



Australian
National
University

Australian Climate Security and Disaster Preparedness Symposium



Image: Bushfires threaten the ACT in January 2020

Date: 14 March 2025

Time: 10am-2pm

Venue: Mills Room, 4th Floor Chancelry Building, Australian National University

Contact: Dr Jessie Moritz (jessie.moritz@anu.edu.au)

Synopsis

As climate change exacerbates extreme weather events, Australia will experience more frequent and severe disasters – with the massive human and economic cost visible in recent high-profile disasters such as the 2019-2020 Black Summer bushfires and catastrophic floods in 2022. These challenging, cascading, and systemic conditions are already placing enormous pressure on our emergency and disaster response systems.

We are in a new era of risk and urgently require new and improved strategies to enhance Australia's disaster preparedness and resilience. We are also in a point of opportunity. With the release of the Independent Review of Commonwealth Disaster Funding (Colvin Review) and Independent Review of National Natural Disaster Governance Arrangements (Glasser Review), there is a unique opportunity to strengthen Australia's disaster preparedness. Research from the Australian National University (ANU) demonstrates that a transformative approach to addressing the growing disaster risks posed by climate change is critical. Rapidly intensifying weather fuelled by climate change demands new approaches to national climate security.

This symposium draws together Canberra-based researchers and practitioners to strengthen a community of practice on climate and disaster security – supporting cutting-edge policymaking built on the latest scientific evidence. The symposium is solution-oriented: we aim to identify specific, actionable solutions and opportunities for further collaboration across the scientific and whole-of-government policymaking communities on Australian climate security and disaster resilience.

Driving questions include:

- How can the recommendations of the Colvin and Glasser Reviews be most effectively implemented across the whole-of-government and whole-of-nation?
- How can the Australian Government best capitalise on the wide expertise available, across both policymakers and researchers, to improve Australia's preparedness for disasters related to climate change, both domestically and in our region?
- What do policymakers need from the scientific community, and how can the scientific community better engage with policymakers? What opportunities exist for further collaborations to improve Australia's climate security?
- What remaining knowledge gaps does this community of practice foresee will become pivotal in our immediate, medium, or longterm future, and how can we collaboratively address these issues?

By strengthening a community of practice between researchers and practitioners and fostering collaboration to identify specific, actionable

solutions, this symposium seeks to enhance Australian climate security and natural disaster preparedness.

Agenda

Note: This event will be held under Chatham House rule to encourage frank and open dialogue.

9.45-10am: Arrival and coffee

10-10.15am: Welcome, Acknowledgement, and Introduction

10.15-11.15am: Expert panel Q&A

11.15-1.30pm: Structured Discussion

1.30-2pm: Lunch/networking

Welcome, Acknowledgement, and Introduction

Associate Professor Roslyn Prinsley

Head of Disaster Solutions, ICEDS, ANU

Roslyn is Head of Disaster Solutions, Institute of Climate, Energy and Disaster Solutions. Previously, she was Head, Strategic Research Initiatives, in the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation at the ANU. She was previously the National Adviser for Science and Mathematics Education and Industry in the Office of the Chief Scientist. Roslyn has had an extensive career leading research in natural resource management and bioenergy. She has published over 90 books, papers and reports.



Expert Panellists

Professor (Hon) Robert Glasser

Senior Fellow, Australian Strategic Policy Institute

Dr. Robert Glasser is a Senior Fellow at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) and served as the inaugural Head of ASPI's Climate and Security Policy Centre from 2021 to 2024. He previously held the role of United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, where he was a member of the Secretary-General's Senior Management Team.



Prior to his work with the UN, Dr. Glasser was the Secretary-General of CARE International, one of the world's largest humanitarian organizations, overseeing a global workforce of more than 10,000 staff across 80 countries. From 2003 to 2007, he served as Chief Executive of CARE Australia. Earlier in his career, Dr. Glasser held the position of Assistant Director General at AusAID (the Australian Government's aid agency), where he led programs for Papua New Guinea, Southeast Asia, corporate policy, and the Infrastructure and Environment Group.

Dr. Glasser's earlier work includes contributions to climate change science and policy analysis with the US Department of Energy at Los Alamos National Laboratory's Center for National Security Studies. Additionally, he conducted research on peace and conflict issues at several institutions, including the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University, the Cornell University Peace Studies Program, and the Centre for International and Strategic Affairs at the University of California.

