



# NZCCRI Seminar Series

**Speaker: Professor Jean Palutikof**

*Director of the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, Griffith University, Queensland*

## **Flood, famine and dangerous weather: What can the past tell us about adapting to future climate change?**



NCCARF was set up by the Australian government to provide decision makers with the knowledge they need to successfully adapt to climate change. We have found that people have difficulty identifying with the threat of climate change: it is far in the future, and shrouded in uncertainty. However, and perhaps especially in Australia, people have no difficulty in identifying with weather extremes and their effects: cyclone damage, drought and flood, bushfire. For many of us, our experience of climate change will come mainly through changes in the frequency and severity of extremes. We can confidently expect there to be more severe heatwaves and bushfires, and we have some certainty that drought and flood will become more common also. If we - as a nation, a community and as individuals - are resilient to the effects of extremes - if we know how to protect ourselves and how to respond - then we've a much better chance of being resilient to climate change.

We have looked at notable weather extremes in Australia and globally to understand what builds resilience to extremes: what makes people well prepared, what works and what doesn't during the event, and what can be done afterwards to prepare for next time. We have looked at events as widely separated in time and distance as Cyclone Tracy in Darwin, and Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans.

This talk presents results from these studies addressing two questions. What lessons can we learn about adapting to climate change by studying responses and adaptation to weather extremes? How can studying weather extremes help us to understand better the challenge of climate change?

**Date: Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

**Time: 12.30 – 1.30 pm**

**Venue: Rutherford House, Lecture Theatre 2**

**Prof. Jean Palutikof** is Director of the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility at Griffith University. She took up the role in October 2008, having previously managed production of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report for Working Group II (Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability).

Jean was a Professor in the School of Environmental Sciences, and Director of the Climatic Research Unit, at the University of East Anglia, UK, where she worked from 1979 to 2004, and a Lecturer at the Department of Geography, University of Nairobi, Kenya, from 1974 to 1979.

Her research interests focus on climate change impacts, especially changes in extreme events. She has authored more than 200 papers, articles and reports on the topic of climate change and climate variability. Her proudest moment to date was attending the ceremony in 2007 at which the IPCC was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.