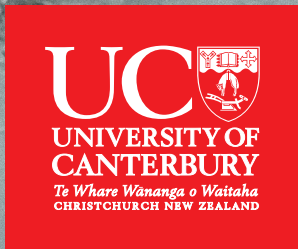


# Hei Puāwaitanga

## *Sustainable Development and Civic Imagination Research Group 2021 Report*

**UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY**





## **DIRECTORS' REPORT**

**Professor Bronwyn Hayward** MNZM



**The period June 2020 to June 2021 has been dramatic as the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted communities globally, particularly cities and driven the roll back of sustainable development gains for children everywhere.**

**In this difficult period it's been a privilege to be able to continue to work with a diverse team of international research colleagues and graduate students from here at the University of Canterbury in Hei Puāwaitanga: the Sustainable Development, Citizenship and Civic Imagination Research Group.**

**In Hei Puāwaitanga we have three major research themes.**



**WHAT DO YOU EAT?"**

**TELL US HERE >**



**"We have pasta a lot cos most of my family doesn't eat meat but my brothers still do so it's easy to make pasta and two different sauces."**

**Anahera, Christchurch**

**Brazil  
South Africa  
New Zealand**

**Theme One: Youth, Cities and Sustainability**

*How can we support urban young people to live flourishing lives in low carbon ways?*

This year marks a milestone in completion of data collection for **CYCLES Children and Youth in Cities Lifestyle Evaluation and Sustainability**. This project is led by our team in partnership with Surrey University's Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity (CUSP) and is conducted in seven cities with local research collaborators in Christchurch (New Zealand); and in Dhaka (Bangladesh), Lambeth (United Kingdom); Makhanda (South Africa); New Delhi (India); São Paulo (Brazil); and Yokohama (Japan). On 22 July we shared insights from a film directed and produced by Amanda Blue, London, in association with CYCLES in which young people write letters of hope to their city, and shared some of the emerging qualitative and quantitative insights from the CYCLES study as it applies to Christchurch in an outreach event at Tūranga Library. The study itself has grown out of a rich 12 year collaboration with Prof Tim Jackson director of CUSP, and Prof Kate Burningham in Surrey University. A special thanks to Dr Kate Prendergast who has managed the CYCLES project so ably, after post-doctoral fellow, Dr Sylvia Nissen took up a permanent position at Lincoln University. We also thank research assistants Yana Selyuk and Torie Owers who worked with us this year and translators Carolina Nery and Yurika Arai. Details about the exciting planned outputs from CYCLES are noted in the pages that follow and congratulations to Dr Mehedi Hasan who successfully defended his PhD as part of the CYCLES project here at UC in 2021.

## Theme Two: Critical Hope and Climate Change

*How can we support the citizenship skills and capabilities youth will need in increasingly chaotic climates?* In this theme two large grant research proposals have been invited to the second round led by collaborators Professor Bronwyn Hayward, Professor Angus Macfarlane, Associate Professor Sara Tolbert UC, Dr Glynne Mackey UC, Dr Bronwyn Wood (Victoria University) and Prof Niki Harre (Auckland University), Sam Dean of (NIWA), Prof Steve Ratuva Director MacMillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies UC, Sacha McMeeking Head of Aotahi School of Māori and Indigenous Studies, Dr Eruera Tarena (Tokona Te Raki: Māori Futures collective). Alongside these proposals new publications and graduate projects have focused on and innovative ways to engage and support citizens, particularly youth facing chaotic climate futures see pages 10-11.

## Theme Three: Civics Lab

*What are the skills and ideas of citizenship and how can we ensure these ideas, practices of citizenship support democracies in a changing world?* We explored this theme in three ways in the past year. First thanks to the support of Victoria University's Dr Emily Beausoleil and UNESCO NZ, we were able to support a **"Courageous conversations"** programme which included co-sponsoring Bariz Shah & Saba Afrasyabi for their Inspired Summit of Growth 28 January 2021 and Dr Mahdis Azarmandi UC Education's zine "Anti-Racist Soup". These community outreach events helped build capacity in ways that foreground upcoming collaborations with Pacific Youth Leadership for Transformation (PYLAT) and the National Muslim Youth Association NZ supporting courageous conversations/submissions about draft hate speech laws for Aotearoa.

The civics lab also hosted two national online workshops for the New Zealand Political Studies Association on **Votes at 16: international Lessons, NZ Citizenship Education Curriculum** review.

Alongside these projects we have continued the work on supporting citizenship, with Wendy Alabaster picking up analysis of the ways to address income inequality through fees free policies, and Rachel Hickling exploring the value of school gardens in supporting young citizens' wellbeing.

