



NZCCRI Seminar Series

An Australian Perspective on Climate Change Adaptation

Speaker: Professor Tim Smith

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The planet faces a range of human-induced pressures that create enduring challenges for sustainability. Climate change has emerged as a new issue that exacerbates many past challenges. If we have not been able to adequately deal with past challenges, what basis is there for thinking that our traditional management approaches will be effective against climate change?

Climate change requires new approaches to knowledge production, civic engagement, and decision-making, particularly in the face of high decision stakes. A systems perspective is needed that comprehensively addresses the interrelationships between system drivers (the things that affect change), relays (the things that magnify or dampen the drivers), the impacts, and possible management interventions.

Furthermore, the institutions that facilitate adaptation need to also adapt themselves to changing contexts and challenges through an ongoing process of social learning—so that climate change adaptation can be process enabled (dynamic to changing socio-ecological contexts and goal focused) rather than process constrained (restricted by outdated institutional structures). These issues will be explored through several current Australian research projects; as well as, through commentary on policy responses.

Date: Tuesday 13th December 2011

Time: 12.30 – 1.30

Venue: Government Buildings, Lecture Theatre 1

Professor Tim Smith PhD is the inaugural Director of the Sustainability Research Centre (SRC) at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia. Prof Smith's research interests focus on the social and institutional dimensions of climate change adaptation, coastal management, environmental management and other sustainability issues. Prof Smith currently leads the Communities Theme of the Adaptation Research Network for Marine Biodiversity and Resources; the Adaptive Capacity Theme of the South East Queensland Climate Adaptation Research Initiative; and the Adaptive Learning Theme of the national CSIRO Coastal Collaboration Cluster. He was awarded the Vice-Chancellor's Medal for Excellence in Research and Research Training in 2010; and along with his research partners, Prof Smith was awarded the 2009 NSW Coastal Innovation Award, as well as the 2009 Australian Museum Eureka Prize in the category of Innovative Solutions to Climate Change.