

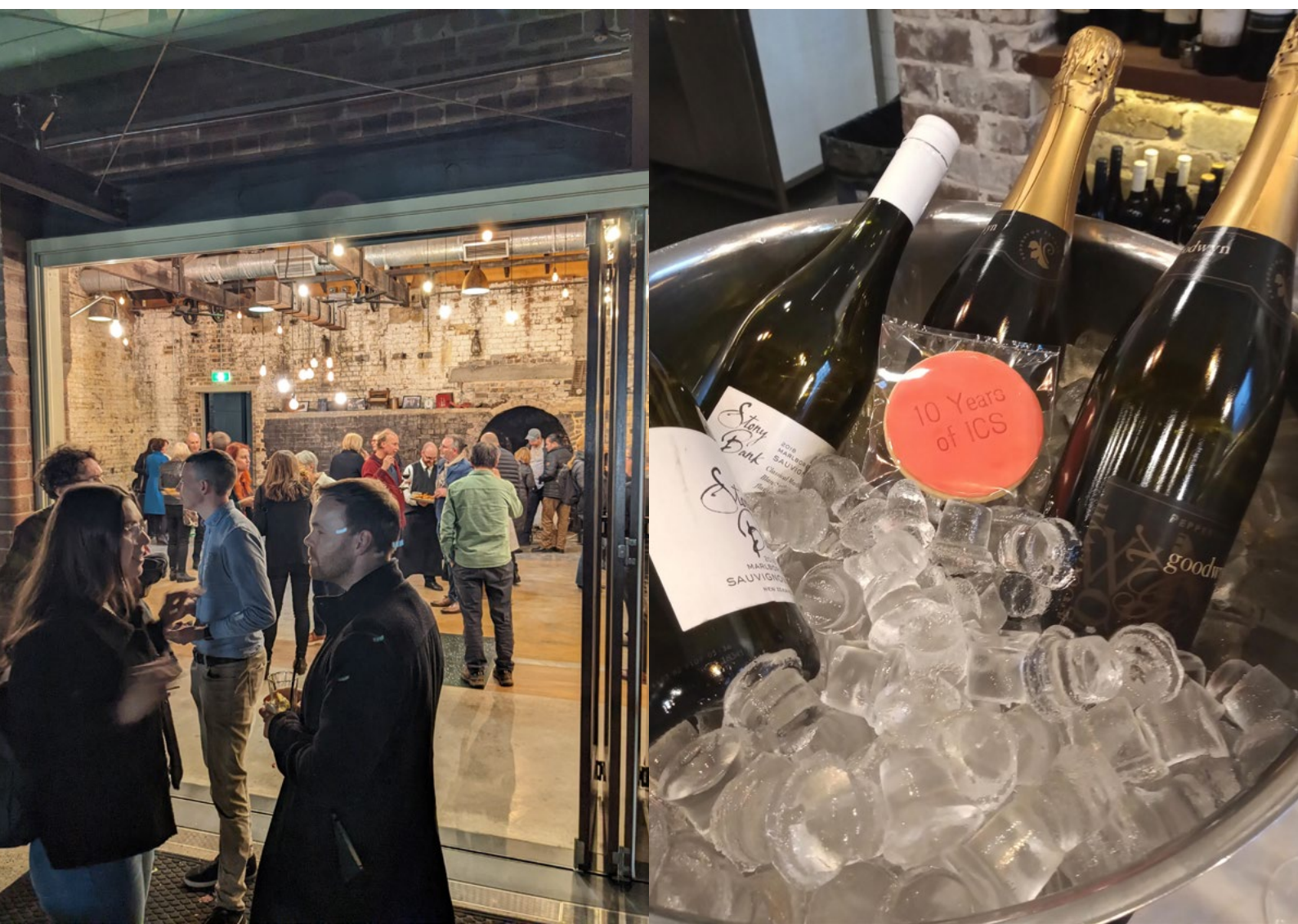
WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



Institute for Culture
and Society

2022

Institute for Culture and Society
ANNUAL REVIEW



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Cover image: Celebrating 10 years of the Institute for Culture and Society. Photos taken by Sally Byrnes.

