### Visit by His Excellency Dr THONG Khon, Minister of Tourism

The University awarded His Excellency Dr THONG Khon, Minister of Tourism and President of the National Olympic Committee of Cambodia an Honorary Doctorate at Graduation on Thursday, 10 April. This is in recognition of his significant international contributions to sustainable and community-based tourism.

During the course of his 4-day visit to the Sunshine Coast, the Minister signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between USC, Cambodia’s Ministry of Tourism and Griffith University. The aim of the MOU is to encourage collaboration for research, training and advancement of sustainable tourism and related community development. The three organisations aim to target areas such as heritage resource management, public and ecosystem health and alleviation of poverty.

Dr Thong, who has been Minister of Tourism since 2007, is recognised within ASEAN countries as a champion of sustainable and community-based tourism. He has strongly advocated for Cambodia to create products that protect natural and cultural heritage and contribute to the maintenance of cultural integrity and sustainable livelihoods.

He and his team have been working with USC’s Sustainability Research Centre through a government-funded AusAID Australian Leadership Award Fellowship program. The project aims to address issues in the Asia-Pacific region including international trade, security, pandemics, climate change and clean energy.

### Featured staff member Professor Patrick Nunn

The SRC has strengthened its senior research leadership and capacity through the appointments of Prof Patrick Nunn (Professor of Geography) and Dr Richard Wilson (Principal Research Fellow).

After 30 years of research, mostly focused in the Asia-Pacific region, Professor Nunn has accumulated a degree of expertise in a number of different fields. His primary field is geography, once largely physical in focus, but now straddling various aspects of sustainability. Professor Nunn has worked for a number of years in climate change, mostly on sea level and on the challenges of effective adaptation in poorer countries. He has also worked on archaeological topics, usually through the lens of palaeoenvironment reconstruction, but also applying his geological training to ceramic mineralogy and radiocarbon chronology.

His areas of research include:

- climate and sea-level change
- human-environment interactions—past, present, future
- community governance and responses to environmental risk
- geomorphology
- perceptions of environmental threats
- geography, quaternary geology, geoarchaeology
- Asia-Pacific islands
ASEAN Community Based Tourism (CBT) Standards meeting

Prof Bill Carter and HDR student Kym Cheatham were invited to the third ASEAN Community-based tourism (CBT) Standard Development workshop in April 2014 led by Royal Kingdom of Cambodia Ministry of Tourism. CBT has played a vital role in the local socio-economic development and poverty reduction and is regarded as an environmentally sustainable and socially responsible development as it contributes to cultural and natural heritage protection and conservation including community development. The development of ASEAN CBT standard is an important step in assisting and guiding communities in engaging with tourists.

This workshop was attended by delegates from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Lao PDR and Thailand, as well as the ASEAN Secretariat. Bill and Kym provided independent workshop facilitation and expert advice on the development, implementation and governance of sustainable tourism standards to the ASEAN member representatives.

This workshop followed a UNESCO meeting on the Battambang Sustainable Tourism Development Strategic Guidelines towards the listing of Battambang as a UNESCO Heritage City.

Climate Change Adaptation for Natural Resource Management in East Coast Australia

A new consortium project has begun this year, with the aim to foster and support an effective community of practice for planning for climate change within the East Coast cluster (seven natural resource management regions, Rockhampton to Sydney). The project will increase the capacity for adaptation to climate change by enhancing knowledge and skills, and establishing long term collaborations. The project is funded through the Commonwealth Government’s Natural Resource Management Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation Research Grants Program ($939,012), administered by the Department of the Environment. It includes six consortium partners: University of Queensland (consortium leader), Griffith University, University of the Sunshine Coast, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, and Queensland Herbarium.

The University of the Sunshine Coast is leading the Socio-Economic Vulnerability Assessment component of the project ($187,000 over 12 months), the purpose is to develop a framework for undertaking a systematic assessment of socio-economic vulnerability to climate change impacts across the East Coast cluster. Five staff from the Sustainability Research Centre are involved: Prof Tim Smith, Dr Scott Lieske, Dr Noni Keys, Prof Neil Powell, and Erin Smith.

