

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



Institute for Culture
and Society

2023 ICS Conference

Terrestrial Politics In Uncertain Times

25 October

Maldhan Ngurr Ngurra
Lithgow Transformation Hub
Lithgow NSW 2790

26-27 October

Powerhouse Museum Ultimo
Ultimo NSW 2007



Terrestrial Politics In Uncertain Times

The climate crisis breaches basic categories of thought. The primary coordinates – society and culture, environment and economy, human and non-human – no longer orient the composition of the world amid profound disruption and transition. Despair and horror punctuate the emergence of what Bruno Latour termed ‘the new climate regime’. How to respond? How do we come down to earth where ‘ecological’ concerns coincide with ‘social’ concerns for more liveable futures?

Recent studies indicate four in five people have been directly impacted by climate change related natural disasters in Australia. What sort of disciplinary resources do we have available to address and make intelligible the horror and devastation of species depletion and environmental degradation? In the realm of the formal production of knowledge, the divide between STEM disciplines and the humanities and social sciences is itself a product of settler colonialism and industrialization. Crafting trajectories beyond this divide also means encountering cultures and cosmologies where such epistemic dislocations of this kind were never operative in the first place.



The collective work of cultivating a ‘difference which makes a difference’ (Bateson) entails producing shared matters of concern. The integrity of soils, qualities of atmosphere and ocean, the durable futures of material and energetic infrastructures – these are among the cast of elements and conditions key to questions of futurity that bind the current conjuncture with generations to come.



The Institute for Culture and Society stages this event to explore how we can engage analytically and politically with ‘common cosmological concerns’ (Latour). Leading scholars, practitioners, and artists join this collective experiment in devising new concepts to address the unprecedented challenges that demand attention.



Program

Day One

25 October
Maldhan Ngurr Ngurra
Lithgow Transformation Hub
154 Mort St, Lithgow NSW

Session One

10.00AM-12.30PM

After the Fire, Beyond the Waters: Thriving Future

Jason De Santolo, Auntie Sharon Riley,
David Conyers
Chair: Stephen Healy

Session Two

1.30PM-3.30PM

Lithgow Regional Futures: Workshopping Transition

Louis Crabtree-Hayes, Neil Perry,
Michele Maloney
Chair: Cameron Tonkinwise

Return to Sydney

Transport details to come

Program

Day Two

26 October
Powerhouse Museum
500 Harris St, Ultimo

Session One

10.00AM-12.30PM

Postgraduate Masterclass with Maria Bargh and Kelly Dombroski

Masterclass with postgraduate students around key issues on terrestrial politics and higher degrees research.

Session Two

3.30PM-5.30PM

Keynote: After Latour, Legacies and Trajectories

Stephen Muecke, Sophie Chao, Dipesh Chakrabarty(by video)
Chair: Gay Hawkins

Reception

5.30PM-6.30PM



Program

Day Three

27 October
Powerhouse Museum Ultimo
500 Harris St, Ultimo

Matters of Concern, Elemental Politics

Session One

9.00AM-10.30PM

Energy // Transition

Maria Bargh, Darren Sharp
Chair: Declan Kuch

Session Two

Earth // Off-Earth Politics

11.00AM-12.30PM

Screening of The Archival Futures
Collective's Outer Space Film Quartet and
Q&A with filmmakers Ceridwen Dovey and
Rowena Potts in dialogue with
Juan Francisco Salazar
Chair: Deborah Lawler-Dormer

Session Three

1.30PM-3.30PM

Care // Health

Emma Power, Miriam Williams,
Kelly Dombroski
Chair: Heather Horst

Some meals and refreshments
will be provided.

Participants

Jason De Santolo

Jason is Garrwa and Barunggam and Professor of First Nations Land Justice in Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research and Associate Dean (Indigenous Research) at UTS. He has worked in higher education for over two decades, combining legal training with creative methodologies to further Indigenous rights and environmental justice.



Auntie Sharon Riley

Auntie Sharon is a proud Wiradjuri elder. She takes pride in having extensive experience in site identification and assisting with remedial work on Aboriginal rock art sites. She has been involved with major works across the state and heavily in the local area. These include Aboriginal place identifications and declarations, site training, rock art remedial work, community liaison for the management of sites, and ecological restoration and bushfire recovery work and management frameworks for a protected Aboriginal area.



