MONASH University

MONASH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

2024 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

We recognise First Nations Peoples' inherent rights as custodians of land and waters and that sovereignty was never ceded. We affirm that this always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

As an organisation committed to shaping a better future, we value First Nations Peoples' knowledge systems and practices. We honour those who protect, preserve and celebrate them, leaving a profound legacy for future generations of Elders and leaders.

We're committed to fostering a society that recognises, respects and includes Indigenous peoples, cultures and knowledge by working with and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to advance the wellbeing of people and the planet for current and future generations.

About Monash Sustainable Development Institute

In 2007, Monash University set up the Monash Sustainable Development Institute (MSDI) – to better drive real world change through pioneering research, education and innovation.

With more than 200 academic and professional staff, and drawing on expertise from across Monash's faculties, MSDI works across six key areas – climate action, environment and health, sustainable cities and regions, circular economy, inclusive prosperity, and leadership for the SDGs – to advance the wellbeing of people and the planet for current and future generations in Australia and the region.

Leveraging our expertise in systems and behavioural change, we convene and collaborate with governments, industry, academia and communities to shape policy, build capacity, and develop strategies that unpack complex issues, test innovative solutions, and support systems transformation for sustainable development.

We provided input to help the United Nations shape the SDGs back in 2013, and have since developed significant expertise and reputation as a regional and global leader in mobilising SDG implementation.

MSDI houses a number of key initiatives including:

Climateworks Centre – specialists in climate transitions with a mission to accelerate transition to net zero emissions in Australia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific, aligned with the global goal of limiting global warming to 1.5C.

BehaviourWorks Australia – a leading behaviour change research enterprise which brings researchers together with government and industry to find behavioural solutions to social, environmental and organisational problems. BehaviourWorks also hosts the Evidence Review Service.

MSDI Water and Water Sensitive Cities Australia – collaborating with partners to build knowledge and capacity, and drive practical change to transform water systems for sustainable development in Australia and our region.

Circular Economy Labs – accelerating circular transitions by combining world-class research with practical tools and partnerships between policymakers, industries, and academics.

Sustainable Development Education – including accredited education with Monash University Faculties and Campuses, professional education, and co-curricular programs.

Research – transdisciplinary research on sustainability transitions, sustainable development governance, futures and adaptive planning, and justice and social inclusion. Also includes our Graduate Research Program.

Revitalising Informal Settlements and their Environments (RISE) – a global first research program providing water and sanitation in 24 informal settlements in Fiji and Indonesia to improve environmental and health outcomes.

Fire to Flourish – a 5-year transdisciplinary program supporting four disaster-affected communities to lead their own recovery, co-create foundations for resilience and wellbeing, and disrupt cycles of entrenched disadvantage, while building evidence and insight to drive reform.

More information – monash.edu/msdi

Cover image credit: Maiara Skarheim

Message from Chair, John Thwaites and Director, Tony Capon

In 2024, global sustainable development advanced significantly despite mounting climate challenges, with the year marking the hottest on record.

The international community reaffirmed its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), countries united at the UN Summit of the Future to accelerate progress toward a fairer, greener world, addressing climate change, promoting circular economies, enhancing resilience, and fostering inclusive development.

A few MSDI highlights from 2024 we'd like to touch on include …

- BehaviorWorks Australia published ***Inspiring Change: How to Influence Behaviour for a Better World*** on how behavior change can improve sustainability.
- With the Monash Business School, we established Circular Economy Labs, and are working with businesses and advising governments on the circular economy. The Australian Government also launched its Circular Economy Framework, supported by an advisory group chaired by John Thwaites.
- We launched the Transitions to Sustainable Health Systems consortium with health sector partners across Australia to identify priorities and practical actions to accelerate carbon emission reductions in Australian health systems. A guide has been drafted and will be launched in 2025.
- Revitalising Informal Settlements and their Environments (RISE) completed their infrastructure intervention to improve access to water and sanitation in its first group of informal settlements in Indonesia. The upgrades benefit more than 1500 residents in the city of Makassar.
- We launched Net Zero Academy, a suite of courses for professionals in business, government and civil society to transition their organisations to achieve net zero. Net Zero Academy brings together our expertise in sustainable development education, with experts from Climateworks, BehaviourWorks, Monash faculties and industry.
- Climateworks celebrated its 15 year anniversary with former Prime Minister The Hon Julia Gillard MP, our Vice-Chancellor Professor Sharon Pickering, and David Shelmerdine from the Myer Family, among many others in the Climateworks family.
- Fire to Flourish won the 2024 Resilient Australia National Community Award and hosted the second National Indigenous Disaster Resilience Gathering on Bundjalung Country in Lismore. Leveraging our learnings, we received new grant funding of $1.4 million for Flood to Flourish, a new project to start in 2025 focused on flood disaster resilience.
- We were active in the lead up to the UN Summit of the Future, chairing and speaking in various sessions and hosting a roundtable for alumni based in New York. We continue to lead on the SDGs by chairing the Sustainable Development Solutions Network for our region.
- Building on the 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report, we are advancing a new research collaboration with the Stockholm Environment Institute and others to accelerate implementation of the SDGs and explore options for the post-2030 development agenda. The first workshop brought together about 25 academics from leading research institutions globally to discuss reflections and learnings from SDG implementation in the last several years and brainstorm ideas for the next sustainable development agenda beyond 2030.
- The Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade confirmed expansion of the Water Sensitive Cities Australia (WSCA) Resilient Urban Centres and Surrounds program, which harnesses nature-based solutions in water management as a catalyst for urban climate resilience in Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Lao PDR.

Thank you to all our employees, Monash University, partners and funders for your support in helping us contribute to Monash University's **Impact 2030 strategy** and change the world for the better.

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Our strategy

As part of Monash University, Monash Sustainable Development Institute contributes to the university's Impact 2030 strategic plan. In particular, our work helps Monash pursue two of its identified key challenges of the age: climate change and thriving communities. MSDI collaborates across Monash faculties, teams and campuses in pursuit of those shared goals.

In addition, MSDI is driven by the vision and targets of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In 2024, MSDI finished the fourth year of our 2021–2025 strategic plan.

Our projects, programs, initiatives, publications and partnerships contribute to six strategic domains:

CLIMATE ACTION

ENVIRONMENT & HEALTH

SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND REGIONS

INCLUSIVE PROSPERITY

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

LEADERSHIP FOR THE GOALS

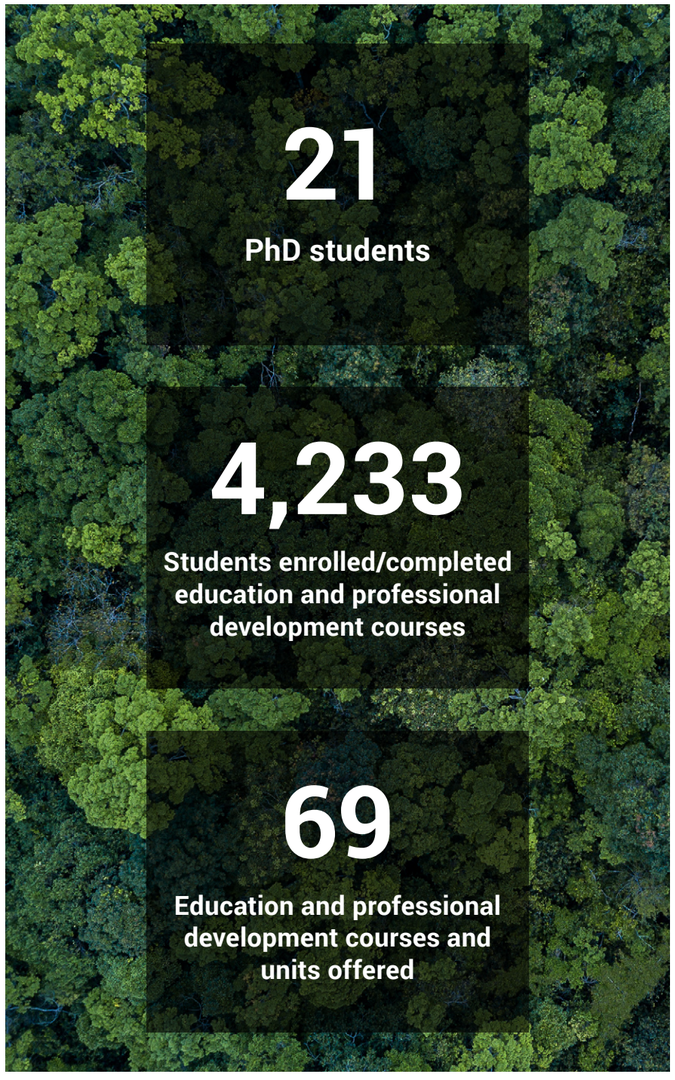
And our six defined capabilities create impact in the world:

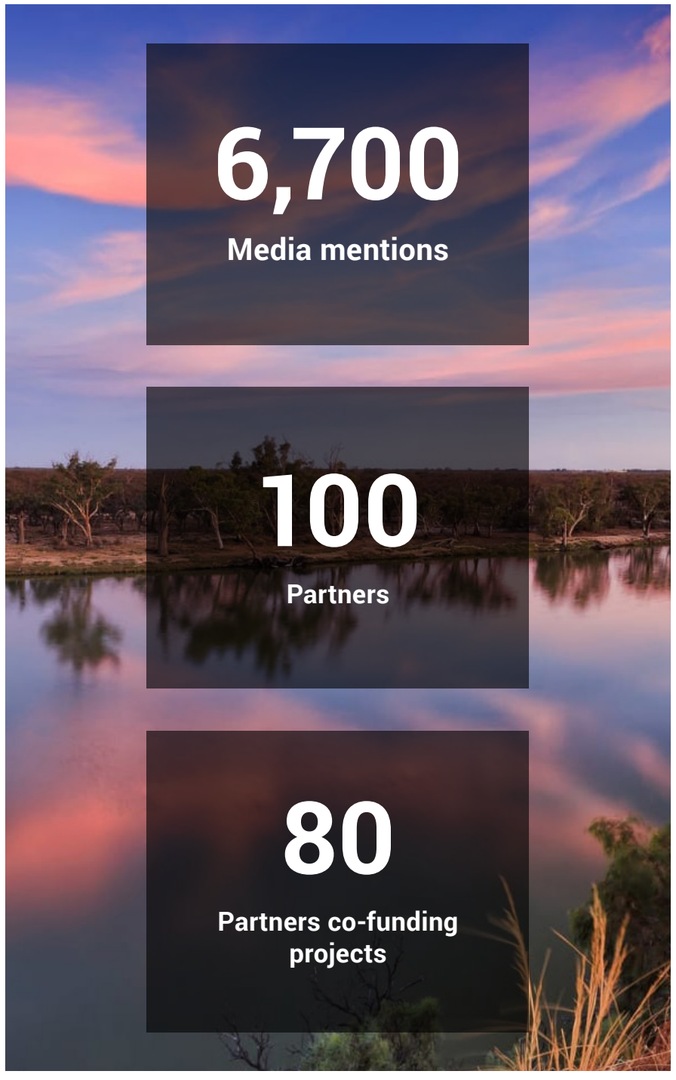
- **BUILD CAPACITY AND EMPOWER LEADERSHIP**
- **FACILITATE COLLABORATION**
- **CREATE, SYNTHESISE AND TRANSLATE KNOWLEDGE**
- **EXPERIMENT AND INNOVATE UNDERSTAND AND INFLUENCE BEHAVIOUR**
- **SHAPE INSTITUTIONS, POLICY AND PRACTICE**

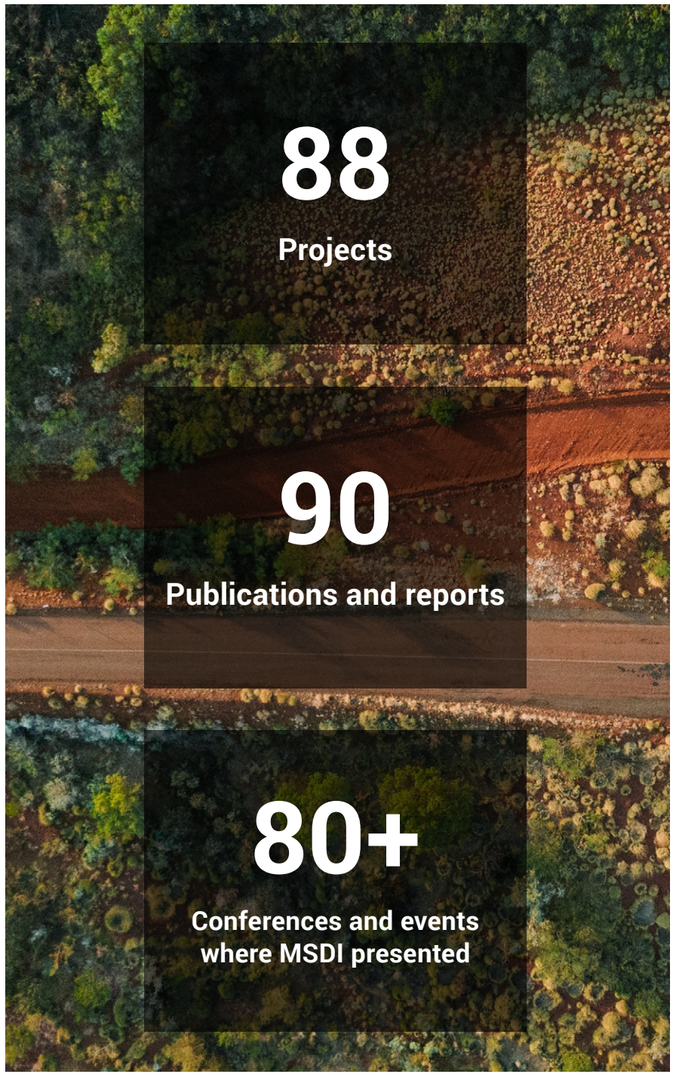
With one year left in our strategic plan, we can measure our success while also having goals left to achieve. To demonstrate our progress against our strategy, we have chosen here a few of our projects and their impacts in 2024.

The four chapters in this Impact Report trace our path towards our vision to be globally recognised as a leader in system transformation for sustainable development. The case studies share the stories and experiences of our partners, students and alumni to understand how our work lives in the world.

Highlights of 2024







AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Join us in congratulating the individuals, projects, and teams who continue to share their sustainable development knowledge and experience for the benefit of people and planet.

Professor of Sustainability Transitions and Deputy Director (Research), **Rob Raven**, was awarded a Fellowship at the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia (ASSA) in recognition for his distinguished and interdisciplinary contribution to sustainability transition research and practice in Australia.