(\*Citizenship is defined here in its broadest form, as belonging and participating in communities beyond narrowly determined rights and responsibilities)

It has been a busy and productive year and we are grateful to all our collaborators and friends for their support – our whakatuki: Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini", reminds us that success doesn't not belong to the individual but is the result of collective effort. More information about Hei Puāwaitanga: is found at <https://www.canterbury.ac.nz/arts/research/sccl/>



CYCLES international team, at Surrey University workshop UK.

# THEME ONE

## Youth Cities and Sustainability

*How can we support urban young people to live flourishing lives in low carbon ways?*

### CHRISTCHURCH INSIGHTS FROM THE CYCLES STUDY: CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CITIES, LIFESTYLES EVALUATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

**Dr Kate Prendergast and Prof Bronwyn Hayward**

Thinking about what a community needs to do to support young citizens to live well is a key question that our international CYCLES study is exploring in seven cities around the globe. It is particularly pressing for children and youth in Christchurch Ōtautahi. Over the last decade 12-24 year olds have had to face earthquakes, fires, drought, floods & terror attacks on top of coming to terms with the impact of colonialism, racism, toxic masculinity, growing inequality and climate change. Viewed in any way, this is a lot to be dealing with. Here in Hei Puāwaitanga we also feel it's time to focus on what helps youth flourish and in partnership with Surrey University and the wider study of young people's lives growing up in seven cities, which we lead with the Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity CUSP, we took the chance to ask 332 young residents of Christchurch aged 12 to 24 years through a survey and another 60 in more in-depth focus groups, about what they like and would like to change about living here.

Our initial findings suggest many youth are anxious about a range of issues, not only the disasters they have faced but bullying, harassment on streets, future employment prospects, and the climate crisis. As all cities now confront COVID-19 and its risks, especially for the elderly, we also need to ask what will be the impact of our responses to this pandemic on young people and future generations? Will our

varied responses deepen inequality and amplify existing challenges? Or can our city build back better?

Thinking about what a community needs to do to support young citizens to live well the study began by interviewing 60 young Christchurch residents aged 12-24 from across the city and the survey that followed confirmed the comments of young people who collectively said that what the city's streets look and feel like matter to them. Some young people spoke proudly of enjoying the outdoors and 'nice views' from their homes or classrooms onto green space but other young people highlighted disparities in streetscapes between different parts of Christchurch. Some suburban streets 'don't feel as nice' they 'don't have trees' or they are divided by major roads that are 'hard to cross', or they have "low street lights that just don't work as well as the 'richer' or 'better' parts of Christchurch. Much research tells us that planting street trees is not only good for the environment, and urban health in a rapidly changing climate but it is good for wellbeing for all citizens, being able to enjoy calm and tranquil places and areas to play, matters for physical health and social connection.

Having the freedom to get around and get away is also important to all the young people we spoke to. They want sustainable, accessible, and safe transport but they said that the 'spread out' nature of the city makes it quite

'car dependent', which can be 'quite isolating'. Young people also told us that while they like independence of using buses many still find the fares are 'unaffordable', and catching a bus can still be 'difficult and time consuming'.

Moving around the city by foot and bike also provides young people a sense of independence and freedom. Yet some participants, young women in particular, reported that they don't feel safe on some of their neighbourhood streets. They want to be able to walk and 'not feel like they're being followed' or 'being harassed'.



*Above and right: Margaret Mahey playground was identified by children and youth of all ages as one of the few public spaces easily accessible to them along with Tūranga library and Washington skate park.*





...s Stop

# “HOW DO YOU GET AROUND, AND GET AWAY?”

TELL US HERE >



“I like how I bike to school and back cos I go with my friend cos she lives close and it takes longer so we can talk for longer.”

Nashi (12-13 years)

- Brazil
- South Africa
- New Zealand
- United Kingdom
- Bangladesh
- Japan
- India



## Amanda Blue Film maker

### “Dear Christchurch: letters of Hope to Ōtautahi”

Amanda Blue is a critically acclaimed, London based filmmaker who has been directing documentaries for the past 18 years and has been nominated for and won numerous awards both in the UK and internationally. Her long form documentaries made through the eyes of children and youth include the multi award-winning documentary series, Young Black farmers, about a group of inner-city black teenagers going to live and work on a Devonshire farm, Prescott: The class system and me and The Big School Lottery about British children going from primary to secondary school. She is collaborating with the UK Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity, University of Surrey and University of Canterbury to make a film that features letters of hope from children to their city.



Amanda Blue with Students from Hornby High, filmmaking workshop.

