

NEWSLETTER: The impact of governance on regional natural resource planning

Regional Governance in Australia

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Regional governance in Australia is one of the most important, but complex public policy issues challenging sustainability. The management of natural resources at the regional scale, however, is challenged by complex decision-making processes and poor integration between different planning activities.

In Queensland, these challenges become acute in resource-rich regions and in the Great Barrier Reef. In such regions competition

for resources and resource-use impacts are contested, and these conflicts are expected to be more acute in a changing climate.

The ARC 'NRM planning and governance' project's focus is on the governance (decision-making systems) for regional natural resource management (NRM), including the collective interplay between national, state and local government and different stakeholders. The project is a 3-year collaborative research project led

by the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in partnership with James Cook University (JCU).

The project is funded by the Australian Research Council with co-investment from Terrain NRM, Dry Tropics NRM, Fitzroy Basin Association, Queensland Murray Darling Committee, Condamine Alliance and the Queensland Regional Groups Collective.



Project Member Profile—Jaime Olvera Garcia

I am one of the PhD candidates in the project team. Previously, I did a Masters of Governance and Public Policy (2011-2012) at UQ, so my profile relates more to political science and policy studies.

I am originally from Mexico and came to Australia by a twist of fate, mainly to undertake postgraduate studies but also by the prospect of living in a country so far away and different from my own. During my four years of residence in Australia, most of my time has been spent in the research sector, but I've also worked in an environmental consultancy firm.

The environment and its management in a development-oriented world is one of my passions but also other public issues where planning, politics and policy intersect such as education, health, labour or housing. I am aware that research activities occur in a world apart from practical reality. This separation is reduced to a certain degree by research fieldwork. Therefore, I would like my research to contribute to building a common language between academics and practitioners, serving as a starting point for further planning or policy solutions.

Apart from my research life, I like playing outdoor sports (especially soccer), music, movies, reading, and travelling.

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Team members

Professor Douglas Baker

Science and Engineering Faculty, Civil Engineering and The Built Environment, Property and Planning, QUT

<http://staff.qut.edu.au/staff/bakerd2/>

d2.baker@qut.edu.au

Dr Severine Mayere

Science and Engineering Faculty, Civil Engineering and The Built Environment, Property and Planning, QUT

<http://staff.qut.edu.au/staff/mayere/>

severine.mayere@qut.edu.au

Dr Karen Vella

Science and Engineering Faculty, Civil Engineering and The Built Environment, Property and Planning, QUT

<http://staff.qut.edu.au/staff/vella3/>

karen.vella@qut.edu.au

Professor Neil Sipe

Professor of Planning, UQ

<https://www.gpem.uq.edu.au/neil-sipe>

n.sipe@uq.edu.au

Dr Bruce Taylor

CSIRO

<http://people.csiro.au/T/B/Bruce-Taylor/PublicationsHistory.aspx>

Bruce.Taylor@csiro.au

Professor Allan Dale

Professor of Tropical Regional Development
The Cairns Institute, James Cook University

<https://research.jcu.edu.au/portfolio/allan.dale/>

allan.dale@jcu.edu.au

Professor Richard Margerum

Planning, Public Policy and Management, University of Oregon

<https://pppm.uoregon.edu/faculty/rich-margerum>

rdm@uoregon.edu

Jaime Olvera Garcia

School of Geography Planning and Environmental Management, UQ

<https://www.gpem.uq.edu.au/jaime-olvera-garcia>

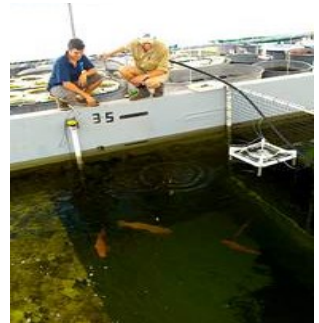
j.olveragarcia@uq.edu.au

Rachel Eberhard

Science and Engineering Faculty, Civil Engineering and The Built Environment, Property and Planning, QUT

<http://www.eberhardconsulting.com.au>

rachel@eberhardconsulting.com.au



Project happenings

1. Reef Range and Red Dust conference



The team ran a workshop to explore the impact of current policy on NRM planning and action at the Reef Range and Red Dust 2015 Conference in Caloundra in September. To set the scene for the workshop we began with four presentations from the project. These considered: Australian NRM in an international context (Rachel Eberhard), A review of Australia's NRM policy over the last 30 years (Karen Vella), Governance Risks to NRM Delivery (Allan Dale), and A Regional Approach to NRM Delivery (Jayne Thorpe, Condamine Alliance). This led into a lively workshop discussions

where participants from across regions shared their very different experiences and explored implications of current policy on the business and future of regional NRM.

