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Climate Change Adaptation Program
Global Cities Research Institute
RMIT University

In collaboration with:
Monash Sustainability Institute
The University of Melbourne

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Working Paper 2: Assessing the costs of climate change

Adriana Keating and John Handmer have published the project's Working Paper 2: 'Options for assessing the cost of climate change in Victoria'.

The working paper provides a critical analysis of methodologies that have been used to assess the costs of recent extreme weather events in Victoria and Australia, with a view to exploring the suitability of these methods for assessing the costs of climate change.

Estimating the costs of climate change impacts is the first step in the economic evaluation of adaptation options. Impacts of climate change in Victoria are already being felt and are likely to intensify in the future.



Queensland floods 2011

Source: www.flickr.com/photos/51133868@N03/

From a public policy perspective there is a demand for an economic analysis of the costs and benefits of climate change impacts that can then be compared with the potential costs of adaptation. These are important for assessing potential risks and

making the case for government intervention. However assessing the economic impacts of climate change is challenging and resource intensive and there are a variety of potential approaches that can be used to make these assessments.

This report outlines the main methodologies available for costing climate change impacts, namely general equilibrium analysis, partial equilibrium analysis, and integrated assessments. These are presented with an accompanying analysis of their respective strengths, weaknesses and applicability.

Working Paper 2 is available on the project website:

www.vcccar.org.au/content/pages/framing-project

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Work package 4

Four distinct work packages make up the Framing Adaptation project. In this project update we feature a summary of work package 4, which is carried out by Jana-Axinja Paschen, Ray Ison and Phil Wallis at Monash University.

Work package 4, 'Exploring local narratives of climate change adaptation' has three related objectives:

First, the analysis of underlying cultural narratives of climate change makes explicit how these frame our actions and understandings of appropriate adaptation strategies.

Second, climate change adaptation presents an opportunity to include diverse stakeholders in policy development and decision-making. However, there is often a discrepancy between how theoretical concepts of climate change adaptation are framed in top-down communication, and the needs and desires of local communities.

Narrative research reflects the diversity of climate actors in the community and helps gain a more detailed understanding of what drives or constrains these actors' adaptive capacity. It produces a range of context-specific and policy relevant data critical to 'bottom-up' approaches to communicating climate change adaptation.

Third, utilising the social process elements of narrative, the research simultaneously provides a method for ongoing and participatory adaptation planning processes.

For the first case study, located in the City of Melbourne local government area, the researchers interviewed local residents, business owners and agencies in the suburbs of Carlton and Docklands. In the recruitment a snowball sampling process was used following along existing social relationship lines.

The conversational interviews encourage story telling through open-ended questions, while focus questions help zoom in on policy relevant themes. Planning is underway for a workshop with research participants and City of Melbourne stakeholders, where key findings will be presented for feedback and discussion. Recruitment for a second case study in Port Fairy will commence in July.

3 Resilient Cities 2011 Congress held

Resilient Cities 2011, the 2nd World Congress on Cities and Adaptation to Climate Change was recently held in Bonn, Germany. Two VCCCAR Framing Adaptation project researchers presented their work at the congress.

This year's second international congress on cities and climate change adaptation attracted about 600 local and state government staff, researchers, and elected officials from around the world. The annual congress, organised by ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability provides

a forum for exchange on current challenges for cities in the process of planning for climate change. This year's event covered topics such as multi-level adaptation governance, green infrastructure, mainstreaming adaptation and various city case studies (e.g. London, Lagos, Ho Chi Minh City).

Jana-Axinja Paschen and Hartmut Fuenfgeld of the VCCCAR Framing Adaptation project presented their work, focusing on conceptual framing of adaptation and the role local narratives can play in adaptation planning processes.

The congress enabled the researchers to promote VCCCAR's work internationally and highlight the collaborative approach



Resilient Cities Congress 2011, Bonn
Source: ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, <http://resilient-cities.iclei.org>

of the project and VCCCAR as a whole. Interest in the project outputs was particularly strong from North American and European delegates, who seemed to grapple with similar issues of adaptation framing.

A summary of the congress as well as many presentations and background information on the sessions is available at:

<http://resilient-cities.iclei.org>

Upcoming Events

12-14 July 2011, Melbourne
Four Degrees or More?
Conference

This conference explores the unintended consequences of current domestic and international climate policies. It invites the audience to imagine the social, economic and ecological implications of catastrophic global warming for Australia and its region. The conference is organised by the University of Melbourne and Monash University.

www.fourdegrees2011.com.au

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