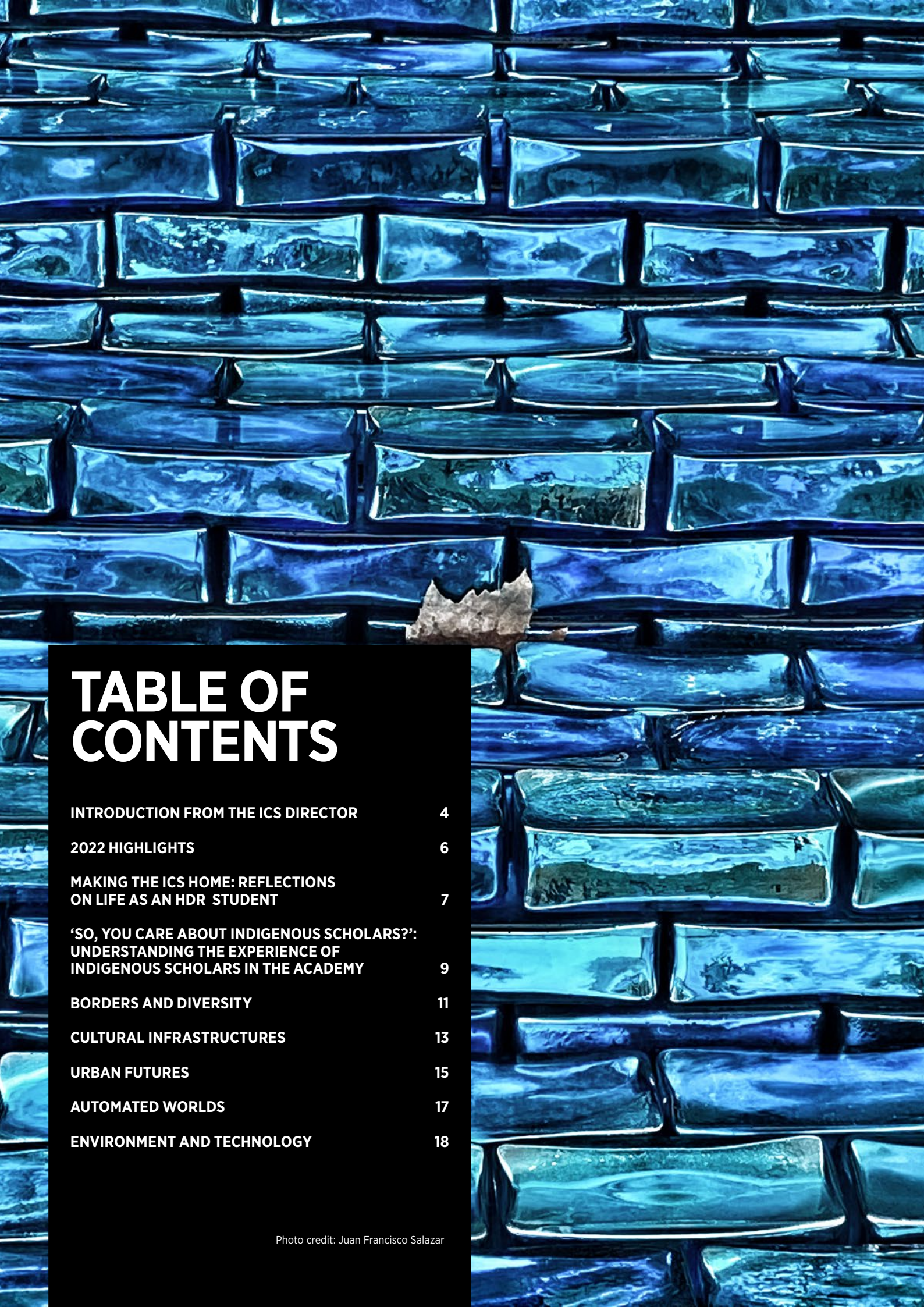


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INTRODUCTION FROM THE ICS DIRECTOR

The arrival of 2022 coincided with new phases of the global pandemic, changing restrictions on movement, and adjusted ways of working and living with COVID-19. For many, 2022 was a time of uncertainty; yet it also was a time to reinvigorate the forms of sociality that have been a hallmark of the Institute's culture. In this introduction to our 2022 Annual Review, I focus upon the moments of (re-)connection, commemoration and celebration that characterised the past year.

(re-)connection: The rhythm of academic life at the Institute returned in March, with a series of curated conversations in our weekly ICS Seminar Series. Organised under the theme "States of Urgency", we explored intersecting crises and issues such as the socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic, extraction and environmental crises, Indigenous data sovereignty, the war in Ukraine and other geopolitical concerns.

Our engagement with our neighbours in greater Sydney resumed with the launch of *rīvus A Glossary of Water*, an edited volume by José Roca and Juan Francisco Salazar as part of the Institute's partnership with the Biennale of Sydney. Later in the year members of our Borders & Diversity Research Program released a series of reports, including the "Media, Art and Stories in Sydney's West" report led by one of our new ICS staff members Dr. Valentina Baú. In addition, the Young & Resilient Research Centre released the "Responsible Innovation in Technology for Children" report with their partners: UNICEF; the LEGO Foundation; CREATE Lab at New York University; The Graduate Center; City University of New York; the University of Sheffield and the Australian Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child. We held our first meetings with our new Advisory Board members, Chair and Professor Gerard Goggin, Indu Balachandran, Dr. Mark Crees, David Masters and Dr. Tayanah O'Donnell.

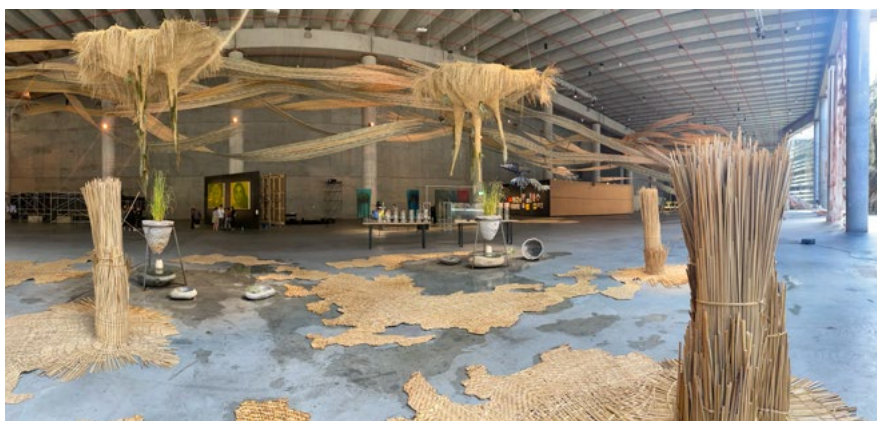


Photo credit: Juan Francisco Salazar at the 23rd Biennale of Sydney (2022)

As the year progressed, we welcomed the return of interstate and international visitors, including Gabriele Morelli (University of Milan-Bicocca), Anna Karlsson (University of Bergen), Kelen Katia (Federal University of Grande Dourados) and our joint PhD candidate Jori Snells (University of Amsterdam/Western Sydney University) as well as Professor Robert Foster (Rochester), Dr. Erin Taylor (Fanthropology), Una Corbett (Visiting Fullbright Fellow) and Dr. Nick Ruddell (CSU). David Rowe, Deborah Stevenson, Fiona Cameron, HDR candidates Christine Streatham and Michelle Whitmore travelled to Linköping University in Sweden to continue our multi decade international partnership with cultural studies researchers. We embarked upon in-person fieldwork and engaged in new conversations with our colleagues at workshops and major conference in the Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America and Africa for the first time in over two years.

Commemoration: 2022 marked the 10-year anniversary of the founding of the Institute for Culture and Society. In June we took this opportunity to gather together to celebrate the occasion and pay tribute to the Institute and the key figures involved in the formation and evolution of the ICS. Emeritus Professor Mandy Thomas opened the event with reflections upon her time as a postdoctoral research fellow at the Centre for Cultural Research, the entity that pre-ceded the Institute. Founding Director Ien Ang convened a panel on "Western Sydney and Its Worlds" with academics across Western

Sydney University and two members of our Advisory Board, who discussed past and future engagements with Western Sydney communities. Ned Rossiter brought alumni, staff and HDR together to discuss the global engagement of our work over time, while Juan Salazar curated a dynamic panel on the growth of creative practice research. We concluded academic proceedings with a panel on the critical challenges facing cultural research, chaired by former Director (2015-2019) Professor Paul James. The final sessions explored new focal areas of the Institute: climate change, economic transformations and the implications of new technologies.