The young people we listened to also valued social connections. In a time of social distancing, this is a reminder that our city needs innovative initiatives that bring people together. Many youth wished there were more places than ‘just the malls’ to ‘hang out’. While all ages loved the Margaret Mahy playground, they also wanted more spaces to connect online and offline. For some the costs of Wi-Fi given need for online connectivity, made achieving valued connection hard. Our findings support other studies that highlight the value of free internet connectivity and local libraries as places to gather.

During lockdown in 2020 all of us spent many hours in our own homes. While the young people we spoke with in Christchurch before lockdown valued friendships and time with families it was concerning to hear many young people still talk about serious housing problems.

Some reported their houses have been flooded more than once, while others said their homes are still earthquake-damaged. We also heard comments from young people whose families are unable to afford regular heating and rely on ‘blankets and stuff’, wearing puffer jackets some nights inside and using ‘hot water bottles’ to keep warm. The findings of our focus groups are a reminder that the city’s pandemic recovery must prioritise safe, secure, and warm housing.

As the city grapples with how it will respond to COVID-19, it’s timely to note that many of the young people we spoke to said that adults need to ‘listen to young people more’ because they have ‘heaps of ideas’. The decisions made now will shape the wellbeing of the city for generations to come. So it is troubling that Christchurch ranked lowest of the seven cities overall for efficacy - that is feeling they can influence change, either individually

(“I believe I can make a difference in my city”, just 32 percent agreed) and collectively ‘together people in my neighbourhood can influence what happens in my city’ just 34 percent agreed.

This is a deeply troubling result, given the background mental health and community struggles, and the leadership that youth in Christchurch have offered over the decade whether through the student volunteer army or peace vigils after the terror attacks, and protests against sexual harassment. Some countries like Wales and Scotland have introduced A Foundation for Future Generations, and lowered the voting age to 16 to empower more youth voices, these are now pressing institutional changes that a city like Christchurch can and should make for a more flourishing future for tamariki.

## Dr Kate Prendergast

### What does it mean to flourish?

*Dr Kate Prendergast, Research Manager for Hei Puāwaitanga and Research Fellow for the Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity (CUSP). Her research explores the intersection of wellbeing, health, and sustainability, with a focus on children and young people in urban contexts. Kate's work is inspired by the need to understand how people can flourish in a world with finite resources. Dr Prendergast is project manager for CYCLES International Survey in seven world cities.*



What shapes the wellbeing of young people living in urban areas is a significant question. By 2050, seven in ten young people are expected to live in cities, which are at the forefront of sustainability challenges. In her work, Dr Prendergast argues that supporting young people to flourish requires moving beyond individual understandings and assessments of wellbeing, which risk positioning wellbeing as a personal responsibility, to also consider the importance of what it means to be well together. Together with a team of authors from the seven CYCLES cities, Dr Prendergast is using the CYCLES data to interrogate the structures, processes, places that hinder or enable young people's wellbeing.

Our CYCLES work shows that understanding local communities means listening to young people in meaningful ways (1). Less than a third of young people across all cities felt that decision-makers listen to them and in Christchurch the young people we spoke to wanted 'more youth voices [...], rather than adults sort of thinking, or trying to do what's best for the young people' (Ruby, 15-17 years). Young people are however finding platforms to make their voices heard. A fifth of the young people we surveyed internationally, and a third of the surveyed youth in Christchurch, said they had taken part in climate

protest (2). Across all cities, 85 percent of young protesters reported being worried about climate change, and 65 percent think about climate change all the time. Experiencing these emotions about the changing climate is normal but, at times, these feelings can be challenging young people to navigate without adequate support (4). In this context, fostering young people's skills and capabilities to take action together can provide a powerful way for supporting their wellbeing.

CYCLES 2020 outputs include a paper providing a comparative analysis of young people's experiences with local transport and green space in the seven diverse urban communities (1). In this paper, we argue that it is not merely the provision of transport or public and green space that matters, but the nuanced meaning of places and experiences as understood by local communities that needs to be recognised if we are to better support urban youth wellbeing.

Looking forwards to our series of planned publications, we aim to further examine young people's self-reported wellbeing across the seven international cities to consider how wellbeing is influenced by opportunities to express agency, place attachment, and social support. This work will focus on the situated and contextual factors that influence the abilities of urban young people to flourish in sustainable ways.