Sharon leads site awareness training, rock art graffiti removal training, community projects, and workshops for cultural understanding, art interpretation, and traditional practices. This includes leading culturally based mental health programs and firefighter training, and teaching cultural burning to emerging Wiradjuri leaders to then support the broader community in undertaking cultural burns to care for Country. Sharon has led successful major funding submissions including recent Heritage NSW and Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grants. Sharon is also leading the establishment of an Indigenous ranger program through NIAA, which has recently secured registration.

Participants

David J Conyers

Born the son of an English orphan soldier settler farmer near Bathurst NSW. School vice-captain Bathurst High 1976. Australian government apprentice of the year 1981 Refrigeration trades. Fifty-year association with Rugby union as a player, coach, referee, and administrator across six continents. Goodwill missions to Pacific nations, India, Uganda, and Europe promoting rugby and delivering aid and support to disadvantaged communities through the power of sport. Undergraduate and master's degrees in sports science as a 50-year-old. From American universities. Founder Fridgy's for Eugowra delivering a disaster relief mission to re-air condition an entire town and a \$400k volunteer services and products to the Tsunami damaged township.



Participants

Stephen Healy

Stephen Healy is a geographer and an Associate Professor in the School of Social Science and Research Fellow at the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University. His work draws on insights from Marxian, feminist, and psychoanalytic theory to understand processes of social transformation. Healy's current work encompasses two Australian Research Council projects centred around economies of waste and reuse. By drawing on perspectives from diverse economies, discard studies, and design, he aims to foster a shared understanding of social innovation, opening up new political possibilities for more inclusive and just forms of a circular economy. Collaborating with Associate Professor Abby Mellick Lopes, Healy is also co-leading a three-year project that focuses on climate change adaptation in the context of social housing providers. This research endeavour seeks to explore innovative strategies for climate resilience within social housing communities. He is co-author of *Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming our Communities* with J.K. Gibson-Graham and Jenny Cameron. His works have appeared in *Geoforum*, *Antipode*, *Emotion Space and Society*, *Environment and Planning D*, and the *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*. He is treasurer of the Community Economies Institute and associate editor of the journal *Rethinking Marxism*.



Participants

Louise Crabtree-Hayes

Louise's research focuses on the social, ecological, and economic sustainability of community-driven housing developments in Australia; on the uptake of housing innovation in practice and policy; on complex adaptive systems theory in urban contexts; and, on the interfaces between sustainability, property rights, institutional design, and democracy. Her work is underpinning the emergence of forms of permanently affordable and community-led housing in Australia, such as housing cooperatives and community land trusts, on which she is Australia's leading expert.



Day One



Participants

Neil Perry

Neil is an Associate Professor in Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability. He specialises in progressive economics approaches to environmental economics and policy and in ecological economics, an interdisciplinary field emphasising the interdependence of economic, social, and ecological values. His research on the economics of biodiversity conservation, policy to combat climate change, and heterodox environmental economics is published in *Ecological Economics*, the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, the *Journal of Australian Political Economy*, and *Wildlife Research*.

Neil's applied research involves the use of cost benefit analysis and other economic analysis tools to promote sustainability and environmental and social values. He has completed research grants with local Councils, social housing providers, and environmental organisations, and has three current research grants with colleagues from the Institute for Culture and Society and the Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment: an ARC Linkage Project grant on articulating value in cooperative housing; a TfNSW/Metro grant on the wider economic benefits of transport projects; and a DPE grant to develop the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan Research Implementation Strategy. Neil's applied work on transitioning economies and at the Maldhan Ngurr Ngurra Lithgow Transformation Hub has been recognised with an appointment to the NSW Governments Regional Expert Panel for the Central West.



Participants

Michelle Maloney

Dr Michelle Maloney is the Co-founder and National Convenor of the Australian Earth Laws Alliance (AELA), and a Director of Future Dreaming and the New Economy Network Australia (NENA). She is recognised internationally as a leading authority on Earth laws, Earth jurisprudence and Rights of Nature and her books, journal publications, podcasts, and speaking events can be accessed on her profile page: www.earthlaws.org.au/michelle.