Alongside academic programming, our opening reception included many of our alumni, research partners and former professional and academic staff. Our final reception featured an evocative performance by our talented researcher and musician at the Institute, Waldo Garrido, followed by an inspired dance mix by our resident DJ, Juan Salazar. It was a brilliant way to commemorate and celebrate with the people who have made - and continue to make - the ICS a fantastic place to work and to imagine new worlds together.

Celebration: Alongside our 10-year anniversary, we had a number of awards, grants, HDR completions and promotions to celebrate. Erasmus University Rotterdam awarded Ien Ang an honorary doctorate for her contributions to academia. Katherine Gibson spent 2022 at Harvard University as the Gough Whitlam and Malcolm Fraser Visiting Professor of Australian Studies.



Photo credit: Sally Tsoutas taken at the launch of *rivus: A Glossary of Water*

Malini Sur was awarded the biennial President's Prize for 2020 and 2021 for an outstanding book by The South-East Asian Studies Association of Australia (SASAA) for her book *Jungle Passports: Fences, Mobility and Citizenship at the Northeast India-Bangladesh Border*. Jessica Weir and her team won the EMPA award for Excellence in Communication (Research Category) for their work titled *Cultural Burning in Southern Australia*. HDR student Gina Gatarin, was announced the winner of the Paul Benneworth award by the Regional Studies Association for an original and outstanding contribution to the field of regional studies, based upon her paper 'Designing Cities for Dignified Commuting: Watersheds of Hope in Metro Manila, Philippines' Traffic Situation.'

We also celebrated the graduation of HDR students Cali Prince, Amrita Limbu, Kate Naidu and Utsab Bhattra and the promotion of a number of academic staff. Alison Barnes, Zelmari Cantillon and Waldo Garrido were promoted to Senior Lecturer. Promotions to Associate Professor included Stephen Healy, Neil Perry, Emma Power, Malini Sur and Jessica Weir. Denis Byrne, Philippa Collin, Alana Lentin, Karen Soldatic, and Dimitris Vardoulakis were all promoted to Professor.

We were delighted to see the award of two ARC Linkage Projects amongst ICS researchers. The first grant "Living with Urban Heat: Becoming Climate-Ready in Social Housing", is led by Stephen Healy, and includes ICS researchers Katherine Gibson, Emma Power, Louise Crabtree-Hayes and colleagues from Western and UTS. It also brings in St George Community Housing Limited, UCA-Paramatta Nepean Presbyterian, Wentworth Community Housing Limited and Bridge Housing Limited and Churches as partner organisations. The second grant awarded, "Walking My Path: NSW Indigenous LGBTIQ+ Peoples'

Experiences & Aspirations", is led by Indigenous scholar Corrinne Sullivan. Karen Soldatic, and community partners BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation are also investigators on this innovative project.

The year ended on a high, with the announcement an ARC Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA) to Benjamin Hanckel who was awarded funding for his project "Examining Youth Digital Wellbeing in Australia and the Philippines". And shortly thereafter, Philippa Collin's Discovery Project "New Possibilities: Young People and Democratic Renewal" investigating Australian students' role in the climate change movement. This was a significant achievement for her research team as it was one of six grants vetoed without explanation in December 2021.

Finally, we were very pleased to welcome the new Urban Transformations Research Centre (UTRC) to the Institute. Co-led by Nicky Morrison and Greg Morrison, the Urban Transformations Research Centre launched in November 2022 to address two key challenges facing a fast-urbanising world: reducing the impacts of climate change; and delivering inclusive, healthy, safe, and resilient communities and infrastructure.

Building upon this year's focus on commemoration and celebration, the Annual Review pieces that follow highlight the future trajectories of research at the Institute. We begin with an essay featuring two of our HDR candidates, Christopher Cheng and Linda Marsden, who have spent the last three years completing their PhDs in the context of a global pandemic. The second contribution, by Corrinne Sullivan and Jessica Weir, focuses upon creative practice outcomes developed and designed to challenge non-Indigenous colleagues to understand the lived experiences of Indigenous scholars in the

academy. This piece reflects conversations we resumed at the ICS regarding our collective commitment to increasing the presence and support of Indigenous scholars at Western. The next five contributions were developed to provide an overview of the current research trajectories in the Institute. The first essay highlights new areas of exploration in the Borders and Diversity research program. The next two pieces - Cultural Infrastructure and Urban Futures - reflect upon the conceptual work in each program with a particular focus upon the different forms of Infrastructures that are being leveraged to understand contemporary practices. The final essays from the Automated Worlds and the Environment and Technology research programs feature ICS research examining the integration of technologies in everyday life with particular attention to how this dynamic is reshaping the experience of time, place and space through processes such as automation and extraction.

As we hope is evident, 2022 was an exciting year filled with new partnerships, collaborations and research directions. We look forward to carrying these activities forward into 2023!

Best Wishes,
Heather A. Horst
Director





2022 HIGHLIGHTS

RESEARCH STAFF

63



31

School
based

32

Institute
based

HDR STUDENTS

46



36

PhD
students

10

MRes

RESEARCH INCOME

\$4,441,285*

*as of end of November

26

GRANTS
AWARDED

40

ACTIVE
GRANTS



391

MEDIA
ENGAGEMENTS

32

CONVERSATION
ARTICLES



170

RESEARCH
PUBLICATIONS

8

BOOKS

559,549

VIEWS OF CONVERSATION ARTICLES

MAKING THE ICS HOME: REFLECTIONS ON LIFE AS AN HDR STUDENT

Home can mean a place of residence, one's birthplace or a feeling of comfort and safe-haven. But what does it mean to 'feel at home' at an academic institution? Furthermore, what is the impact of such emotion on one's research?

We spoke to our PhD candidates Christopher Cheng and Linda Marsden, who told us they feel at home at the ICS, despite being hundreds of kilometres away from the Parramatta campus.

For the past five years, Christopher has been conducting fieldwork in Southern China, Sydney and Queensland for his PhD thesis 'Australian Migrant Heritage in South China: The Legacy of Diaspora-Funded Schools in Twentieth-Century Zhongshan'. Chris's research is part of a larger ICS-led project, The China-Australia Heritage Corridor, which aims to enhance public awareness of Australia's history of connectivity with Asia by showing how buildings and places created by Chinese migrants in Australia were and are linked to facilities and locations in China. Chris has an undergraduate degree in architecture and a master's in Anthropology, which is a perfect combination for his research which examines the schools built in Zhongshan county by Chinese emigrants.

