Australia and the One Earth Interdisciplinary Conference - registrations open

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Australia and the One Earth: Engaging with global environmental governance since Stockholm, 1972

11-13 April 2022

Virtual and in-person at Flinders University at Victoria Square, Adelaide

To mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Stockholm Conference in 2022, Dr Alessandro Antonello (Flinders Uni), Associate Professor Cassandra Star (Flinders Uni), Associate Professor Ruth Morgan (ANU), and Associate Professor Emily O’Gorman (Macquarie University), are convening an interdisciplinary conference to explore Australia’s part in global environmental governance between 1972 and the present. We aim to explore the history and politics of Australian engagements with various aspects of global environmental governance, including international conferences, international organisations and multilateral forums, environmental norms and concepts, civil society and environmentalism, justice and human rights, science and knowledge.

Register at Eventbrite to attend the conference virtually or in-person.

The conference has two keynotes and 11 research papers.

Registered participants will receive zoom links and other instructions at a later stage. Final program is forthcoming.

Keynote Lectures

Professor Susan Park - “Australia as an Ecocidal Middle Environmental Power”

11 April 2022, 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm (Adelaide time, UTC+9:30)

The climate catastrophe has triggered scholarly attention as to how great powers understand and engage with the environment, given their recognised legitimacy and responsibilities as systemic actors within the international order. Great environmental powers - those that can employ both...
positive and negative powers to advance or block environmental cooperation – are limited to those
with the capability to influence environmental issues and the responsibility to do so. This paper
examines the little examined role of ‘middle environmental powers,’ where traditional middle powers
like Australia can influence environmental issues through their support for international cooperation
backed by their actions. Australia is an exemplary ‘middle power’ supporting the international rules-
based order. In examining Australia’s record in key environmental issue areas such as climate
change, biodiversity and water, Australia is arguably demonstrating both support and opposition to
environmental cooperation underpinned by ecocidal domestic and foreign policies. Given the need for
all states to address the crossing of planetary boundaries, Australia as a quintessential middle power
deserves scrutiny.

Professor Susan Park is professor of global governance at the University of Sydney, and a world-
recognised expert on the subject global environmental governance, including of multilateral banks
and finance. Her most recent book is Environmental Recourse at the Multilateral Development Banks
(Cambridge University Press, 2020).

**Professor Sverker Sörlin - “Empowering the Human Environment: Stockholm
and the Rise of Global Environmental Governance”**

**12 April 2022, 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm (Adelaide time, UTC+9:30)**

Since the modern understanding of ‘the environment’ emerged in earnest after World War II there
has been a parallel rise of governance of this new phenomenon with its own rich and largely
unwritten history. A landmark event was the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment
in Stockholm in 1972, prepared over several years of scientific and diplomatic work in Stockholm and
New York. Already then and even more in the following decade, Stockholm and Sweden assumed an
oversize role in the shaping and developing of global environmental governance. This middle-sized
city on the northern fringe of Europe has been lining up: ambitious politicians (such as Olof Palme,
Alva Myrdal, Inga Thorsson, Anna Lindh), entrepreneurial, policy-influencing scientists (Carl-Gustaf
Rossby, Bert Bolin, Gordon Goodman, Malin Falkenmark), significant journals (Tellus, Ambio), civic
movements and activists (all the way up to Greta Thunberg’s Fridays for Future), institutional
innovations (Stockholm Environment Institute, Stockholm Resilience Centre), key GEG related
concepts (the Anthropocene, the Earth system, the Planetary Boundaries framework) and a string of
important meetings from the pre-1972 SMIC meetings on climate change through to the Nobel
environmental summit gatherings in 2011 and 2021. How can we assess and explain the relative
weight of the contribution of a city in the rise of such a vast and complex phenomenon as GEG?
Drawing on a book-length project, I will reflect on this question, which raises a number of theoretical
and methodological questions. My analysis circles around a set of empowering properties, which I
will argue Stockholm, and Sweden possessed that compensated for other shortcomings in relation to
the usual top-level hierarchy of world cities and centers of world affairs, all with the prefix con-:
convening power, contributory expertise, conceptualizing ingenuity, connecting inclusiveness
emphasizing the human dimensions of the new human environment.

Professor Sverker Sörlin, an environmental historian at KTH Stockholm and currently chief investigator on a major European Research Council grant on the history of global environmental governance. His most recent book, Ice Humanities: Living, Thinking and Working in a Melting World (with Klaus Dodds) will appear in July 2022 on Manchester University Press. A monograph (with Eric Paglia), The Human Environment: Stockholm and the Rise of Global Environmental Governance, is under contract with Cambridge University Press.

Research Papers

Across 12 and 13 April, the following papers will be presented:

- Brett Bennett, Western Sydney Uni. – “Forestry as Foreign Policy: Understanding the History of Australia’s Forestry Aid in Asia and Africa, 1945 to now”
- Ethan Beringen, Macquarie – “Three Eras of Australian Practice on Marine Protected Areas: The Interaction between National and International Law and Policy”
- Cobi Calyx, ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society and Centre for Social Impact – “Ground-truthing satellite imagery: from local to global”
- Babet de Groot, Uni. Sydney – “Who is governing marine plastic pollution?”
- Nicholas Ferns, Monash – “From modernisation to sustainability: The emergence of environmental concerns in Australian Foreign Aid policy”
- Ruth Morgan, ANU – “Atmospheric Change in the Antipodes: Australian atmospheric monitoring in the wake of the Stockholm Conference”
- Emily O’Gorman, Macquarie – “Wetlands, bird migration, and global environmental crisis”
- Libby Robin (ANU) and David Larsson Heidenblad (Lund) – “Plundering and Extermination: Hans Palmstierna, AJ Marshall and One Earth’s local politics in Sweden and Australia”
- Ruchira Talukdar, UTS – “Lessons for international conservation from Australia’s actions and civil society’s fight for the Great Barrier Reef during Australia’s coal boom”