



## Welcome from the network convener

Welcome to the newsletter of the Social, Economic and Institutional dimensions of adaptation (SEI-) network. The SEI-network is a large, inclusive and diverse community of researchers, practitioners and decision makers from universities, government, the private sector and civil society.

Climate change poses risks to a wide array of things that are important to people, including for example their health, jobs, homes and communities. Who is at risk, and how social groups respond to climate change will depend on their needs, values, cultures, capacities, institutional forms, and the environmental characteristics of the places they live.

Making good decisions about adaptation involves understanding the diverse goals of individuals, communities, and institutions, and the degree to which these are in conflict, and can be aligned. Decisions must be made under conditions of complex uncertainty. Successful implementation of adaptation strategies requires understanding how actors and institutions at each level and in each sector will enable or constrain responses.

Thus, regardless of the risks, places, and groups involved, adaptation is at its core a social issue. This NCCARF theme is therefore concerned with the following dimensions of climate adaptation:

**social dimensions** the relationships between different people and groups, and patterns of behaviours, attitudes, and understanding reflected in (and transmitted by) culture that determine the goals of adaptation, the capacity to adapt, and the effectiveness of outcomes

**economic dimensions** the economic activities embedded in society, primarily related to the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services through markets

**institutional dimensions** the formal and informal rules as well as organisational arrangements governing human interactions, including social and economic activities

The SEI-network is driving thinking across sectors and disciplines in the complex social, economic and institutional dimensions of climate adaptation. An

understanding of these dimensions will allow decision makers to develop more effective adaptation measures. Highlights of the networks activities to date follow. Wishing you all a Happy Christmas,



Dr Jon Barnett  
University of Melbourne

## Joining the SEI-network

Autumn 2009 saw the launch of the Social, Economic and Institutional dimensions of climate adaptation network website: [www.nccarf.edu.au/social-economic-and-institutional-dimensions/](http://www.nccarf.edu.au/social-economic-and-institutional-dimensions/). Already, the network has gained over 300 members.

We are currently developing two searchable databases: one a list of our members and their interests, and one of key publications in the SEI-theme. These will be available online in the new year.

You can become part of this community by joining the SEI-network mailing list. This mailing list aims to provide a forum for members of the network to share information and discuss issues. It is used to inform members about events, publications, policy developments, and research funding opportunities that may be of interest – and members can post direct to the list themselves. To join the SEI-network, follow the instructions on our website under 'join the network'.

## Network Highlights 2009

- over 300 members sign up to the SEI-network
- the SEI-network National Adaptation Research Plan goes out for consultation
- the Adaptation College recruits 16 future leaders in human dimensions of adaptation



## The NARP goes out to review

The draft National Adaptation Research Plan: Social, Economic and Institutional Dimensions has been developed by a writing team with expertise in the field. It is one of a number of research plans being developed by NCCARF and the Australian Government Department of Climate Change to guide and coordinate climate change adaptation research in Australia.

These plans identify critical gaps in the information that is required by governments, industry and the community to develop and implement adaptation responses to climate change. They set research priorities based on these gaps.

NCCARF is consulting widely on this draft plan, and welcomes your feedback. An open public information session was held to assist with consultation on the Plan in Canberra in December. We thank the attendees of this session for a productive session, which will feed into the revised SEI-NARP. If you could not attend this session but would like to comment on the SEI-NARP, the deadline for feedback is the 20<sup>th</sup> January 2010. Please use the feedback form available to download at: [www.nccarf.edu.au/node/299](http://www.nccarf.edu.au/node/299).

## Launch of the Adaptation College

One of the main aims of the SEI-network is to build a community of future leaders who are well informed about the human dimensions of climate change adaptation, through its annual Adaptation College. Sixteen outstanding individuals have been selected from a strong pool of applications to the College. College Fellows represent a diversity of sectors, research interests and states.

### First Adaptation College held in NT

The first SEI-network Adaptation College was held in November 2009 in the NT. This year's Adaptation College theme was 'vulnerability and adaptation in Indigenous Australia'.

The Fellows also attended a fieldtrip to the Nauiyu Nambiyu community. auiyu community leader, Patricia Marrfurra, agreed to take the College out into the bush on a 'Fi' tour. The Fi tour is named after the Orb spider web, and the idea of 'creating something out of nothing'. Patricia and other members of her family and the community showed the Fellows the lengthy process

required to create a 'dilly bag'. The ladies demonstrated how to strip the Merrepen palm, dye the resulting string with plant materials, and the weaving process. Talking to members of the community whilst trying these skills gave the Fellows a great introduction to Nauiyu and the Daly River region.



College Fellows on the 'Fi' fieldtrip (image: Ian Thomas)

The College was designed to provide Fellows both with structured sessions, but also plenty of opportunities for informal network-building; in common with its goal for supporting a community of future leaders in adaptation. Sessions explored the issues, challenges and opportunities for climate adaptation in indigenous communities, and key issues in the social dimensions of adaptation

### Next steps for the Adaptation College

The next College will be held in Sydney, November 2010. An additional networking College lunch will be held after the main NCCARF conference in July 2010, with invited speakers from the main conference.

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