Linda is in the third year of working on her thesis, *The Self, Selfies and the Performance of Health Identities by Young People at the Young and Resilient Research Centre*. Linda's research focuses on young people's health and sense of identity related to their online presence. Linda has an undergraduate degree in Human Movement Studies. Before starting her PhD, she spent 15 years in leadership positions at not-for-profit organisations in the sport and education sectors. Her experience of liaising with academics on the Boards she worked with led her to consider becoming an HDR student. She initially started her HDR journey at the School of Health at Western. After seeing a scholarship opportunity advertised which aligned closely with her research on health and young people's digital



My Uncle from Cairns with family from Australia peeping at his former school in Heng Mei village, (photo by Christopher Cheng 2016)

practices Linda transitioned to the ICS's Young and Resilient Research Centre to work with Amanda Third. In addition to Amanda, Linda has Tony Rossi and Nicki Taylor from Health Sciences as her supervisors.

As an institute that champions multidisciplinary research, it is common for the ICS and Young and Resilient Research Centre to accommodate HDR students who sit between disciplines and schools. This is also the case with Chris and Linda, who navigate multiple terrains for their PhD projects.

In 2017 Chris won the Institute for Australian and Chinese Arts and Culture doctoral degree -scholarship award and began to work under Dr Denis Byrne from the ICS. While Chris's background in architecture plays a vital role in the ways he studies the design and construction materials, his research is also based on his anthropological training that focuses on people's interpretation of the buildings and the concept of 'homeland'. This brings the aspects of cultural and heritage studies into play. Chris admits that he didn't know much about Chinese-Australian history before this project and needed a lot of background reading to prepare himself.

Like Chris, Linda was an outsider to the humanities before coming to the ICS. Having her background in health sciences, she describes her early times at the ICS as going from one end of the science spectrum to the other.

As her research landed Linda somewhere between the health sciences and humanities, she felt like an outsider in both faculties. However, she says that it all changed after transferring to the Young and Resilient Research Centre.

'At ICS and YRRC, I began to feel at home because I am supported.' she says.

'Tony Rossi is fluent in both languages of sociology and health. On top of that, Amanda Third has expertise in digital media and cultural studies. Between the two, it's a perfect overlap of skills as my work sits at the intersection of this and I get the best support that is available' she replies when asked about her supervisors.

'Also, Ben Hanckel and Liam Magee have been invaluable as informal mentors. It's exactly where I need to be.'



Photo by Cristina Zaragoza

pieces, even though most people simplify it and blame the social media platforms. There is far more to it.'

When asked about the future of her research, Linda says that changing people's perceptions of young people's use of social media and how we approach it is the desired impact she wants to make.

For Chris, research is an ongoing process that does not necessarily have a defined end in sight:

"This project is so significant for my identity as it ties up various things in my life and trying to find something that will attract my attention and time after it ends will be difficult."

This piece was written by Deniz Agraz following an interview with Christopher Cheng and Linda Marsden in September 2022

While most people tend to recall the COVID-19 lockdowns with horror, Linda prefers to think of it as a silver lining. For Linda, the lockdown was an opportunity to attend the ICS seminars online, which she describes as 'extremely helpful in terms of catching up.' She also adds that she used this time to read extensively to familiarise herself with the language of sociology.

Born and raised in Queensland by Chinese parents, Chris says that prior to moving overseas, he didn't know much about his family history or their connection to China. 'While growing up in Queensland, I felt more Chinese than Australian', Chris says when talking about the personal dimensions of his PhD research. 'Then, I moved to Hong Kong (a decade before PhD) and started to feel more Australian than Chinese'. Chris was working as a researcher in Hong Kong when he went on a trip around Southern China and noticed the changing landscape of the villages due to immigration to the West. 'Chris says when Chinese left their villages and returned with money years later, they'd build schools or sports facilities. He became interested in how these buildings connected Chinese villages with other parts of the world.

Because his research topic is tightly intertwined with his cultural identities, Chris highlights that since starting his PhD at the ICS, he feels at home since he is finally part of both worlds.

'Now, I belong everywhere, but I don't belong anywhere.'

Like Chris, Linda's research is also heavily based on real life. While researching young people's health identities, Linda is raising three teenagers at home. She comments on carrying on with her research at home as she observes her children's use of social media as a tool and having discussions about it.

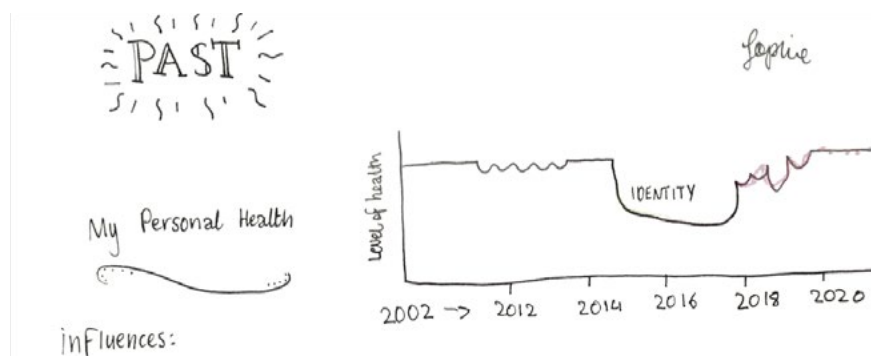
Linda says that research hasn't impacted her use of social media or her views on social media

platforms. However, she is concerned about the alarming narrative surrounding young people's use of social media platforms and the ways it impacts their health and well-being.

'The health and well-being of an individual are like a puzzle with many complexities and



Denis Byrne and Christopher Cheng visits the new Lihe School, with principal, teacher and students (Photo by Lihe School, 2019)



Health and Identity image from Linda Marsden's fieldwork

‘SO, YOU CARE ABOUT INDIGENOUS SCHOLARS?’: UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCE OF INDIGENOUS SCHOLARS IN THE ACADEMY

CORRINNE SULLIVAN AND JESSICA WEIR

‘So, you care about Indigenous scholars?’ is a series of four posters that use humour and irony to build critical consciousness about the forms of inter-personal violence experienced by Indigenous scholars in academic settings.

Developed by a scholarly collective comprised of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars including Beth Piatote, Carolyn Smith, Sibyl Diver, Corrinne Sullivan and Jessica Weir, the posters were developed over a two-day workshop at Stanford University in 2020. The comic artist/writer duo Nicole Burton and Hugh Goldring advised the workshops and developed the illustrations.