Michelle began her career as an environmental lawyer, and then broadened her work to include multi-disciplinary approaches to creating Earth-centred governance and systems change. She now designs and manages social change initiatives that focus on creating bioregional stewardship and governance, reimagining law and economics, empowering communities, bridging different cultural approaches to ecological care, Earth-centred ethics, and the arts. As a Director of Future Dreaming, Michelle works with First Nations elders and communities, and is currently writing a book with Indigenous elder Mary Graham, called *Future Law: How the Relationist Ethos can be a Foundation for Australian Society*.

Michelle holds a Bachelor of Arts (Political Science and History) and Laws (Honours) from the Australian National University and a PhD in Law from Griffith University. Michelle's PhD analysed how collective action (including law and regulation) can help reduce unsustainable consumption. She is Adjunct Senior Fellow, Law Futures Centre, Griffith University; on the Steering Group for the International Ecological Law and Governance Association (ELGA), and is on the Advisory Group for the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature (GARN).

Participants

Cameron Tonkinwise

Professor Cameron Tonkinwise teaches Service Design and researches Sustainable Design at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). His expertise has reshaped traditional thinking around how designers should be educated, and he has established Design Studies programs at the Parsons The New School for Design (New York), Carnegie Mellon University (Pittsburgh), and UTS. Cameron has been a leading voice in the emerging practice of Transition Design, enabling human-scale designers to facilitate systems-level change toward more equitably sustainable societies. His collection of essays on the philosophy of design, *How Designing Happens*, will be published by Bloomsbury.



Participants

Kelly Dombroski

Kelly Dombroski is a researcher in social, economic and environmental change in Aotearoa New Zealand and Asia Pacific. She is Associate Professor of Geography at Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa Massey University. Her current five-year research project funded by Te Aparangi Royal Society of New Zealand is titled Transitioning to Caring Economies through Transformative Community Investment. It involves working with a range of innovative community groups who are already doing transformational work. She is a member of the Community Economies Institute and facilitates the Aotearoa node of the annual Researching Postcapitalist Possibilities Summer/Winter School.

Kelly has published widely in the areas of feminist economic geography, care, diverse economies and community economies in Asia Pacific. With JK Gibson-Graham, she is the co-editor of the *Handbook of Diverse Economies* (Edward Elgar 2020). Her other books include *Huritanga: Ten Years of Transformative Placemaking* (Life in Vacant Spaces 2022), *Introducing Human Geographies 4th Edition* (Routledge, 2024), and *Caring for Life: A Postdevelopment Politics of Infant Hygiene* (University of Minnesota Press, 2023). Kelly grew up in rural Wairarapa, studied in New Zealand, Australia and China, and now lives in Manawatū. She descends from Scottish, English, Irish, and German immigrants and has four children.



Participants

Maria Bargh

Maria Bargh (Te Arawa, Ngāti Awa) is Professor of Politics and Māori Studies at Te Herenga Waka, Victoria University of Wellington. She has researched and published widely in the area of politics: Māori, local, national, and international. Her work on a 'tika transition' for climate change has been used by community organisations and local and central government in Aotearoa New Zealand. She is co-chair of the 'adaptive governance and policy' research team for the Biological Heritage, National Science Challenge and is Deputy Chair of the Independent Electoral Review Panel. She is also Minerals Advisor for her hapū Ngāti Kea/Ngāti Tuara at Horohoro, Rotorua.



Stephen Muecke

Stephen Muecke is a research professor at the Nulungu Research Institute Notre Dame University, Broome, Emeritus Professor of Ethnography at the University of New South Wales, and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. Recent books are *The Children's Country: Creation of a Goolarabooloo Future in North-West Australia*, co-authored with Paddy Roe, 2020, a translation of Philippe Pignarre's, *Latour-Stengers: An Entangled Flight*, 2023, and a forthcoming translation of Bernadette Bensaude-Vincent and Sacha Loeve's *Carbon: A Biography*.



Participants

Sophie Chao

Sophie Chao is DECRA Fellow and Lecturer in the Discipline of Anthropology at the University of Sydney. Her research investigates the intersections of Indigeneity, ecology, capitalism, health, and justice in the Pacific. Chao is author of *In the Shadow of the Palms: More-Than-Human Becomings in West Papua* and co-editor of *The Promise of Multispecies Justice*. She previously worked for the Indigenous rights organization, Forest Peoples Programme. Chao is of Sino-French heritage and lives on unceded Gadigal lands in Sydney, Australia.