Rob Raven was also named in *The Australian's* 2025 Research magazine amongst Australia's top 250 researchers based on the quality and impact of his work.

Climateworks Centre's CEO, **Anna Skarbek**, was appointed by the Australian Government to Australia's newly-legislated Net Zero Economy Authority board.

Senior Research Fellow, **Cameron Allen**, was the first MSDI researcher to receive a highly competitive Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA) from the Australian Research Council (ARC).

Senior Research Fellow, **Mark Boulet**, won the Researcher Award at End Food Waste Australia's inaugural Food Waste Action Awards for his work on the Great Unwaste national behaviour change campaign, and other food waste campaigns.

Senior Lecturer, **Gitanjali Bedi**, was awarded a Fellowship from Advance HE (UK) in recognition for her role in teaching and supporting higher education learning.

Graduating PhD student **Alexander Nordt**, was the recipient of the Mollie Holman Award, the Vice-Chancellor's Commendation for Thesis Excellence and the Postgraduate Publications Award.

Associate Professor, **Angie Bone**, was inducted into the Social Purpose Innovator Hall of Fame by the Institute of Certified Management Accountants Australia and New Zealand for the impact of her championing of sustainable and equitable business practices in environmental and planetary health. Angie was also appointed as an independent advisor of Queensland Health's climate resilience and sustainability task force.

Senior Research Fellow, **Darren Sharp**, was awarded a Theodore von Kármán Fellowship through RWTH Aachen University in Germany for his research on the Net Zero Precincts ARC Linkage project.

Master of Environment and Sustainability student, **Lara Salaysay**, won International Student of the Year at the 2024 Victorian International Education Awards.

Our **education team** was awarded second place in the non-digital games category for their game 'Water Champions' at the International Educational Games Competition.

Master of Environment and Sustainability units ENS5020 - Perspectives on sustainability; ENS5510 - Innovation to influence system change; ENS5340 - Transforming cities for sustainability; and ENS5910 - Interdisciplinary industry project for sustainable development solutions, earned Purple (outstanding) student evaluations in Semester 1 – putting them in the top 6% of units at the university.

Fire to Flourish initiative was the NSW Winner of the Community category of the Resilient Australia Awards and the winner of the 2024 Resilient Australia National Community Award.

GRADUATING PHD STUDENTS

Congratulations to our graduating PhD students: Alexander Nordt, Jarrod Grainger-Brown, Corina Crisan and Andrea Cuesta Claros.

We look forward to following the impact of your research, intelligence and passion as you continue your sustainability journey.







Informed action for change

We are implementing change and empowering others to create change



Our transdisciplinary approach works across sectors and society to implement environmental, social and economic solutions that work in the real world. Through our partnerships, we build skills in others who continue to create sustainable change in their world.

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS AT THE FOREFRONT OF CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

In 2024, we celebrated Climateworks Centre's 15th anniversary. The Vice-Chancellor and President, Sharon Pickering, hosted the celebration at the State Library of Victoria, with former Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, delivering the keynote speech.

Over the decade and a half, our Climateworks expertise has been welcomed, commissioned, and implemented by multiple state governments and big banks, who adopted the first formal net zero targets following our decarbonisation pathways advice. The Australian Government's first submission to the Paris Agreement cites our net zero pathways potential. And we created the first ever forward-looking green equities index for the ASX300 and the first tracker of corporate net zero alignment.

We helped to create key players in net zero, convening over a dozen of the biggest mining and resources companies and investors to co-create the first ever Paris-aligned net zero pathways for Australia's heavy industry sectors. We advised on the mandate of the Net Zero Economy Authority, and Australia's first green investment bank whose early strategy was informed by our economy wide analysis of decarbonisation opportunities and barriers.

Read more about our celebration







REIMAGINING SELF-DETERMINED AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Our innovative mission-oriented research initiative, Fire to Flourish, is piloting solutions that enable communities to self-determine their collective disaster recovery and long-term resilience priorities.

We work in four communities recently impacted by bushfires and floods: Clarence Valley, Tenterfield and Eurobodalla in NSW; and East Gippsland in Victoria. This was the fourth of Fire to Flourish's five-year program.

The initiative is supported by cornerstone philanthropic partners, the Paul Ramsay Foundation and Metal Manufactures Pty Ltd. Additional philanthropic support is provided by the Lowy Foundation.

The interdisciplinary research team, lead by MSDI, includes collaborations across Monash including the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture; the Monash University Disaster Resilience Institute; the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences; the Faculty of Arts; the Faculty of Information Technology; and the Faculty of Business and Economics. The team also includes a researcher from Griffith University.

Through participatory grant funding rounds, where the communities themselves make the decisions of where the funding goes, Fire to Flourish funded more than 83 community-led disaster resilience projects this year, with $5.3 million of funds disbursed to support local priorities.

"I love this process because I totally believe in it. Community knows what's best and it just makes sense to have them making the decisions about what they need."

- Community Staff Member, Tenterfield

The initiative created and shared research reports, fact sheets and guides for communities and the emergency management and disaster recovery sectors.

We received a new grant funding $1.4M for a new project, Flood to Flourish, which will launch in 2025 and focus on flood disaster resilience, leveraging our learnings from Fire to Flourish.

Read more





PRIORITISING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND LEADERSHIP IN DISASTER RESILIENCE

We have the only research centre dedicated to investigating and quantifying the true impacts that major disaster events have on Indigenous peoples, which is driven by our National Indigenous Disaster Resilience program (NIDR).

NIDR was seeded by Fire to Flourish and is now homed in the Faculty of Arts. It is led by Bhiamie Williamson, a Euahlayi man from north-west New South Wales. In 2024, NIDR interviewed 27 Aboriginal people across three communities along the Murray and Goulburn Rivers about their experiences of the 2022 floods to understand if and how Indigenous experiences differed from non-Indigenous community members.

In 2024, the team held policy roundtables in both South Australia and Queensland, bringing together key Indigenous organisations, community leaders, emergency management and disaster resilience agencies, to share information regarding disaster arrangements, and identify priority reform areas and points of collaboration.

NIDR hosted a National Indigenous Disaster Resilience Gathering on Bundjalung Country in Lismore. This unique gathering brought together over 280 representatives from across Australia and abroad to celebrate Indigenous leadership and excellence in emergency management, community recovery, disaster resilience and caring for Country. This was the largest gathering of Indigenous peoples and organisations who have played a key role in responding to major hazard events, and provided a valuable opportunity for delegates to hear from communities who have been impacted by disasters in the recent past.



Read more



Image credit: Gabrielle Connole Photography

NIDR team with Canadian international delegates at the National Indigenous Disaster Resilience Gathering (L-R: David Young, Joe Gilchrist, Lucy Connole, Emma McNicol, Beth Patch, Bhiamie Williamson, Nell Reidy, Amy Cardinal Chirstianson, Alex Zahara).

BUILDING CRITICAL WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

We are building innovative water and sanitation infrastructure in 24 informal settlements in Fiji and Indonesia to improve environmental and human health outcomes thanks to our Revitalising Informal Settlements and their Environments (RISE) program.

RISE is anchored at MSDI and brings expertise from across Monash's Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture; Faculty of Science; Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences; Faculty of Engineering; and Monash Business School. MSDI leads the initiative in partnership with the Indonesia Government, Fiji Government, as well as the Governments of Australia and New Zealand. And with our academic partners Hasanuddin University in Indonesia and Fiji National University.