We look forward to continuing this discussion at the national level in 2016. The presentation slides can be found here:

<http://eprints.qut.edu.au/87330/>

2. NRM focus groups

The project team ran a series of focus groups with QLD NRM CEOs, Managers and Planners in March and April this year. These sessions focused on the impacts of the changing policy environment on NRM business. Preliminary results have been circulated to participants and will be presented by Richard Margerum at the ACSP conference in Houston, Texas in October.

3. SSRM conference in Charleston, South Carolina, USA



Rachel Eberhard presented two papers at this conference that showcases social science for resource management. Rachel's papers included the results of a comparative analysis of the governance of water conflicts across Australia, the USA and Europe.

4. Papers on adaptive management and NRM

Karen Vella and co-authors have published a paper on adaptive management and NRM including a review of all the NRM reviews and recommendations made over the years. The paper is available at <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/84279/>

5. Reef Taskforce

Allan Dale has been appointed to the State Government's Water Quality Taskforce; a group led by Chief Scientist Geoff Garrett and charged with advising the Government about how best to achieve it's the Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan water quality improvement targets. In the Taskforce, Allan is particularly focused on governance reform and the role of regional communities.

6. PhD fieldwork



Both Rachel Eberhard and Jaime Olvera Garcia will be talking to NRMs and stakeholders as part of their PhD fieldwork in the coming months.

Recent publications include



Dale A, Vella KJ and McKee J (2014) [Analysing governance of Australia's system of landscape-based greenhouse gas abatement](#). *Australasian Journal of Environmental Management*, 21(4), 378-395.

Dale A, Vella KJ and Cottrell A (2015) [Can social resilience inform SA/SIA for adaptive planning for climate change in vulnerable regions?](#) *Journal of Natural Resources Policy Research*, 7(1), 93-104.

Davis, J., O'Grady, A. P., Dale, A., Arthington, A. H., Gell, P. A., Drive, P. D., . . . Specht, A. (2015). [When trends intersect: The challenge of protecting freshwater ecosystems under multiple land use and hydrological intensification scenarios](#). *Science of the Total Environment*, 534, 65-78. doi: 10.1016/j.scitotenv.2015.03.127

Potts, R., Vella, K., Dale, A., & Sipe, N. (2015). [A study of governance arrangements for land use and natural resource management planning in Cape York Peninsula](#). *Australian Geographer*, 46(3), 389-409. doi: 10.1080/00049182.2015.1048594

Stephens, A., Oppermann, E., Turnour, J., Brewer, T., O'Brien, C., Rayner, T., . . . Dale, A. P. (2015). [Identifying tensions in the development of northern Australia: Implications for governance](#). *Journal of Economic and Social Policy*, 17(1), Article 5.

Vella, K., Sipe, N., Dale, A., & Taylor, B. (2015). [Not learning from the past: Adaptive governance challenges for Australian natural resource management](#). *Geographical Research (online 18 May)*. doi: 10.1111/1745-5871.12115



Interesting links

An article by Allan Dale about the jobs for economy versus the environment in the Conversation (link <https://theconversation.com/time-for-the-green-tape-debate-to-mature-jobs-and-the-environment-are-not-implacable-foes-46538>)

Forecasts for a super El Nino are strengthening

http://blogs.csiro.au/ecos/2015-16-is-shaping-up-to-deliver-a-rollercoaster-from-strong-el-nino-to-la-nina/?utm_source=Ecos+CSIRO&utm_campaign=f0bd9cd594-ECOS+August+2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3ee5fec188-f0bd9cd594-22974081&ct=t%28ECOS+August+2015%29&mc_cid=f0bd9cd594&mc_eid=ccd3d6defb

Iowa water utilities suing counties over agricultural runoff

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/19/us/conflict-over-soil-and-water-quality-puts-iowa-nice-to-a-test.html?emc=edit_th_20150419&nl=todaysheadlines&nlid=71290900&r=2

Record low snowfalls across the west coast USA contribute to water shortages

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2015/03/150304-snow-snowpack-california-drought-groundwater-crisis/>



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Contact

For further information or to subscribe or unsubscribe to this newsletter please contact:

Jennifer McHugh,

The Cairns Institute, James Cook University

Phone: +61 7 42321718

E-mail: Jennifer.mchugh1@jcu.edu.au