Dipesh Chakrabarty

Dipesh Chakrabarty is the Kimpton Distinguished Service Professor of History, South Asian Languages and Civilizations, and the College at the University of Chicago. He is the author of several books, including *Rethinking Working-Class History: Bengal, 1890-1940* (Princeton, 1989), *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, 2000), *The Calling of History: Sir Jadunath Sarkar and His Empire of Truth* (Chicago, 2015), and *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age* (Chicago, 2021). He is a founding member of the editorial collective of *Subaltern Studies*, a consulting editor of *Critical Inquiry*, and a founding editor of *Postcolonial Studies*. He was awarded the Toynbee Foundation Prize in 2014 for his contributions to global history and the Tagore Memorial Prize of the Government of West Bengal in 2019.



Participants

Gay Hawkins

Gay Hawkins is a professor of social and cultural theory at the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University, and a fellow of the Australian Academy of Humanities. She has played a key role in the development of Australian cultural studies as an interdisciplinary and philosophically informed practice of social reflection. She is recognised for research in three distinct areas: the relations between culture and governance, environmental humanities, and the sociotechnical and political lives of materials. Over the last ten years she has conducted a range of major projects investigating the cultural and political history of plastic and its complex remaking of environments, economies and everyday life. Key books include: *The Ethics of Waste* (2005), *The SBS Story: Broadcasting Social Diversity* (with Ian Ang, 2008), *Accumulation: The Material Politics of Plastic* (with Jennifer Gabrys and Mike Michael, 2013) and *Plastic Water* (with Kane Race and Emily Potter, 2015).



Participants

Darren Sharp

Dr Darren Sharp is Senior Research Fellow at Monash Sustainable Development Institute and a sustainability transitions researcher interested in urban experimentation, living labs, grassroots innovations, and the sharing economy. His work is situated at the intersection of transition management, design for social innovation, and community economies thinking, with a particular interest in collaborative governance of urban transitions. Darren co-led the urban living lab Livewell Yarra which used action research to empower local residents to reduce their carbon emissions at an individual, household, and community level. His research speaks to the possibilities of social learning, institutional arrangements, and new urban imaginaries to drive the transformation of cities towards sustainability. Darren is taking these insights into his role as the Interdisciplinary Research Lead of the Net Zero Precincts ARC Linkage Project that brings together a new approach to transition management by using design anthropology to engage with the precinct community and consider their lived experiences. This is being tested over four years in an action-oriented case study in the Monash Technology Precinct through a portfolio of Living Lab experiments across energy, mobility, buildings, governance, and data.



Participants

Declan Kuch

Dr Declan Kuch is a Vice-Chancellor's Research Fellow at the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University, specializing in the sociology of knowledge and emerging technologies. His research encompasses the societal dimensions of the climate and energy transition, automation, and life sciences. He has consulted to the Australian Council of Learned Academies on public engagement with science and technology, and leads work on the social value of new energy technologies through the IEA's User-Centred Energy Systems Technology Collaboration Program. He has recently published in journals including *Science as Culture*, *Global Environmental Policy and Futures*, and co-edited the volume *Economies of Virtue: The Circulation of 'Ethics' in AI* (2022).



Ceridwen Dovey

Ceridwen Dovey writes fiction (*Only the Animals; Mothertongues*) and creative non-fiction (*On J.M. Coetzee: Writers on Writers*) and has won an Australian Museum Eureka Award & two UNSW Press Bragg Prizes for long-form science writing. With creative collaborator Rowena Potts, Ceridwen has written and produced *The Archival Futures of Outer Space Film Quartet* about ethics and emotions in outer space. She has recently completed her DCA at Western Sydney University, with Professor Juan Francisco Salazar as her supervisor. Her book of short stories told from the perspective of real space objects launched by humans, *Only the Astronauts*, will be published by Penguin Random House in 2024.



Participants

Rowena Potts

Rowena Potts is an award-winning filmmaker whose work explores the entanglement of human and non-human worlds. She is a co-founder, with Ceridwen Dovey, of the Archival Futures Collective, a creative collaboration dedicated to making experimental non-fiction media inspired by the archives and research collections of museums, libraries, and cultural institutions around the world. She holds a PhD in Cultural Anthropology from NYU and a graduate diploma in documentary from the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS). Rowena is currently participating in Documentary Australia's inaugural Impact Producer Program.