The program completed community upgrades in Makassar, Indonesia, improving living conditions and climate resilience for over 1,400 residents across 325 households. The works include integrated green (wetland sewage systems), grey (drainage and flood management), and smart (internet-connected sewer systems) solutions to address sanitation, water access, and climate challenges. This marks the first successful implementation of such infrastructure in low-income urban settlements.

The Mayor of Makassar issued a decree that the city would support the operation and maintenance of RISE's infrastructure and planned upgrades for a second round of settlements.

Similar upgrades are underway in Suva, Fiji, which we expect to complete in 2025. The Fiji Government has included our nature-based water and sanitation systems for informal settlements in its national water strategy for 2050. And Fiji is putting together a body across various government ministries committed to advancing RISE.

Read about our **RISE team member Intan Putri** and more about the **RISE program**.



REVITALISING THE CITARUM RIVER AND IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE

We are bringing urban design and technology together to address river pollution and environmental degradation, providing environmental, economic and social benefits to the communities along the Citarum River in Indonesia through our Citarum Action Research Program.

The program is delivered in partnership with Monash's Faculty of Art Design and Architecture; CSIRO; Universitas Indonesia and Universitas Padjadjaran; the West Java government and communities; local non government organisations (NGOs) like Yayasan Pengembangan Biosains dan Bioteknologi (YPBB) enterprises like plastic recyclers, Precious Plastics Bandung, and animal feed company, Pro-BSF Indonesia; and the global research community.

In 2024, we conducted a waste pilot project with a new, government-funded waste facility. Our team worked with behavioural scientists led by the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology, with contributions from BehaviourWorks Australia, to understand current waste practices and perceptions, and how to promote the segregation of solid waste.

The campaign led to better recycling outcomes by helping locals separate waste at the source before it's transported to the waste facility. The number of households voluntarily participating in the waste program increased from 50 to over 200. By learning to value waste processing, the community is also changing its poor perception of local waste collectors.

Read more



HELPING ASIA PACIFIC TO IMPROVE WATER SENSITIVE CITY PRACTICES

Our Water Sensitive Cities Index Benchmarking Tool is designed to measure a city's or town's performance and identify ways to improve water sensitive practices.

To date, the tool has been applied in over 80 cities across Asia-Pacific.

In 2024, we delivered a training program to World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Pakistan on the use of the Benchmarking Tool, leveraging the skills of our MSDI Water and Water Sensitive Cities Australia (WSCA) teams. The project provided WWF Pakistan and their stakeholders with valuable insights into how Islamabad's water sensitive journey compares to other cities. The WWF Pakistan team has since been demonstrating what a water sensitive city can look like in two disadvantaged communities in Pakistan through both infrastructure development and capacity building.

Read more



ENHANCING CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE IN MEKONG COMMUNITIES

MSDI works in Lao PDR, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam, bringing together local stakeholders and international development agencies to develop nature-based solutions and build more climate resilient cities and towns through our Resilient Urban Centres and Surrounds (RUCaS) project. The RUCaS program also embeds strategies to improve gender equality, disability and social inclusion in all activities.

The multidisciplinary program is delivered through our Water Sensitive Cities Australia (WSCA) team in partnership with the International Centre for Environmental Management and with government agencies, universities and NGOs in each country. In 2024, RUCaS welcomed its 1000th event participant.

In 2024, we:

- Provided technical training for more than 280 senior officials in Cambodia.
- Consulted with more than 200 participants in upscaling nature-based strategies for each country.
- Participated in 42 major outreach events.
- Published eight case studies demonstrating the community, technical and economic case for action.

Read more



SHARING OUR KNOWLEDGE TO CREATE MORE WATER SENSITIVE CITIES

We are helping to protect Australia's precious urban water resources by helping to embed water sensitive city principles in city and town planning, building and management.

Over the past four years, our Water Sensitive Cities Australia team have delivered 23 reports that share experiences and guidance on implementing water sensitive practices. In 2024, we launched a webinar series to disseminate knowledge from researchers, government representatives, practitioners from water utilities and consultants, covering topics from practical steps to take while engaging local government, to upskilling and technical capacity building for taking action. The eight webinars attracted 580 attendees from over 20 countries.

Read more



INFLUENCING INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE IN VICTORIA

We are currently working with and contributing to the Victorian Government's Integrated Water Management (IWM) program, providing evidence, tools, expert advice and leadership through our Water team. This includes representation on the Yarra Catchment and Werribee IWM Forums and on the IWM Reference Group, where we provide leadership for water authorities and local government and other agencies, and advice to the Victorian Department of Energy, Environment, and Climate Action (DEECA) and the Minister for Water to support the mainstreaming of IWM.

We are also undertaking a project examining an 'All options on the table' approach to achieving the alternate water targets in Melbourne's Water for Life strategy, with a focus on stormwater options, sponsored by Melbourne Water and South East Water. Our work enhances water security, improves environmental outcomes, and supports community resilience in the face of climate change and population growth across the whole state.

Read more



MODELLING DIVERSE SOLUTIONS TO DECARBONISE THE TRANSPORT SECTOR

We are informing the Australian Government's national decarbonisation plan for the transport sector through Climateworks Centre's expertise, demonstrating a diverse range of solutions is needed for Australia to meet its 1.5°C Paris Agreement targets.

Our transport modelling report, *Decarbonising Australia's transport sector: Diverse solutions for a credible emissions reduction plan*, included technology changes and explored broader decarbonisation solutions like mode shift and avoided travel, and their impact on emissions.

Climateworks collaborated with CSIRO and our Technical Reference Group, including representatives from industry, research institutions, and state and federal governments. And we had generous support of philanthropic partners, Boundless Earth and the Limb Family Foundation.

We briefed federal, state and territory departments on our findings and made six submissions to leverage our research. Notably, this research heavily influenced our submission to the Federal Government's Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero plan. The report was also cited by six other organisations in their submissions to the plan. Less than one month after release, the report had already received 330 media mentions, reaching 153,531,867 readers, including a double page spread in *The Age and Sydney Morning Herald*. Climateworks was referenced in Tasmania's transport sector plan: Transport Emissions Reduction and Resilience Plan - ReCFIT. We were also cited in the Australian Institute of Traffic Planning and Management Ltd's issue paper: The Path to Net Zero: Decarbonising Australia's transport system.

Bart Mellish, Queensland's Minister for Transport and Main Roads, said, *"I welcome and acknowledge the ongoing contribution that the Climateworks Centre is making to inform and progress decarbonisation of the transport sector."*

Read more



HELPING TO END AUSTRALIA'S FOOD WASTE

We leveraged BehaviourWorks Australia's expertise to design the behavioural strategy for the new Great Unwaste national behaviour change campaign on household food waste, launched by Environment Minister, Tanya Plibersek. BehaviourWorks Australia worked with End Food Waste Australia to develop this evidence-based campaign, which aims to reduce the 2.5 million tonnes of food waste from Australian households each year.

Read more



Knowledge that leads to transition

We’re contributing interdisciplinary knowledge to inform sustainable transitions



Our research and initiatives engage with, and learn from, industry, society and government who are critical for creating change. Our education programs empower those who are pursuing systems transformation, now and into the future.

HELPING CREATE A HEALTHIER AUSTRALIAN HEALTH SYSTEM

We're helping the Australian health system transition to greater sustainability and accelerate emissions reduction while improving safety and quality of care, and reducing waste in all its forms.