The posters feature different examples of the routine and daily encounters that go unnoticed, are misunderstood or are downplayed in institutional settings around the world. One of the goals of the collective was to call attention to these experiences and the need to create respectful spaces for dialogue and change. To this end, the Indigenous scholars in the collective led the content development and decision-making, and the non-Indigenous scholars supported their colleagues as allies and accomplices. The collective foregrounded Indigenous methods of expert evidence creation, teaching protocols and research, which are fundamental to academic institutions. Together, the collective employed language, imagery and examples that could communicate across contexts.

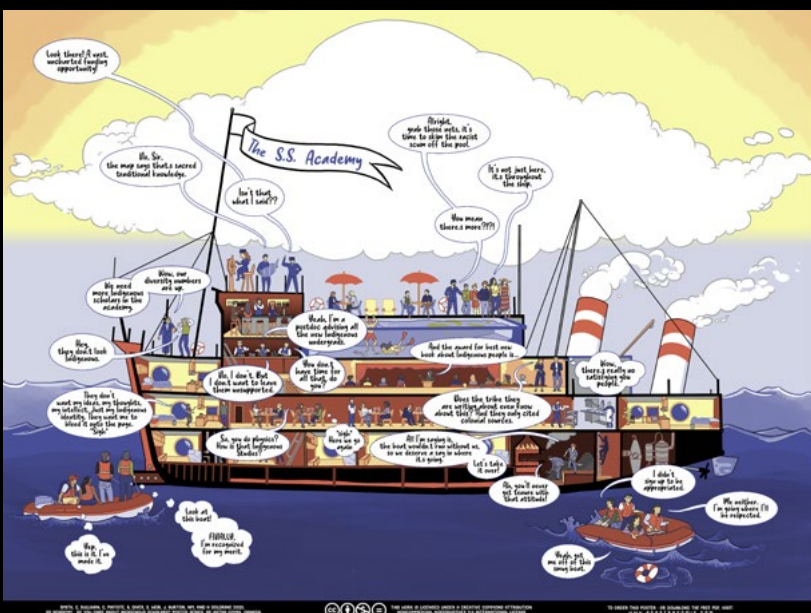
The posters, and their affirmation of the structural transformations required in institutions dominated by non-Indigenous academics, represent part of a broader shift in the higher education sector to question the ways in which knowledge production, privilege, and power shape the experience of the academy. By drawing attention to these dynamics and the everyday ways in which they are reproduced, they are designed to disrupt these practices to create respectful



Indigenous Land emphasizes that the university campus always was, always will be Indigenous land, and a place of Indigenous teaching. Sullivan, C, Piatote, B, Smith, C, Weir, J, Diver, S, Burton, NM, and H Goldring 2020. 'Indigenous Land', So you care about Indigenous scholars? poster series, Ad Astra Comix, Canada.

spaces for Indigenous scholars in the academy. The posters can be downloaded for free, and we hope that they will be shared widely in departmental corridors, staff rooms, offices

and on notice boards. Their presence at the ICS marks an important renewal of the institutional commitment to Indigenous scholars in the academy in Australia and beyond.



Extraction Zombies highlights the tokenism and minority tax experienced by many Indigenous scholars, perhaps in your university department. *Smith, C, Piatote, B, Sullivan, C, Weir, J, Diver, S, Burton, NM, and H Goldring 2020. 'Extraction Zombies', So you care about Indigenous scholars? poster series, Ad Astra Comix, Canada.*

Pass the Ball expresses frustration about non-native scholars occupying the fields of Native knowledge and refusing to “pass the ball” or recognize Native scholars as experts in these very fields — and imagines a win for the team when Native scholars are valued. *Piatote, B, Sullivan, C, Smith, C, Diver, S, Weir, J, Burton, NM, and H Goldring 2020. ‘Pass the Ball’, So you care about Indigenous scholars? poster series, Ad Astra Comix, Canada.*



BORDERS AND DIVERSITY



Photo credit: Sally Tsoutas Ben Hanckel and Shiva Chandra report launch

VALENTINA BAÚ, BEN HANCKEL, SUKHMANI KHORANA, AND KAREN SOLDATIC

The Borders & Diversity Research Program is the collective home for many ICS researchers grappling with core questions and concerns around inequality, digitisation and community wellbeing. A common thread across the group has been the attentive exploration of the social impact of rapid transformations

occurring across the diverse communities of our region. As a result, researchers involved in the Borders & Diversity Research Program are building meaningful collaborative partnerships with a rich array of community partners, including batyr, Diversity Arts, Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association, Settlement Services International, Western Sydney Migrant Research Centre, and ACON Health to name a few.

Issues around culture and diversity cannot be studied from an Ivory Tower and necessarily involve exploration of the lived experiences of communities: of the interactions, reflections and dialogue that give shape to specific dynamics and relationships. The complexity of this realm of experience can only be unveiled through engaged scholarship. Connecting with both the public, civic and private sectors through substantial collaborations does not only enrich knowledge, but it is also key in institutionalising evidence-based interventions within social systems. Effective partnerships ensure that expertise is combined to reach innovative outcomes while translating issues in a way that reflects communities' needs and expectations. Engaged scholarship in Borders & Diversity goes beyond this,



Photo credit: Sally Tsoutas Western Sydney University at Mardi Gras

presenting compelling research findings that provide recommendations for best practice, aimed at influencing public and institutional policy, and inform the implementation of new interventions, including Parliamentary Inquiries and Social Policy Agendas.

Whilst the Institute has always had a strong tradition of researching migrant communities (especially in the Western Sydney region), in 2022 gender and sexuality emerged as strong focus of researchers in the program. This included a report focused upon intersectional and gender and sexuality diverse approaches to gender equity in the workplace, a community roadmap report investigating the social, emotional and cultural wellbeing of Indigenous LGBTIQ+ people in New South Wales and continuing work on the intersectional lived experience of wellbeing of young people, including sexuality and gender diverse youth. More work of this kind will develop into the future with the recently funded ARC Linkage led by Corrinne Sullivan and Karen Soldatic focused upon Indigenous LGBTIQ+ peoples' experiences & aspirations, Benjamin Hanckel's DECRA examining Youth Digital Wellbeing in Australia and the Philippines, and the presentation of

findings from Michelle Fitts DECRA exploring Indigenous women living with traumatic brain injury, their families and the services who support them.