Juan Francisco Salazar

Juan Francisco Salazar was born in Santiago, Chile, and migrated to Sydney in 1998. For the past fifteen years he has lived along the Cooks River, in unceded Gadigal, Wangal, and D'harawal Country. He is an interdisciplinary researcher, author, and documentary filmmaker who engages with communities and places where the environmental and cultural challenges of living sustainably are starkly exposed. His academic and creative work explore the coupled dynamics of social-ecological change and is underpinned by a collaborative ethos across the arts, science, and activism.



Participants

Deborah Lawler-Dormer

Deborah Lawler-Dormer is a research manager based in Sydney, Australia specializing in art, science, media, and technology projects. She has a PhD in creative practice from University of Auckland and University of New South Wales. From 1996 to 2011, Lawler-Dormer was the director of the Moving Image Centre (MIC) Toi Rerehiko, an organization dedicated to the exhibition of media arts practice. She was a founding co-director in the establishment of CoLab, a creative technologies research unit at AUT University. Her practice features transdisciplinary art-sci-tech projects connecting universities, community, and industry.



Participants

Emma Power

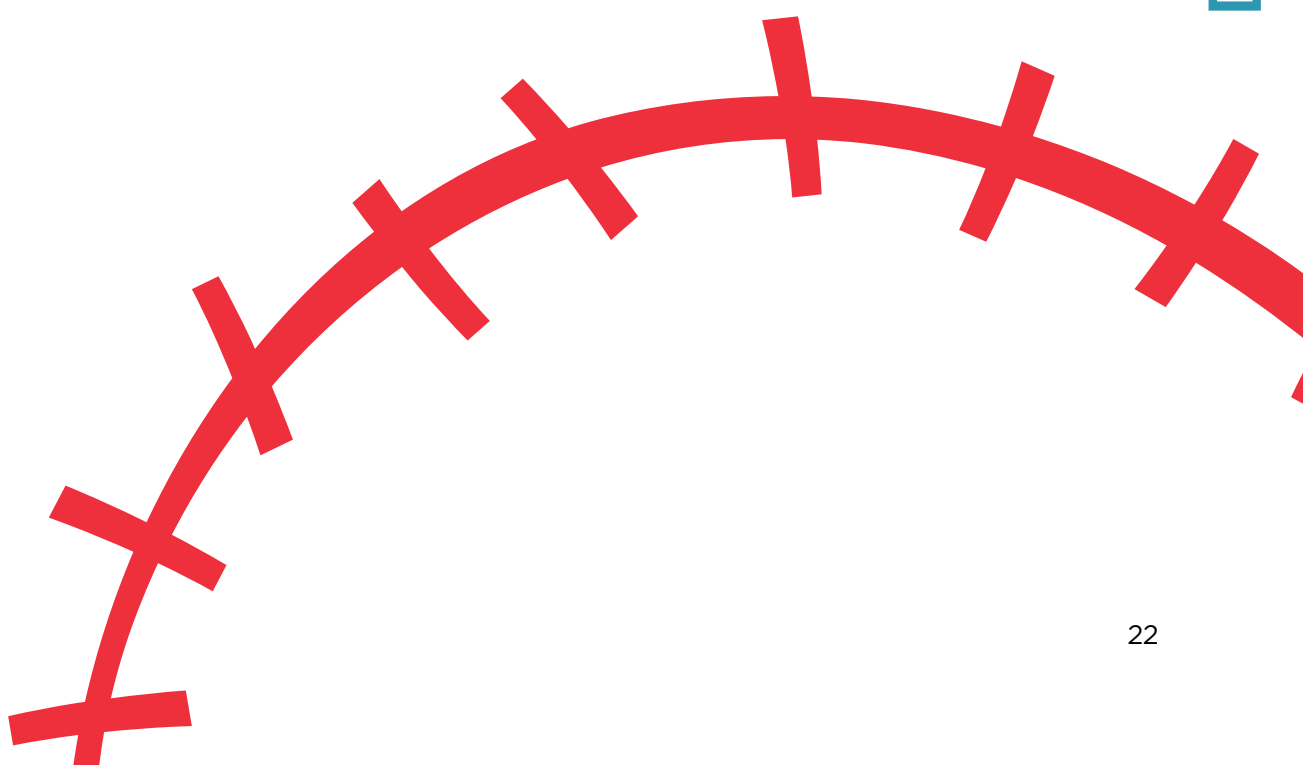
Emma Power is an Associate Professor in Geography and Urban Studies in the School of Social Sciences and an ICS Institute Fellow. Emma's programme of research is concerned with urban living and the politics of care. It envisions a world of more caring and just cities, asking how the capacity of people to meet their needs for care and to live a good life can be better supported within cities and through the broader housing and welfare systems. This work is motivated by an interest in what makes cities liveable and is driven with concerns about the implications of growing urban and housing inequity, the residualisation of social welfare systems in western liberal welfare states, and urban liveability in changing climates. Emma leads the ARC Discovery Project 'Shadow Care Infrastructures: Sustaining Life in Post-welfare Cities' (2021-2024) which asks how people reliant on government income support make ends meet. It investigates whether and how 'shadow care infrastructures' - a wide range of formal and informal material and social supports - enable the survival, well-being, and flourishing of income support recipients. Focusing on people with disabilities, unemployed, and asylum seekers, the research evaluates the benefits and harms such infrastructures produce for those receiving and providing care, and the wider community. It examines risks and opportunities to scale up emerging care infrastructures identified as critical to making ends meet for income support recipients in contemporary cities.