MSDI is the convening member of the Transitions to Sustainable Health Systems consortium which is made up of 16 members spanning federal and state government health departments, metropolitan and regional hospitals, private health providers, professional bodies and peak bodies for Aboriginal-controlled community health organisations.

By bringing together different parts of the health system – policy, practice and research – we are co-developing a guide to support the system and identify priority gaps and opportunities for further exploration and action. The guide will support implementation of Action 4.4 of the Australian Government's *National Health and Climate Strategy: developing a health system decarbonisation roadmap.*

Read more about Associate Professor of Practice - Planetary Health, Angie Bone





DELIVERING LARGE-SCALE TRANSITIONS TO THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

MSDI fosters collaborations between policymakers, industries and academics to scale solutions and de-risk investments in circular production.

Our Circular Economy Labs initiative is a collaboration with Monash Business School, launched in November 2024.

We provided advice to the Australian Government's Circular Economy Ministerial Advisory Group, which advised the Federal Government to accelerate the transition to a Circular Economy as well as add further value across government. MSDI Chair, John Thwaites, chaired the Ministerial Advisory Group, which reported in 2024 with both an interim and a full report offering key recommendations for action.

The Circular Economy Labs team also consulted for DEECA and the Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), as well as the Dutch and German Embassies. And we led a Monash-wide submission to the Australian Government's Productivity Commission's inquiry into the circular economy.

Our Circular Economy Labs forged 10 new relationships with peak bodies, major organisations, and businesses across Pharma, Manufacturing, Agriculture, Logistics and Packaging, and Recycling sectors. We spoke at the Australian Circular Economy Forum, bringing together experts and leaders from government, academia, business, NGOs and investors to share knowledge and insight on participating in the new circular economy.

Our work also informs Monash's Campus Sustainability initiative and Circular Economy framework.

As of December 2024, the work of our Circular Economy lead, Associate Professor Martin Geissdoerfer, was the most cited on Scopus on Circular Economy and among the top three cited in key subfields: circular business models, circular supply chains, and sustainable business models. This work has been cited by 133 policy documents, including the EU, UN, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), International Labour Organization (ILO), and by several national governments including Australia, UK, Germany, Sweden, and Norway. We are on the Editorial Board of Business Strategy and the Environment, one of the highest profile Circular Economy journals, have two papers in print and 13 in various stages of publication.

Read more about Associate Professor of Circular Economy, Martin Geissdoerfer

Circular Economy Labs





MANAGING HAZARDOUS WASTE, SUBSTANCES AND POLLUTANTS IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Transitioning to a circular economy is critical for sustainable development and requires innovative approaches to material use.

As part of the National Environmental Science Program (NESP), this MSDI project enabled the risk assessment of material throughout its lifecycle, from stockpile to reuse, to future stockpile. We informed government decision-makers of the types and nature of risks they need to address when considering the reuse of any materials within the circular economy, and more specifically the reuse of end-of-life tyres.

Our partner researchers include Monash's Faculty of Science, CSIRO, UNSW and Curtin University. Our research co-designers and end-users include DCCEEW, EPA Victoria, Sustainability Victoria and NSW Environment and Heritage.

Read more



HELPING TO BOLSTER AND BOOST LAGGING CIRCULAR ECONOMY INITIATIVES IN REGIONAL AND REMOTE AUSTRALIA

Through a national survey, our 'Governing community-based waste management and resource recovery and circular economy initiatives' project found that regional and remote Circular Economy initiatives are distinctly different from urban examples, and generally less progressed, indicating a need for intervention to support sustainable regional economic development while addressing problematic waste streams. In 2024, we've taken this finding into exploring how to better support regional/remote circular economy initiatives via regional collaborations.

Our engagement with the DCCEEW's Circular Economy policy team shifted our research to explore if regional initiatives can bolster and boost lagging circular economy initiatives and the role of different actors, including national, state and local government, in regional and remote Australia. The Australian Circular Economy Hub at PlanetArk provided valuable feedback and contacts for developing the survey.

Our engagement in Shepparton involved sharing the results with local industry, the Greater Shepparton Council, Victorian Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action, Sustainability Victoria, and CSIRO, and discussing their implications for a nascent regional circular economy initiative.



OUR IMPACTFUL EDUCATORS

This was a busy and exciting year for MSDI in education, delivering Sustainable Healthcare in Practice; the leadership stream of the Master of Environment and Sustainability; units with the Faculty of Business and Economics, and our bespoke education and training. And we offered extra-curricular sustainability programs with Green Steps, and Leave No One Behind.

We delivered professional education to industry, including a bespoke Environment, Social, Governance uplift program for a technology company, an online climate literacy program for a global energy company, and partnered with the Monash Business School to deliver a climate leadership program for an Australian electricity supplier. MSDI drew on BehaviourWorks Australia's expertise to design behaviour change programs and interventions, and deliver the course, INSPIRE: Behavioural Insights for Better Communications.

Senior Lecturer and educational researcher, Gitanjeli Bedi, contributed a chapter to the book, '*Preparing learners for uncertainty in health professions*'. Sustainable Development Education Program Lecturer, Dr Susan Van de Meen, contributed to the Master of Pharmaceutical Sciences, with interpersonal management and management skills tools for Pharmacology students.

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TRAINING SENIOR LEADERS AND EXECUTIVES IN CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

We launched our Net Zero Academy, combining innovative sustainable development education from MSDI Education, solutions-focused, practical climate transition expertise from Climateworks Centre, and contributions from BehaviourWorks Australia.

The Academy has delivered its first Executive Leadership Program to senior leaders and executives. Participants said *"The facilitators and the industry experts that have given time to this program and designed the content have been exceptional. They have a fantastic natural ability to convey what needs to be done, how to do it, and how to strive for success."* and *"There were so many times where there was a light bulb moment of going, oh yes, I can actually take that learning and apply it into my business."*

The Net Zero Academy - Executive Leadership Program draws on contributions from the Monash Business School and the Faculty of Earth, Atmosphere and Environment. The program also featured contributions from industry experts representing organisations including PwC, BHP, Microsoft, Lion, and Pollination.

The Academy also delivered its first one-day Climate Risks and Opportunities program to 13 professionals.

Read more





FOSTERING AWARD-WINNING LEADERS

MSDI runs a unique leadership specialisation in the Master of Environment and Sustainability. The Master is hosted by the Faculty of Science and co-delivered in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Business and Economics for a cohort of learners from lots of different countries and backgrounds and with many aspirations for making change.

In 2024, MSDI Educator, Stathi Paxinos, presented a paper written with colleague, David Robertson, on educational innovations from the units Transforming Cities for Sustainability and Innovation to Influence System Change, at the European Conference on Game Based Learning in Aarhus, Denmark.

At the conference, Stathi also represented a joint collaboration team of MSDI, Monash University and the social enterprise Ecofun Indonesia, in the International Educational Games Competition, where our game, 'Water Champions', was awarded second place in the non-digital games category. The prototype of the game was created as a unit-long team project in the MSDI-led subject, Sustainability Consultancy Project.

NEW MASTERS OFFERINGS FOR 2026

Master of Sustainability - Indonesia is a new Masters offering that MSDI is developing in partnership with Monash Indonesia and planning to launch in 2026.

Master of Behaviour and Systemic Change is a new MSDI course filling a gap in education provision at the Masters level, bringing together behaviour and systemic change, planning to launch in 2026.

