



ITD Alliance

Global Alliance for
Inter- and Transdisciplinarity



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The Oceania Regional Network presents:

July 28, 2026

“Complex identities: Navigating transdisciplinary research as PhDs and ECRs”



Lucy Allen-Kelly
University of
Technology Sydney
Australia



Salvador Cantellano
Griffith
University
Australia



Jess Cheok
CSIRO
Australia



Payal Maharaj
University of
Queensland
Australia, Fiji



Andrew Sullivan
University of
Tasmania
Australia



Mikaela Young
University of the
Sunshine Coast
Australia

The 60-minute webinar will be followed by a 30-minute open discussion - a "Talanoa" - where you can connect with others across Oceania who are passionate about inter- and transdisciplinarity.

Oceania Regional Network Webinar:

Complex identities: Navigating transdisciplinary research as PhDs and ECRs

Webinar Details

Date: Tuesday, July 28th 2026

Time: [Convert to your time zone](#); Perth: 1:30-3pm, Canberra: 3:30-5pm, Fiji and Aotearoa New Zealand: 5:30-7pm

[Register at Humanitix](#) (Zoom link sent to registered participants)

Description

Conducting transdisciplinary research is a significant challenge for seasoned academics, but for PhD students and Early Career Researchers (ECRs), there is the additional challenge of nurturing their emerging academic identity within (often indifferent or even hostile) institutional settings. Six PhDs/ECRs will explore the challenges and opportunities they have faced as they develop their academic identities in a variety of research fields and institutional situations.

The event will be hosted and moderated by Iain Gordon, Honorary Professor with the Fenner School of Environment and Society at the Australian National University, and Linda Wilson, a PhD student in the School of Social Sciences at the University of Western Australia.

This hour-long webinar will be followed by a 30-minute open discussion – a Talanoa – where you can connect with others across Oceania who are passionate about inter- and transdisciplinarity. A recording of the webinar will be available from the [ITD Alliance Oceania Regional Network](#) web page after the event.

ITD Alliance Oceania Regional Network

Contact: info@itd-alliance.org Web: <https://itd-alliance.org/oceania-regional-network/>

Panel members

Name	Position	Institution	Transdisciplinary Research Field
Dr Lucy Allen-Kelly	Lecturer	University of Technology Sydney - Transdisciplinary School	Creative and arts-based approaches in transdisciplinary education
Salvador Cantellano	PhD student	Griffith University - Creative Arts Research Institute	Participatory filmmaking for climate change communication
Dr Jess Cheok	Postdoctoral Fellow	CSIRO - Collaborative and Adaptive Futures	Co-design, Indigenous engagement, addressing complex conservation and sustainability challenges
Payal Maharaj	PhD student	University of Queensland - One Ocean Hub Project	Women's health, sustainable development, governance & policy
Andrew Sullivan	PhD student	University of Tasmania - Centre for Marine Socioecology	Ocean Governance
Mikaela Young	PhD student	University of Sunshine Coast - Seaweed Research Group	Improving desirability of sustainable and nutritious food sources for Australian consumers

Lucy Allen-Kelly is a Lecturer in Transdisciplinary School at the University of Technology Sydney. With a background in the creative arts and innovation, Lucy's research and teaching practice explores the role of creative and arts-based approaches in transdisciplinary education. She recently completed her doctorate in Transdisciplinary Innovation titled "Bodies and Boundaries in Practice: Nurturing Embodied Learning Approaches in Transdisciplinary Higher Education".

Salvador Cantellano is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, educator, and PhD candidate at the Griffith Centre for Social and Cultural Research at Griffith University. He is a member of the Griffith Climate Action Beacon, and his transdisciplinary research works across documentary cinema, environmental communication, decolonial thought, and community-engaged practice. His doctoral research, *Cinema del Pueblo*, explores how participatory filmmaking can support more relational, ethical, and place-responsive forms of climate change communication. Drawing on his South American heritage, *Mestizaje*, and Indigenous ways of knowing, Salvador explores how collaborative storytelling with communities can surface ecological relationships and perspectives often missed by dominant forms of climate discourse. His work responds to climate coloniality by asking how communities can co-create films and filmmaking processes that enable them to speak from lived experience, local knowledge, and responsibility to people and place. Coming to research as a practitioner, Salvador brings more than two decades of filmmaking experience into the academy, where his films and collaborations have engaged communities, universities, cultural organisations, and environmental initiatives across Australia and the Asia Pacific.

