



**Carmel Tebbutt MP**

**Deputy Premier**

Minister for Climate Change and the Environment | Minister for Commerce

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## **Students get access to top climate scientists**

Secondary students across New South Wales are getting direct personal access to Australia's top climate change scientists in a National Science Week project.

"Climate Change: Reflecting Back, Looking Forward" is a series of videoconferences and a seminar organised by the NSW Department of Education and Training, Macquarie University and the Australian Institute of Policy and Science Tall Poppy Campaign.

"This event is giving Year 10 to 12 students a unique opportunity to learn in detail about the very latest thinking on climate change from scientists who are among the nation's most highly qualified to talk about it," said Ken Olah, Relieving Director, Curriculum, NSW DET.

"The scientists have all volunteered their spectacular breadth of expertise to the program, a clear indication of their passion and commitment, and itself a lesson for potential professional scientists in our schools.

"We are enormously grateful to the scientists, Macquarie University, the Institute and all participating bodies and individuals for their support in such an extensive and important event."

Three hundred students from the Sydney and Hunter areas will take part in the seminar today between 10am and 2pm at a Macquarie University meeting venue, U@MQ.

It aims to give detailed insights into current Australian climate change research, demonstrate the scientific principles underpinning that research, build understanding about the issues around climate change, and encourage discussion on careers in scientific research.

The speakers are:

- Professor Tim Flannery, a leading thinker and writer on sustainability and the environment, professor of Environmental Sciences at Macquarie University, palaeontologist, zoologist, explorer and Australian of the Year in 2007
- Professor Lesley Hughes, an ecologist who has researched the impact of climate change on Australian species and ecosystems for more than 15 years, one of the authors of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Macquarie University representative on the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility management committee
- Dr Ben McNeil, a researcher into the ocean's role in absorbing atmospheric carbon dioxide and the ecological consequences of this as it turns the ocean more acidic; Dr McNeil was chosen as an expert reviewer of United Nations climate change work in 2007



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Associate Professor Ian Goodwin, Dr Charles Warren, Professor Richie Howitt, Associate Professor Peter Ralph and Ms Nicole Walczyk will also be on the seminar's panel.

- Associate Professor Goodwin has 25 years' experience in research and is an international expert in sea-level and wave climate change, and change in large-scale coastal behaviour, particularly in the southern hemisphere including the Antarctic.
- Dr Warren's research examines how plants and ecosystems function during climate change, bushfire, drought and increased salinity.
- Professor Howitt is a Professor of Human Geography at Macquarie University and a specialist in the social impact of climate and environmental change on Indigenous peoples.
- Associate Professor Ralph from UTS heads a laboratory using photosynthetic tools to assess the impact of climate change on the microalgae that support ecosystems in the Southern Ocean in Antarctic sea-ice.
- Ms Walczyk is a PhD student at Macquarie University looking at the impact of climate change on aeroallergens and allergic diseases.

In addition to these scientists, others will take part in the series of morning video conferences based in the Department's Ryde office and involving several hundred Year 9 to 12 students each time.

Up to three thousand students will have taken part in schools between Kingscliff in the north, Bateman's Bay in the south and Broken Hill by the time the program of conferences from August 11 to 24 is complete.

The additional scientists taking part include:

- Dr Tracey Rogers, whose research focusses on the impact of climate change on the Southern Ocean ecosystem, especially through the leopard seal, an Antarctic apex predator
- Professor John Dodson, head of the Institute for Environmental Research, with internationally recognised expertise in climate change, water and human impact on environments
- Professor Greg Retallack, currently leading a group at the University of Oregon researching the proposition that soils have a fossil record that can inform about the evolution of ecosystems
- Dr Leigh Sheppard, an Australian Research Fellow at the School of Natural Sciences at the University of Western Sydney, researching sustainable energy and particularly solar-hydrogen



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- Dr Craig O'Neill, researching the processes of planet formation that explain why the Earth is habitable but other planets are not
- Dr Martina Doblin, a plankton ecologist researching how the organisms have such a profound influence on the Earth's climate and ecological function
- Dr Andrew Smith, researching and counting atoms to discover ancient sources of methane gas and support our understanding of living with climate change
- Dr Scott Sampson, a leading palaeontologist and former associate professor at the University of Utah, currently researching the remains of previously unknown dinosaurs in southern Utah, an author and broadcaster

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