Read more



DEVELOPING ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS TO INFLUENCE SYSTEMIC BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

BehaviourWorks Australia provides targeted behaviour change expertise and increases partner organisations' capacities to implement strategic behaviour change actions to achieve their goals.

A selection of 2024's projects include:

- Evidence-based tactics to improve reading rates – we provided Australia Reads with an understanding of different types of Australian readers (and non-readers) through segmentation analyses, identifying key drivers and barriers to reading behaviours, insights into how to influence behaviours, to help improve the nation's reading rates.

  Read more

- Western Australia Return Recycle Renew Limited (WARRRL) drew on our expertise to develop a framework that provides clear guidance, practical tools, and evidence-based strategies to help them identify, implement, and sustain impactful behavioural changes to capture more eligible drink containers, so that they can be recycled at their highest value.

  Read more

- OzChild and the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare engaged us to identify the characteristics of people who would consider becoming a foster carer, and suggest some strategies they could use to recruit more foster carers, as they are desperately needed in Australia. The learnings have formed part of a key website for the sector. And the information is informing OzChild's efforts to increase funding and support more foster carers.

  Read more

- We improved the global Athletics Integrity Unit's education and communication skills, helping them to empower athletes from around the world to practice with integrity and contribute to a more healthy, just and fair sporting system.



PROVIDING RENOVATION PATHWAYS TO ENCOURAGE AMBITIOUS CLIMATE ACTION POLICY

We are providing the evidence for policymakers to take more ambitious action on climate and highlighting that residential building decarbonisation is possible and cost-effective.

Through the Renovation Pathways program, which Climateworks Centre is leading, we provided critical analysis and advice to enable the kick start and scaling up of Australia's building stock through renovation. The reports, *Climate-ready homes* and *Enabling Australia's home renovation wave*, provided actionable steps for Australia's net zero plan.

We collaborated with CSIRO and economists at Strategy Policy Research (SPR), as well as our expert advisory group consisting of experts in building decarbonisation from state and local government, peak bodies, NGOs, banks and the private sector.

Policymakers are embedding the information in Federal Government policy consultations and the NSW and Victorian Governments are also consulting with us in their early stages of policy design.

We briefed DCCEEW's Energy Performance and Security division on findings, which was incorporated in DCCEEW's National House Energy Rating Scheme consultation paper. Our findings have been cited by the Clean Energy Finance Corporation and the Climate Change Authority.

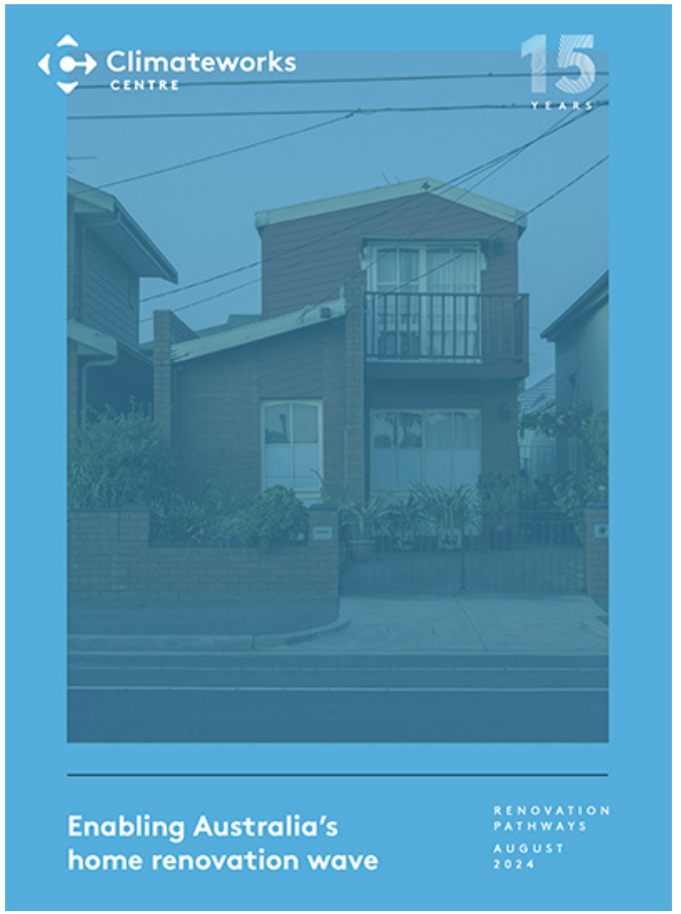
Read more

RENOVATING FOR HEALTHIER AND MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT HOMES

Reducing emissions from homes will be critical for Australia to achieve its climate targets and secure a safe net zero future. Australia's 11 million homes are responsible for over 10% of Australia's total emissions and more than 25% of electricity consumption, and an additional 5.5 million homes are expected to be built before 2050.

Launched in Parliament by the Minister for Emergency Management of Australia, Jenny McAllister, the '***Defining zero carbon homes for a climate resilient future***' report provides a comprehensive picture of the existing housing stock in Australia and where there are the biggest opportunities to reduce emissions.

The work has informed the development of national and state level policies, including the Climate Change Authority's Sector Pathways Review, and the Home Energy Rating Disclosure policy.





CREATING ENERGY UPGRADES FOR A MILLION AUSTRALIAN HOMES

We're identifying the barriers that prevent every Australian house from being made energy efficient in order to enable energy upgrades for a million homes across Australia.

As part of RACE for 2030 CRC, our Energy upgrades for Australian homes project is a partnership with CSIRO, RMIT University, UNSW Sydney, University of South Australia, UTS; as well as industry and government partners, Boundless Earth, Climate KIC Australia, Government of South Australia, Knauf Insulation and NSW Government.

Our approach to help improve home energy efficiency is to partner with local upgrade programs, build a platform with tools to allow communities and governments to establish programs, identify policy reform, develop evidence and tools, identify key household behaviours, strengthen the supply chain, and support program organisers. In order to achieve this, we have engaged two community partners, 31 industry reference group members, and 11 project partners. We conducted 37 interviews, presented the project at 10 events, developed 18 knowledge products, and established seven work packages.

Read more



MEASURING NATURE TO ENABLE BETTER ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

The Natural Capital Measurement Catalogue (NCMC) assists industry, institutions and society in the better management of ecosystems and promotes sustainable practices.

Climateworks Centre created the Natural Capital Measurement Catalogue, the world's first publicly available catalogue which supports the consistent measurement of natural capital, which fuels over half of Australia and the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The catalogue was supported by a technical reference panel of research institutions and organisations across Australia including CSIRO, Australian National University (ANU), La Trobe University, Griffith University, Federation University, and Accounting for Nature and Farming for the Future. It was also supported by an advisory group, comprising more than 50 financial institutions, government, land management, research and supply chains, measurement providers, and consultancies.

We launched the second iteration of this Natural Capital Measurement Catalogue at Australia's Nature Positive Summit. Since version 1.0, the catalogue has generated over 4,200 visitors and more than 2600 unique visitors interacted with it in 2024. The catalogue has been referenced in 13 publications and we have developed three submissions to inform international and Australian policy makers.

Senior Researcher at the Australian Farm Institute, Justin Maroccia, said, *"For the agricultural value chain… who want to better understand, measure and report their natural capital …Version 2.0 of the NCMC is a welcome update and an impressive evolution of the Catalogue that will help more users realise the value in this resource."*

Read more:
Natural Capital Measurement Catalogue
Natural Capital Measurement



INSPIRING BEHAVIOUR CHANGE FOR A BETTER WORLD

We are sharing our method to create impactful and meaningful outcomes in our book, *Inspiring Change - how to influence behaviour for a better world*, published by Monash University Press and written by our BehaviourWorks Australia team.