Dr Richard Wilson

After 39 years in the Australian Regular Army, and recent experience at the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, Dr Wilson joined the SRC on a part-time basis to further his interests in disaster management and national security issues related to climate change. His research areas include:

- all-hazards approach to disaster management focusing on building community resilience through thorough preparation, timely response and cost-effective recovery, including the ongoing incorporation of ‘lessons learned’ and a sensible approach to betterment
- national security as a comprehensive construct that includes conflict as a result of climate change, resource scarcity, food security and population movement; and
- border security and associated issues.

Associate Professor Jennifer Carter

Associate Professor of Geography

Jennifer Carter has been appointed editor of the Institute of Geographers’ newsletter and a member of its council. She said she was honoured to be contributing to the future of geography, including its study, application, promotion and protection.

“Geography is a holistic, relevant study of space, place and environment,” she said. “It examines interconnections between people and the environment and crises facing our planet such as climate change, food resources and refugees.”

Her PhD students are looking at issues including how remote places can develop sustainable industries and how the Sunshine Coast views its own sense of place.

Dr Tristan Pearce

Dr Tristan Pearce is partnering on two large Canadian grants furthering his research with Arctic Indigenous communities:

- **TUMIVUT:** tracks of our ancestors towards a healthy future, Health Canada $140,321.20 [One Year].
- **VaRCCA (Vulnerability and Resilience to Climate Change in the Arctic),** SSHRC $500,000 [Five Years].
Dr Claudia Baldwin was honoured at the USC Graduation Ceremony held in October last year for her work on improving our aquaculture industry and community planning. She received the Vice-Chancellor and President’s Award for Excellence in Research. "This award is recognition for the type of applied research I conduct, which has practical outcomes that contribute to the region," she said.

Congratulations and welcome to our new SRC students

Congratulations to Jamie Knight, who recently had his honours degree confirmed. His research centred on Riparian landholders’ values in the Noosa river catchment and the Mary river catchment where they meet in the Noosa Biosphere reserve. He identified the values that the landholders have regarding their local river and compared them with the values espoused in their respective catchment management plans and the Noosa Biosphere reserve management plan. Showing how much or how little the values of community members are represented by the plans may have implications on future iterations of catchment management strategies in the Noosa Biosphere Reserve and more broadly, for other initiatives in Community Based Natural Resource Management.

The SRC would like to welcome two new students who have joined the SRC this year: Ms Rachele Wilson is a new honours student supervised by Dr Tristan Pearce. Nnenna Ike is a new master’s student from Nigeria who supervised by Dr Claudia Baldwin.

2014 publications


NCCARF Partnership
The Australian Government have committed $9 million over the next 3 years to support the continued operation of the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (NCCARF) at Griffith University.

Under a new funding agreement, NCCARF will be required to deliver a framework for understanding and managing coastal climate risks, including sea-level rise in the coastal zone. NCCARF will also continue to synthesise and communicate research and maintain national adaptation research coordination and capacity building in priority areas (including human health, ecosystems, and settlements and infrastructure).

New Research Fellow
The SRC is pleased to announce that Dr Tristan Pearce has been awarded a USC Research Fellow position.

These positions are tenure-track allowing 5 years of research intensive focus and converting to a teaching and research position. This year, only 2 positions were available for the whole of USC which made the selection extremely competitive.

The Sustainability Research Centre
The work of the Sustainability Research Centre (SRC) encompasses a range of disciplines where transdisciplinary research is undertaken and our core focus is aligned with social (e.g. geography and cultural studies), behavioural and economic sciences.

Our niche area for research projects is societal adaptation – more specifically, understanding the social dimensions of regional environmental change.

We make contributions to knowledge in the areas of:

• sustainability science
• resilience
• adaptive capacity
• social learning
• capacity building
• international development
• institutional policy analysis
• Indigenous knowledge
• adaptive management
• social capital

These contributions have application with a range of sustainability issues such as coastal management, climate change, and water management (recognised as significant at local through to international scales). We address real on-the-ground concerns of society and the environment.

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