Combined with our ongoing work with diverse communities and service-based organisations in Western Sydney, we collectively highlight the intersectional dimensions of research on Borders & Diversity and demonstrate the myriad of ways in which borders can exist at the national but also local and interpersonal level.

PUBLICATIONS

Baú, V. (2022) '[Framing the Representation of Refugee Children and Adolescents: a key informant review of the Italian Media](#)'. *Media Watch: Journal of Communication*, vol 13, no 1

Chandra, S. & Hanckel, B. (2022) '[I wouldn't want my family to cop anything': examining the family of origin and its place in LGBTQIA+ young people's social media practices](#)'. *Journal of Youth Studies*

Fitts, M., Cullen, J., Kingston, G., Johnson, Y., Wills, E. and Soldatic, K. (2023) '[Understanding the lives of Aboriginal and](#)

[Torres Strait Islander women with traumatic brain injury through family violence in Australia: a qualitative study protocol](#)', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, vol 20, no 2

Khorana, S. (2022) '[Indian-Australian Political Candidates as Transnational Actors: Reflecting the Community or Fighting Othering?](#)' in *Transnational Spaces of India and Australia*. Palgrave. 53-67

Soldatic, K., Briskman, L., Trewlynn, W., Leha, J. and Spurway, K. (2022) '[Social and emotional wellbeing of indigenous gender and sexuality diverse youth: mapping the evidence](#)'. *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, vol 24, no 4, pp 564-582

CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURES

**PHILLIP MAR,
DEBORAH STEVENSON,
AND ZELMARIE CANTILLON**

Since 2016, ICS has been carrying out research under the rubric of 'cultural infrastructure'. This work has examined diverse cultural institutions and practices such as heritage, the arts, and sport, as well as the provision and use of spaces for the production and consumption of culture. Research has included probing the cultural infrastructure initiatives and needs of local governments, the space requirements of creative workers, and the processes of embedding major cultural facilities into localities.

In general, cultural infrastructure is a somewhat under-theorised field, dominated by economic explanations that equate infrastructure as a means of 'non-economic' support for 'supply side' economic activity. Hence large-scale venues for cultural consumption are the typical images of cultural infrastructure. A large stadium or museum provides a convenient calculation of investment cost and employment, tourism and local business returns.

The work being done by ICS researchers both engages with and challenges such stereotypes and preconceptions. In 2022 it continued to pursue this agenda through the use of innovative methodologies that bring the theories and insights of social science and humanities to bear on the analysis of wider social values and benefits. Zelmari Cantillon's collaborations with Sarah Baker, Chelsea Evans and Norfolk Island residents to make zines that document life on the island exemplifies new approaches to the production of cultural knowledge. Deborah Stevenson has continued to lead engagement with Sydney local government on cultural planning and

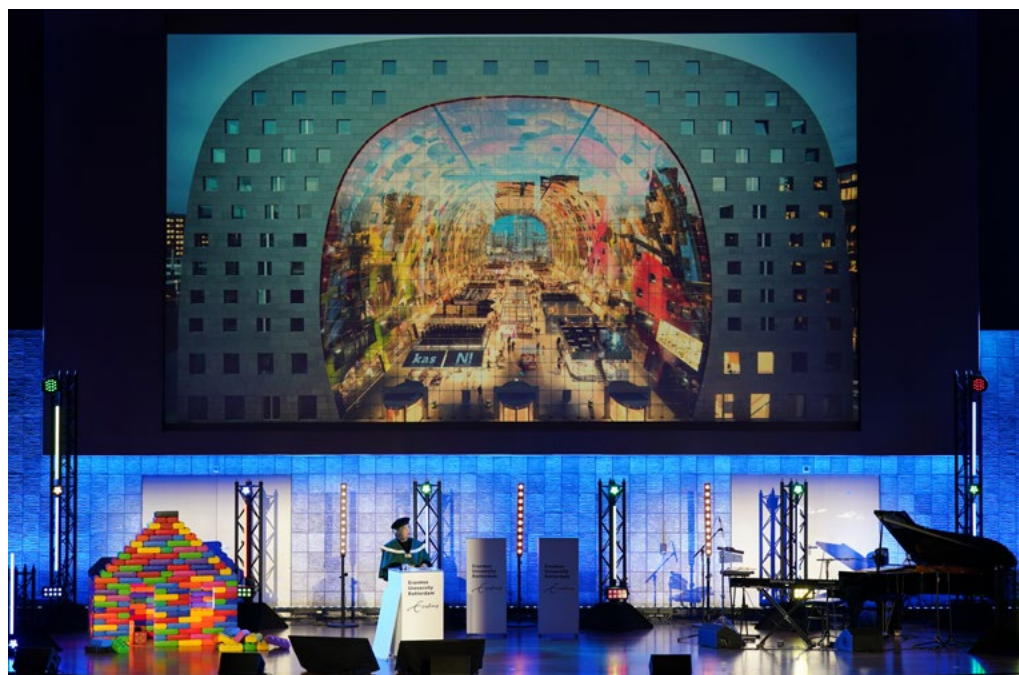


Photo credit: Dies Natalis 2022 at Erasmus University where Ien Ang was awarded an honorary doctorate

infrastructure, and together with Phillip Mar, David Rowe and Ien Ang, convened a review of past contributions and future directions of ICS' work in this area. During the year, Ien Ang was also awarded an honorary doctorate by Erasmus University – a welcome recognition of her seminal contributions to the field of cultural studies over four decades. And to cap off a productive year, Tony Bennett and David Rowe conducted a successful symposium with the *Journal of Sociology on the Fields, Capital, Habitus* book, published in 2020.

The early 2020s have been a period for reflection in many fields, and our Program has been building upon and rethinking the relationship between culture and infrastructure. Central to this task has been incorporation of the burgeoning spectrum of infrastructure thinking that has emerged in the last twenty-five years – a thinking that has linked culture to information technology and media theory, anthropology, urban and spatial studies, the history of technologies, knowledge or 'thinking' infrastructures, environmental crises, and the Anthropocene.