The book is a practical, in-depth guide on how to apply our approach to foster economic prosperity, better health, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. Each of the twelve chapters has tools, processes or structures for practitioners working in behaviour science.

The Australian Political Book of the Year Award nominated the book for its prize. And Behavioural Scientist included it on its **Summer book list**.

Read more



PROVIDING EVIDENCE ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND MENTAL HEALTH TO INFORM FEDERAL POLICY

Beyond Blue, commissioned us through our Evidence Review Service to compile and synthesise emerging learning about promising public health interventions to address the effects of social media use on the mental health and wellbeing of the community.

Beyond Blue drew on the evidence when appearing at the Joint Select Committee on Social Media and Australian Society. The organisation's Evidence and Impact Senior Adviser said, *"The evidence review was incredibly useful for Beyond Blue for our engagement with government stakeholders and sector partners on the social media ban proposed, and now introduced to Parliament, by the Federal Government. The report gave us confidence that we had high quality, contemporary evidence to contribute to these important policy discussions."*

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Many voices working together

At the heart of our work is a collaborative transdisciplinary approach



We work in partnership across communities, sectors, disciplines, Monash faculties and MSDI teams in pursuit of our shared goals and a sustainable future for people and planet.

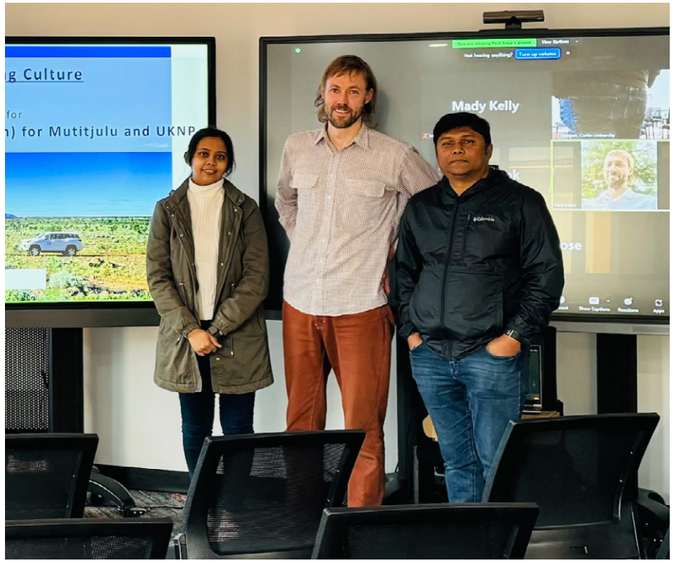
To advance the wellbeing of people and the planet, for current and future generations, we work with many partners and connect with broad audiences.

FACILITATING AN ANANGU LED WATER PLAN FOR ULURU KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK

As part of DEECCW's National Environmental Science Program, our project 'Water Sensitive and Liveable Communities in Regional and Remote Australia is seeking to improve sustainable water outcomes for health, wellbeing and liveability by understanding remote and regional water service needs, priorities and opportunities.

The project undertook a national survey for regional and remote Local Government Authorities, followed by a series of national workshops with regional and remote service providers, stakeholders, community leaders and policy and advocacy groups. We established a three-year research plan that will seek to support the establishment of a national platform for regional and remote areas capability building.

In 2024, we began developing the first in a series of place-based living laboratories that will support impact focussed research to understand the key requirements for place-led or 'country-centred' water capability building. This initiative is led by Anangu Traditional Owners with the support from Parks Australia and other local supporting organisations. It will seek to support the building of knowledge, relationships, research background and an enabling environment for the establishment of an Anangu led water plan for Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park.



MSDI's Paul Satur with Curtin University research team members Shamima Aktar and Mohammed Swapan (Late).

CREATING EQUAL ACCESS TO DRINKING WATER AND WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT IN REMOTE AND REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

The Australian Water Association's Regional and Remote Communities pilot project is addressing the problem that people who live in remote and regional areas don't have equal access to clean and safe drinking water and wastewater management. This inequity is expected to increase due to the impact of climate change, which will stress existing water sources and negatively impact liveability.

As part of a research advisory led by Engineering Consultants, Ekistica, we sought to support the Australian Water Association, Australia's largest water industry membership network, and identify their servicing priorities and opportunities for supporting outcomes for regional and remote communities. In 2024, we conducted four rounds of interviews and consultative workshops with around 80 professionals and organisations in water, and adjacent industries, with experience in education, advocacy, water operations, governance, health and regional/remote operations. Their insights helped us to identify gaps and opportunities for projects that will support the Australian Water Association to meaningfully address water inequality in Australia.

Our consultation identified:

- initiatives that support capability building and networks support for remote and regional water service providers
- partnership programs and opportunities for supporting First Nations water leaders and emerging practitioners, and the strengthening of national employment pathways, training and skills acquisition for regional and remote communities.

Read more



CHALLENGING AQUA NULLIUS TO RECOGNIZE INDIGENOUS WATER RIGHTS

An interfaculty Indigenous-led collective with the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Education is working to disrupt the discourse in government policies and practices around water rights and management to ensure Indigenous water rights are recognised and practiced. kate harriden from MSDI Water coordinates the collective.

In 2024, the collective facilitated three workshops over two months, and a follow-up session, with 10 non-Indigenous participants. The participants were self-selected individuals from DCCEEW and Murray Darling Basin Authority staff with Indigenous water policy and engagement roles.

Following the program, participants are now better equipped to develop appropriate and respectful engagement practices that support Indigenous peoples exercising their water rights. The collective presented their work to the AIATSIS Summit this year, in a presentation titled 'Building gubbers' capacity through teaching and learning about aqua nullius'.



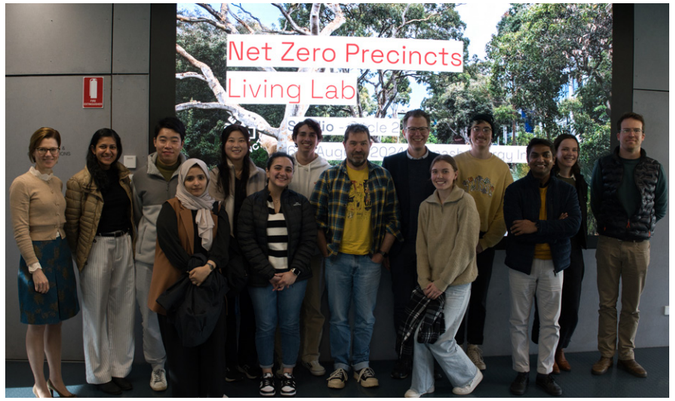
CREATING CHANGE THROUGH LIVING LAB EXPERIMENTATION

Through our Net Zero Precincts ARC Linkage project, we are trialling new ways for Monash staff, students, industry, and government partners to collaborate and broaden net zero innovations, and improve the governance of place-based transitions. Our Living Lab at Monash Clayton steers and accelerates net zero transitions, with real change happening throughout the experimentation phase.

The ARC Linkage project is a partnership between MSDI and the Emerging Technologies Research Lab at the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture; Faculty of IT; Faculty of Arts and Data Futures Institute; Monash staff and students; Monash Buildings and Property; ENGIE, City of Monash; CSIRO; ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability; City of Greater Dandenong; Energy Efficiency Council; and Swinburne University.