Participants

Miriam Williams

Dr Miriam Williams is Senior Lecturer in Geography and Planning in the Macquarie School of Social Sciences at Macquarie University, Sydney. Miriam is an urban cultural geographer whose work contributes to scholarship on care, justice, food, and commons in the city. Her work focuses on how urban life could be made more just and caring for people and planet. She is most well known internationally for her work on Care-full Justice in the city, Cities of Care, and urban commons. She is currently working on projects on student food insecurity, community food initiatives, and public spaces. Miriam is a Chief Investigator on an ARC Linkage Project with Transport for NSW on the Power of Public Spaces and a member of the International Community Economies Institute.



Participants

Heather Horst

Professor Heather A. Horst is the Director of the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University. A sociocultural anthropologist by training, she researches material culture and the mediation of social relations through digital media and technology. Her books focused upon these themes include *The Cell Phone: An Anthropology of Communication* (Horst and Miller, 2006); *Hanging Around, Messing Around and Geeking Out: Kids Living and Learning with New Media* (Ito, 2010); *Digital Anthropology* (Horst and Miller, eds. 2012); *Digital Ethnography: Principles and Practices* (Pink, Horst, 2015); *The Routledge Companion to Digital Ethnography* (Hjorth, Horst, Galloway, and Bell, 2016); *The Moral Economy of Mobile Phones: Pacific Island Perspectives* (Foster and Horst, eds. 2018), and *Location Technologies in International Context* (Wilken, Goggin, and Horst, eds. 2019). Her current research, part of an ARC Linkage Project led by Dr Denis Crowdy with the Wontok Foundation and Further Arts Vanuatu, examines the circulation of music in Melanesia through mobile technologies. She is also developing new work examining the Fijian fashion system as well as Automated Decision Making.



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We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the remarkable individuals and organisations who have played an integral role in making this endeavour a resounding success. Your unwavering support, dedication, and contributions have truly made a difference.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and the lands on which we are holding this event. We recognise the continuing connection to lands, waters, and communities and pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to Elders past and present.

To our esteemed collaborators at The Powerhouse Museum, Maldhan Ngurr Ngurra Lithgow Transformation Hub, and Western Sydney University, your partnership has been instrumental in shaping the outcome of this project. Your expertise, resources, and collaborative spirit have breathed life into our vision, and we are immensely grateful for your commitment. With special acknowledgment to Neil Perry, Western Sydney University Sustainability theme champion.

We also want to express our sincere appreciation to the brilliant minds behind the concept: Tony Bennett, Stephen Muecke, Stephen Healy, Declan Kuch, Heather Horst, Gay Hawkins, and Ned Rossiter. Your creative spark ignited the journey that led us here today.

The Organising Committee, consisting of Co-Chairs, Declan Kuch and Stephen Healy together with Denise Rezk, Gay Hawkins, Heather Horst, Juan Francisco Salazar Sutil, Louise Crabtree-Hayes, Ned Rossiter, and Sally Byrnes. Your dedication has been the driving force that transformed ideas into a tangible reality.

Cover photo by Juan Francisco Salazar.
Design by Just Gold.