An influential strand of infrastructure theory is one which came out of the sociology of early computer technology focused on infrastructure as 'a system of substrates' that is 'by definition invisible, part of the background for other kinds of work... sunk into and inside of other structures, social arrangements, and technologies' (Star, 1999)¹. Infrastructures differ from structures or networks; they are entirely relational and contextual, unnoticed unless they fail. Anthropological studies have often examined the human practices that come to the fore when infrastructures fail. When a tap fails to produce water or housing is scarce, infrastructure becomes visible and the object of social struggle. So too with cultural provision in precarious or unstable conditions. Significant forms of art or cultural expression are produced in contexts of deprivation in music, think jazz, blues, reggae, hip-hop, or street art or writing from prisons.

As the research agenda of the ICS Cultural Infrastructure program matures, issues about the politics of cultural production, institutions

¹ Star, Susan Leigh (1999). "The Ethnography of Infrastructure." *American Behavioral Scientist* 43(3): 377-391.



Photo credit: Juan Francisco Salazar

and infrastructure will receive scrutiny both in Australian and international contexts. Researchers will also continue to work closely with governments as they seek to calibrate their cultural policy agendas to address the complexity of cultural infrastructure, and its importance to the future of cultural production and consumption. These are questions which extend beyond economic concerns to the social and the everyday and represent a significant refocusing of cultural policy research and its significance to city building.

PUBLICATIONS

Ang, I. (2022) 'Unruly Multiculture: Struggles for Arts and Media Diversity in the Anglophone West,' - Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication, 2022

Baker, S., Cantillon, Z. (2022) 'Zines as community archive', *Archival Science* 22, 539-561

Redaelli, E. and Stevenson, D. (2022) 'Arts in the city: debates in the Journal of Urban Affairs', *Journal of Urban Affairs*, vol 44, no 4-5, pp 456-470

Robertson, S., Wong, A., Ho, C., Ang, I., & Mar, P. (2022) 'Sydney as 'Sinoburbia': Patterns of diversification across emerging Chinese ethnoburbs'. *Urban Studies*, 59(16), 3422-3441

Rowe, D., & Bennett, T. (2022) 'Introduction: Surveying the survey', *Journal of Sociology*, 0(0)

URBAN FUTURES

**BY EMMA POWER AND
LOUISE CRABTREE-HAYES**

The Urban Futures Research Program draws on interdisciplinary insights to identify the conditions that make urban areas and regions flourish. In highly urbanised countries like Australia, diverse practices and infrastructures make this possible – from construction to health care and education, housing and everyday practices of living. The Urban Futures Research Program is geared towards the production of hopeful, caring and just futures in response to these challenges.

Members of the Urban Futures Research Program are committed to engaged research, working across the profit and not-for-profit, government and non-government, and international governance sectors to bring impactful change to urban areas and regions where we live and work. Much of the Program's work has focussed on our local region. The Program has been successful in launching the [Maldhan Ngurr Ngurra Lithgow Transformation Hub](#) in the city of Lithgow, after a decade of collaboration led by Louise Crabtree-Hayes; and it has secured an ARC Linkage, led by Stephen Healy, examining alternative cooling practices in urban heat islands like Western Sydney.

The Program also welcomes the launch of the Urban Transformations Research Centre at the ICS, discussed in greater length in the Director's Report. Already the UTRC has been contributing to discussions of the resilience of Sydney's food systems.

Work by Emma Power has been pivotal to broader conversations about housing, with her work being cited 55 times in a [NSW Senate Inquiry on homelessness and older people](#). Together with Emma Mitchell and other colleagues, she has also led a series of



Urban renewal in Oslo, new housing constructed in a former in the form port precinct, photo by Denis Byrne

practical and conceptual interventions on the critical need for new 'infrastructures of care' in relation to social and public housing, international students and older women, as traditional forms of welfare are abandoned or de-funded.

Indeed, our practice across the Program is informed by a central ethic of care. Grounded in feminist relational theories of care we understand care as an "activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our world so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our



Photo by Sally Tsoutas

bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave into a complex, life-sustaining web” (Fisher and Tronto 1990, p40)².

This definition captures care as both a practice - the practice of taking care - and an ethic that motivates action towards worlds that sustain life and support human and nonhuman flourishing. It points to a practice and ethic that is at once universal, in the sense that all beings and the worlds that we cohabit require care in some form, and particular, in describing an ethic and set of practices that are culturally situated and place-specific.

Working with diversity and complexity means that our engagements with care must engage with diverse understandings of the world. This suggests forms of collaboration that can engage productively and hopefully with diversity, such as those offered by understandings of commons. As place-based collaborative governance mechanisms, commons require careful consideration and engagement of rules regarding users, access, and use. That framework provides an appropriate vehicle for examining the ethics and parameters by which we live and organise life in cities, understanding this to require ongoing, reflexive dialogue in order to collaboratively govern cities towards flourishing in times of change.

The question then arises as to how we enable such change, which foregrounds our work on embedded and appropriate models of transition. However, rather than presuming a readily identifiable end point towards which to aim, we recognise that engaging with change in a complex system means acknowledging that change might not take the form we expect, or that unforeseen events might emerge.

This drives us yet again to commit to the ethical orientations that guide our work in place and on Country, and which are intended to enable us to respond creatively, rather than a commitment to a fixed outcome that might become inappropriate as the world changes. In this increasingly urban century, the decisions that we make around our urban futures will define not only the future of cities, but also planetary futures, and it is this challenge that is engaged with and held open with care through work in the program.

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Photo taken by Ned Rossiter



² Fisher, B. & Tronto, J. (1990) 'Toward a Theory of Care', in Abel, E. K. & Nelson, M. K. eds, *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives*, State University of New York Press

AUTOMATED WORLDS

**ISAAC LYNE,
BRETT NEILSON,
AND ADAM SARGENT**

In news stories and popular media automated technologies are portrayed as increasing our productivity and the everyday ways we engage with the world.

For example, recent work by Ned Rossiter, Brett Neilson, Liam Magee and others have highlighted the nanosecond coordination(s) of data packets in logistics centres linked to the punishing temporal rhythms of picking and packing imposed on workers. Nascent work by Adam Sargent, Isaac Lyne and Tsvetelina Hristova investigates the impact of fintech and automation on the daily rhythms of farming in countries like Cambodia and India.

Throughout 2022 the Automated Worlds research program has been exploring the temporalities of automation. Through a series of workshops with colleagues from the Institute and beyond, we have explored alternative forms of time and temporality associated with automation. How, for example, may automation be slowing things down, creating stasis, or deferring futures? What kinds of futures are envisioned with and through automation? And how and where do these take hold in different contexts?