We work closely with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) through the Monash Innovation Guarantee and Research Experimentation and Discovery Flagship programs. Our researchers co-supervise five PhD students and six Final Year Honours students in the Faculty of Engineering.

Read more







ACCELERATING COLLECTIVE ACTION TO PROTECT AND REPAIR NATURE

The Global Nature Positive Summit in Australia was the first in a series of international summits tackling biodiversity loss by accelerating collective action to drive investment in nature and strengthen activities to protect and repair our environment.

The Australian federal and New South Wales state governments co-hosted the summit on Gadigal Country, Sydney. Many MSDI representatives attended, including Climateworks Centre who presented at the Summit. We collaborated with the Monash Faculty of Law on the Nature Positive Summit Webinar series, which included MSDI speakers and other leading Monash researchers.

At the summit, we exhibited the Land Use Trade-Offs Model v.2, a world-leading model developed by Climateworks and Deakin University with research support from CSIRO. The model shows how Australia can meet Paris Agreement climate and Global Biodiversity Framework targets while meeting agricultural demand, by synergising land use and management practices.

Read more



BIODIVERSITY CONCERNS SURVEY SHOWS VOTERS SUPPORT CONSERVATION INVESTMENT

The Biodiversity Council engaged us through BehaviourWorks Australia to design and deliver a survey to ascertain community support for action and spending on biodiversity.

The survey was the product of the Biodiversity Council and researchers from different universities across Australia: Monash University, University of Queensland, Melbourne University, and University of Adelaide.

The group ran two rounds of the survey in early and late 2024. The results showed that Australians care deeply about the state of nature. The survey showed that almost all Australians (95%) want a better budget for nature. There was a majority support for strengthening environmental laws to support nature (73%), 9 in 10 Australians wanted more listed threatened species actively recovered, and the majority (89%) indicated that nature conservation issues would influence how they voted in future elections.

Read more



Image: A few members of the Biodiversity Council including BehaviourWorks Australia Director, Liam Smith (3rd from right).



AFFILIATES NETWORK ACCELERATING COLLABORATION

Our Affiliates Program mobilises and connects the incredible interdisciplinary skills and expertise across all Monash faculties and campuses to help deliver our shared ambitions for impact in key domains of change. This year, the network focussed on the Circular Economy.

The number of Affiliates grew to 200 people in 2024.

Affiliate member, Associate Professor, Dr. Glen Croy, from the Department of Management at the Monash Business School, said, *"The collaboration has enabled access to greater networks and expertise, amplifying our engagement for impact. In one collaborative project we investigated the potential role of taxation levers to support the transition to a circular economy. Based upon our analysis, we made a submission to the Circular Economy Ministerial Advisory Group, and another to the Productivity Commission to strengthen circular transition opportunities."*

Affiliate member, Sandy Swanson, from the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), added, *"...it's a way to surround yourself with inspired and inspiring colleagues - all gathered to discuss interdisciplinary solutions to global challenges that need impact-focused outcomes."*

Read more

Case study

MSDI INTERNS SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE THROUGH DATA SCIENCE

Through the Monash University Work-Integrated Learning program, undergraduate students from diverse faculties have the opportunity to apply their studies to sustainability questions in a real working environment.

In 2024, Farrel Wiharso finished his Bachelor of Applied Science at the School of Mathematics and Louise Childs was in her second last year of the same degree.

Applied Data Science is the use of maths and coding which takes data to visualise the information and model outcomes, helping institutions and organisations to make informed decisions and make predictions based on future modelling.

During their second semester in 2024, Louise and Farrel spent 12 hours a week for 12 weeks interning with MSDI's Strategy and Engagement team, engaging in different tasks and discrete projects that will contribute to their degree.

Read more



Global connections and conversations

We build relationships and engage with diverse actors to advance sustainable development in our region and across the world



As well as the international projects, programs, and initiatives featured across this report, we also participate in, and drive, regional and global conversations to influence the progress of the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia-Pacific and beyond.

BUILDING STRONG GREEN RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND VIETNAM

We brought together businesses in green economy sectors for a summit to provide a stronger case for Australia and Vietnam to decarbonise faster and establish strong relationships with Vietnamese governmental agencies, as part of the Australia Vietnam Green Economy Program (AVGEP).

AVGEP is an initiative led by Asialink and Climateworks Centre and supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The summit was the first of its kind. Business leaders, policymakers and industry experts discussed opportunities for green economy investment and trade. There were over 225 participants, including 40 Australian businesses. Media coverage included pieces in The Conversation, 360info, The Mandarin, Tuoi Tre News, Vietnam News, and ABC's The World Today. The AVGEP initiative published five briefing papers which have been downloaded over 1,300 times.

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THE UN GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT LAUNCHES IN ASIA PACIFIC

MSDI continues to shape discussions to embed the recommendations of the Global Sustainable Development Report 2023 and find regional solutions in Asia Pacific.

In October 2024, MSDI's Associate Professor, Shirin Malekpour, participated in the Asia Pacific launch of the Global Sustainable Development Report 2023, in Delhi, India. She is one of 15 independent scientists appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General to develop the report, which was originally launched in New York in 2023.

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CREATING SPACE FOR EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS TO SHARE IMPACTFUL RESEARCH

At the inaugural Australian hub of the 9th Network of Early Career Researchers in Sustainability Transitions (NEST) Conference, 18 early career researchers from Australia, India, Ghana, Japan, the UK and New Zealand shared impactful research on sustainability transitions topics including disaster resilience and empowerment, climate and energy policy, circular economy, and planetary boundaries.

MSDI co-hosted the conference with Stellenbosch University, South Africa, and Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway.

The conference presented an opportunity for networking, knowledge exchange, discussion, and new collaborations among early career researchers around the world in order to support their growing practice and experience.

Read more



PROVIDING LEADERSHIP FOR THE SDGS IN OUR REGION AND ACROSS THE GLOBE.

MSDI is host to the Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Regional Network of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN AusNZPac). We co-led a regional member support group on Mainstreaming Education for the SDGs in higher education.

We contributed to SDSN recommendation statements to the United Nations and the Australian Government ahead of the UN Summit of the Future. We attended meetings in New York for the SDSN, the 79th United Nations General Assembly, NY Climate Week and the UN Summit of the Future. We chaired sessions with Amina Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General, and Mia Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados, at SDSN's pre-Summit conferences.

Read more

And we co-authored an article in Nature Communications on accelerating the SDGs through the science-policy interface.

MSDI was a member of the International Steering Committee for Global Goals2024, an international academic conference on the future of the SDGs. MSDI represented Australia as part of the International Water Resource Associations SDG6 Localisation Bureau.

Together with Stockholm Environment Institute, we hosted an academic workshop at Monash Indonesia to explore the SDGs beyond 2030, with 25 international thought leaders involved in SDGs research.

Read more



Thank you



Thank you for being on this sustainable journey with us.

Thank you to our staff and students, all of our project and initiative Advisory Councils, Expert Advisory Panels and Governance Boards for your passion and expertise.

Thank you to our colleagues across Monash University for your sponsorship and work with us to widen our sustainable development impact.

Thank you to our partners, research peers, and guest experts for your knowledge and support that helps us advance our shared goals.

Thank you to our donors, clients and funding partners who also believe in the wellbeing of people and planet for current and future generations.



Change the world with us

Together we can transform the world into a sustainable, healthy, equitable and prosperous place.



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