaptation planning and policy. David has worked extensively with local and state governments on just adaptation and resilience planning, the social impacts of climate change, and community-based food systems and policy.