One of the key concepts we have used to examine this dynamic – and the multiple forms of time we see around different automation processes – is what we have been calling ‘layered temporalities’. Participants involved in the research program workshops have been focused upon two forms of layering. First, we are interested in how technical systems generate different temporal rhythms. Automation routines seek to coordinate these rhythms to enable dispersed operations across different computing systems and diverse geographical sites. The resulting patterns of synchronisation and syncopation not only shape how computational machines interact with each other but also impose temporal requirements on users. Second, we are exploring how these novel technologies interact with the everyday temporal rhythms of people’s lives. Consider, for example, the



Photo credit: A Dali-esque painting of robots and humans working together, generated by MidJourney AI and Liam Magee

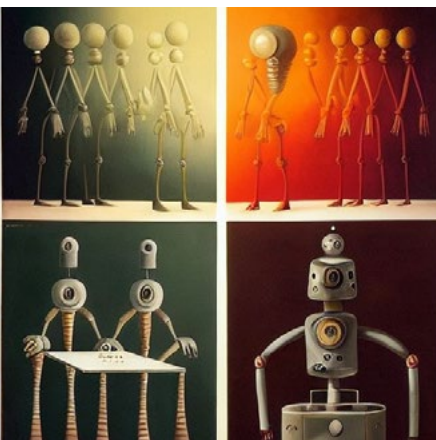
peasant farmer without collateral or a formal credit history who, through innovations in algorithmic credit scoring, becomes enrolled into financialised agrarian practices based on predictions of their likelihood to default on loans. Here the lived temporality of automation interacts with the rhythms of digitally mediated communication and the times of social obligation.

Alongside the relationship between time and automation, the Automated Worlds research program began collaborating with the Environment and Technology program to develop the Future Extractivism seminars. Our particular interest lies in the hardware that enables automation and the raw materials required for its construction. Lithium, cobalt, tungsten, coltan (the so-called transition minerals) are essential to the production of the computers, phones, and other devices that make automated worlds in contexts ranging from Australia, Chile and elsewhere. Moreover, automated machine learning technologies rely upon the provision of the data often through extractive processes such as remote sensing, social media platforms, or techniques of economic rentiership.

As our ongoing research suggests, time and extraction cross automated worlds in diverse ways. In coming years, the Automated Worlds program will continue to explore the effects of these qualities on technical routines of automation, the data that enable such routines, and the social domains and physical environments in which automation takes shape.

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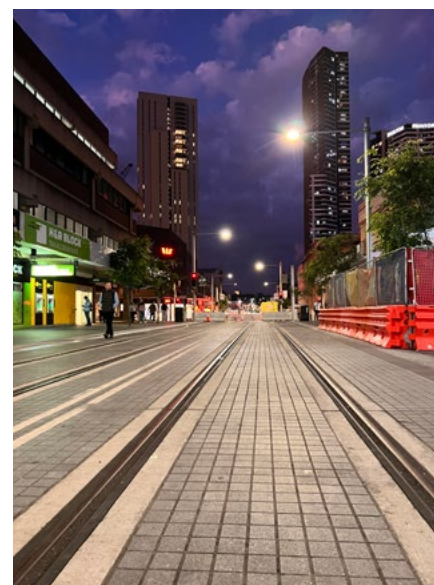


Photo by Malini Sur

ENVIRONMENT AND TECHNOLOGY



Photo taken by Malini Sur

BY DECLAN KUCH AND LIAM MAGEE

The catastrophe of the Black Summer bushfires abutted by consecutive La Niña has turbo-charged new ways of acting with and for our nonhuman world. Lumping coal in with surfboards, BBQs and mowers as some essential technology of Australian culture is simply no longer tenable. Coal is exiting

Australia's domestic energy system faster than experts predicted only recently.

There's a consistent if hesitant line connecting these pro-renewable boardroom decisions to some 15 years of concerted climate campaigning by diverse coalitions of youth, environmental campaigners, farmers, faith groups, and many others. This campaigning has delivered a new landscape of possibilities in Australia, while also posing profound new challenges. The Environment & Technology research platform has been at the forefront of this moment of economic, political and

generational transition. In 2022 – [successfully circumventing a previous ministerial veto](#) – Philippa Collin led a successful grant submission, New Possibilities: Young People and Democratic Renewal, to examine methods and motivations of student organisation and participation in climate change protest. Declan Kuch and Gay Hawkins both co-edited separate critical new volumes on the economics of emerging technologies and climate change. In [Economies of Virtue](#), Declan and colleagues offer a forensic review of how ethics is mobilised within one of the major new fields of fuel consumption and carbon emissions – artificial intelligence. In [Market Detachment](#), on the other hand, Gay



Photo by Juan Francisco Salazar

and her co-editors examine how detachment might work to deflate the influence of markets and usher in alternate economic arrangements. Exploring other environmental and social intersections, Juan Salazar launched a report, [Framing the Futures of Australia in Space](#), developed through his Future Fellowship. Josh Wodak and team have continued to work at the frontiers of the technologisation of life itself, through their contributions to the multi-institutional Centre of Excellence in Synthetic Biology.

As mineral extraction switches from fossil fuels to other elements to fuel electric cars, supply wind turbines and solar panels, we cannot be complacent about coal's vaunted replacements. Australia, alongside Chile, is shaping up to be the major Lithium producers in the world – one reason why we hosted, as part of our second-semester seminar program, a discussion with Manuel Tironi to examine new forms of environmental violence unleashed by an insatiable thirst for the convenience and energy security of Lithium-based battery production. This discussion contributed to a wider research stream in 2022 that also featured a reading group and seminar series focusing on related historical and conceptual questions. In a collaboration with Automated Worlds and running through early 2023, this series will excavate

past, contemporary and future modes of extractivism, which ICS' Brett Neilson has described as "a 500-year-old mode of accumulation based in colonial practices of extraction".

In 2023, Program seminars, publications and grants-in-progress will together drive further interrogation of how systems of science and technology work, even while they extract and complicate our relation to environment and ecologies. In relation to new forms of energy production: what means justify the ends of transitioning our power systems and infrastructure, and what sacrifice zones are we now willing to tolerate? In relation to data: how it is produced, extracted and mobilised, and how might our responses to that question align or challenge colonial and racial legacies of capitalism? In relation to finance, a key legal and political category for contemporary capitalism: how will it operate through new forms of derivative creation, and what alternatives exist for detaching from financial markets, and reattaching ourselves to other, less extractive economic forms?

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