Currently, Dr. Glasser is a member of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Development Program Committee, which oversees Australia's development cooperation initiatives. He also serves on the boards of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority and Fire to Flourish and is a member of the Lethal Humidity Global Council.

Previously, he was the inaugural board chairman of the CHS International Alliance, chair of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response, an Advisory Panel member of the Climate Vulnerability Monitor, a member of the Principals Steering Group of the United Nations Transformative Agenda for Humanitarian Action, and a member of the Steering Group for the World Economic Forum project on the Future Role of Civil Society.

Associate Professor Mark Crosweller AFSM

Associate Professor in the Practice of National Security Leadership, NSC, ANU

Mark has 40 years of experience in crisis, national security, and emergency management, leading major strategic reform in governance, strategy, policy, operations, and capability. Between 2012-2020 as Director General Emergency Management Australia and Head of the National Resilience Taskforce, Mark was responsible for briefing the Prime Minister and Cabinet on disaster management and providing strategic policy advice on climate and disaster risk reduction and resilience. Mark is now the Founder and Director of Ethical Intelligence; Senior Advisor and Luminary to KPMG advising on disaster management, resilience, and leadership ethics; Distinguished Advisor to the National Security College - Australian National University; and published Author. Mark's ongoing research interest is in relational leadership ethics in senior executive leadership within the private sector, public service, national security, and disaster management sectors. His book is titled "Compassion in Disaster Management: The Essential Ethic of Relational Leadership".



Mr Barry Thomas (via Zoom)

President, Bushfire Education Foundation

Barry Thomas is President of Bushfire Education Foundation Inc and former local and international TV News cameraman for over 35 years. Some of the Australian news stories he covered included the Westgate Bridge Disaster, Cyclone Tracey, the Granville Train Disaster, and the Ash Wednesday Bushfires.

Following the 2009 Black Saturday Fires in Victoria, Barry spent over 10 years recording and working with four communities - Marysville, Kinglake, Strathewen and Flowerdale - in their disaster recovery and rebuilding. From his long experience of direct engagement with communities impacted by disaster, Barry believes a National Disaster Education facility needs to be established to educate the ever-changing population on disaster preparedness.



Tracey & Ken Harrison (via zoom)

Harrison & Sons Farms, Araluen

Harrison and Sons is a 4th generation family-run farm in the Araluen Valley. The Harrison family have been in the Valley since the 1800's during the goldrush, growing fruit and vegetables. The farm is mixed farming consisting of fruit, vegetables, sheep, cattle and hay.



The orchard downsized from 12,000 trees and employing 20 casual seasonal workers in the early 2000s to 3,000 trees in 2023, as it wasn't viable with only Ken, Tracey and their children running it. In the last few years they have been impacted by drought, fires, floods, livestock market fluctuations, soaring production costs, road closures, landslides and now going through another dry time. The Harrison family will share their personal reflections as primary producers navigating cascading natural disasters and the local, state & federal assistance programs designed to help them.

Dr Jessie Moritz (moderator)

Senior Lecturer in Comparative Political Economy, ANU

Dr Jessie Moritz is a Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Arab & Islamic Studies and co-Convenor of the Security Research Cluster at the Institute for Climate, Energy Disaster Solutions at the Australian National University. She was previously a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Transregional Institute at Princeton University and held visiting fellow positions in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UK. Jessie's research examines the prospects for social, economic, and political stability as oil-rich countries in the Arabian Peninsula transition to renewable energy and address the realities of climate change in their region.



Australian Climate & Energy Security: Building a Community of Practice

This symposium serves forms the first in a series of workshops between policymakers and researchers focused on Australian climate and energy security. It is convened by ***Australian Climate & Energy Security: Building a Community of Practice*** - a Seed Funding Project from the Australian National University's Institute for Climate, Energy & Disaster Solutions (ICEDS). This project engages Australian policymakers and researchers in order to:

- Reveal overlaps between Australian government priorities and key research directions regarding climate security and disaster risk at ANU
- Develop ongoing communities of practice between researchers and policymakers in government-identified priority areas, to enhance capacity for evidence-based policymaking
- Facilitate collaboration between expert researchers & innovators and policymakers to identify specific, actionable solutions to improve Australia's resilience to climate change

In doing so, this project will enhance Australian research capacity to better address vulnerabilities related to climate change and energy transitions.

For further information and to attend more workshops offered by this project, contact Dr Jessie Moritz (jessie.moritz@anu.edu.au).

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