Jess Cheok is a postdoctoral fellow at CSIRO whose work spans environmental science, marine spatial planning, and natural resource management. Her current research focuses on co-designing Indigenous futures thinking approaches with Traditional Owner groups in the Great Barrier Reef for the future of their Country, centring their perspectives, priorities, and environmental and socioeconomic justice through qualitative modelling and participatory methods. Jess' broader research experience integrates social, ecological, governance, and spatial perspectives to address complex conservation and sustainability challenges.

Payal N. Maharaj holds two master's degrees: a Master of Climate Change from the University of the South Pacific, Fiji (2015), and a Master of Biomedical Sciences from the University of Hawai'i, USA (2018). She joined the University of Queensland after receiving the Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship. A final-year PhD candidate in the School of Social Science, Payal is supervised by Dr. Jenny Munro and Dr. Stefanie Plage. Her doctoral research, "Unravelling the History of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (OBGYN) care in Fiji and how it has shaped Women's Health today," explores how historical and institutional factors continue to shape women's healthcare experiences in Fiji. Her research interests include women's health, medical anthropology, health policy, critical health literacy, and transdisciplinary approaches that connect the social and biomedical sciences.

Andrew Sullivan is a PhD candidate at the University of Tasmania (Australia) examining novel governance for a changing ocean. He returned to the academic community after more than 20 years of experience in fisheries research and management, consultancy and most recently in industry representation as the executive officer of the Commonwealth Fisheries Association. Andrew brings both a government and an end-user perspective to the complex intersection of governance, policy, science, and industry development. Navigating this complexity is critically important as the world transitions into a low carbon future, with the ocean playing a key role. Andrew has identified the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy (the Ocean Panel) as a case study of a novel multilateral governance intervention. Through semi-structured, elite interviews Andrew has gained insights and described the formation of Ocean Panel as a unique form of multilateral club governance. The next phase of his research will examine how member countries are adopting and implementing their Ocean Panel commitments, primarily through the development of Sustainable Ocean Plans.

Mikaela Young is a dietitian, nutritionist, and PhD Candidate at the University of the Sunshine Coast. Mikaela is exploring the nutritional and sensory characteristics of Australian seaweed *Ulva ohnoi*, and the influence that fermentation has on these characteristics. Seaweeds are a nutritionally dense and environmentally sustainable food source, however, to date, seaweed consumption amongst Australians is limited. This research seeks to understand whether fermentation can enhance the nutritional and sensory profiles of seaweed, and whether this can be harnessed to encourage greater seaweed intake amongst consumers. Mikaela also works in a Research Assistant role at the University supporting the interdisciplinary UniSC Seaweed Research Group. Here, Mikaela contributes to tasks spanning various disciplines, including nutrition and business, that contribute to the broader research projects of the team. Examples of recent contributions include collating and analysing data, interpreting findings, writing manuscripts, disseminating outcomes, and participating in social media content.

Hosts / Moderators

Iain Gordon, Honorary Professor, Fenner School of Environment and Society, Australian National University

Linda Wilson, PhD Student, School of Social Sciences, University of Western Australia

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Inter- and transdisciplinarians often have a hard time finding each other to share insights and experiences. The [ITD Alliance Oceania Regional Network](#) provides regular online networking opportunities (talanoa), following stimulating webinars that aim to showcase some of the best educational and research practices in the Pacific, New Zealand and Australia. We also ensure that the unique characteristics of the Oceania region are represented on the global stage. [Visit the network web page](#) and subscribe for notice of future activities.

We are grateful to [NITRO-Oceania](#) (Network of Leaders of Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research Organisations – Oceania) for support.

[Register to participate](#) in the “Complex identities: Navigating transdisciplinary research as PhDs and ECRs” webinar, 28th July 2026.