<sup>1</sup> Prendergast, K. (2020). Listening to young people to build back better. Retrieved from <https://www.cusp.ac.uk/themes/sl/blog-kp-cycles-study-christchurch/>

<sup>2</sup> Nissen, S., Prendergast, K., Aoyagi, M., Burningham, K., Hasan, M. M., Hayward, B., . . . Yoshida, A. (2020). Young people and environmental affordances in urban sustainable development: Insights into transport and green and public space in seven cities. *Sustainable Earth*, 3(1), 17. doi: 10.1186/s42055-020-00039-w

<sup>3</sup> Hayward, B., Prendergast, K., & et. al. (in submission). Youth attitudes to climate change: Seven city insights into school strikes for climate participation. *Frontiers in Political Science Special issue: Youth Activism in Environmental Politics*.

<sup>4</sup> Prendergast, K. (2020). Supporting young people's wellbeing in a changing climate. In B. Hayward (Ed.), *Children, citizenship and the environment*: Routledge.



Above: Displays inviting children and youth to take part in the CYCLES survey toured libraries of Christchurch.

Left: Asked to photograph everything things that they valued, or appreciated, many students photographed their bikes, not only as a means to get around and get away, but they talked about valuing the "freedom" of biking and wanting to be able to "bike everywhere, safely".



Public transport emerged as a huge issue of contention in the course of Hasan's study with thousands of students taking to the streets of Dhaka to protest lack of safe transport in August 2018.

## Dr Mehedi Hasan

### Towards a PLAY Model of Youth Participation in Sustainable Urban Decision Making: Investigating Young People's Experiences, Expectations and Empowerment in Green Space and Public Transport Planning in Dhaka City

Mohammad Mehedi Hasan completed his doctoral research with the Department of Political Science at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand in 2021. Dr. Hasan achieved Masters of Science in Climate Studies (MCL) from Wageningen University, Netherlands. In addition, he also holds a Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) and Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning (BURP) from Jahangirnagar University, Bangladesh where he currently works as an Assistant Professor. His research is Urban Planning and Policy in the context of climate change, disaster management and sustainability.

In his doctoral research 2017-2021, Hasan investigated the involvement of youth aged 12-24 years in sustainable planning for transport and green space in Dhaka city, Bangladesh. There is an increasing number of young people living in cities and towns of the Global South (Mayo, 2001; UN-Habitat, 2013). However, there is comparatively little



opportunity for youth voices, concerns and priorities to be heard by decision makers in urban planning. Considering the rapid growth of cities (Nematinasab, 2017; Wang et al., 2015) and the increasing proportion of young people in cities especially in the Global South, this study argued it is time to take a holistic approach to youth wellbeing by engaging young people in planning to enhance their knowledge capacity and rights to be heard, as we face the challenges of sustainable urban development in the Global South.

Approximately 52% of the population of Dhaka are under the age of 25 years but their priorities have often been overlooked in previous urban planning exercises (Ahmed, 2005; Ahmed & Sohail, 2005). This study used a two stage sequential mixed method approach conducted in two case study areas (an unplanned low income area and a planned high income community) and later added another middle income area for a wider survey. Using focus groups and a quantitative survey Hasan developed a PLAY model: Participation, Leadership and Activism of Youth for urban planning. In this model, he suggests local community discussion with young people in small groups can be a way of helping build the capacity of young people to participate in planning as well as providing opportunities to be heard in urban decision-making.

## THEME TWO

# Critical hope and climate change

*How can we support the citizenship skills and capabilities youth will need in increasingly chaotic climates?*

### CLIMATE, WELLBEING AND THE SAMOAN DIASPORA: A CHRISTCHURCH CASE STUDY

Luisa Leo



*Luisa Leo is a PhD candidate at the University of Canterbury. Having been awarded a UC Arts scholarship for thesis research, she decided to combine her interest in global climate change adaptation with a personally important subject, the wellbeing of Samoan diaspora in New Zealand.*

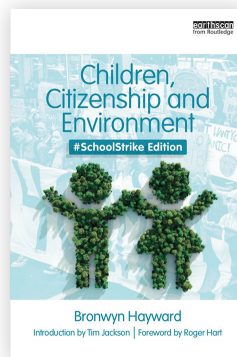
Our day to day lives are increasingly made more complicated by our international interconnectivity. By better recognising how individual and collective experiences of wellbeing are impacted by global changes, we will be more capable of understanding the needs and strengths of our communities.

With this in mind, Luisa's study builds upon existing literature and philosophy concerned with wellbeing and experiences of migration, and climate change adaptation strategies. There is an increasingly common assumption in climate change adaptation literature that diaspora communities will be able to support expected increases in international migration, while also facilitating climate change adaptation

by operating as a "bridge" between countries (Mohamoud et al. 2014, p.19). However, more work needs to be done to address such assumptions, and to better understand how diasporas engage with the adaptation needs of family and communities both locally and overseas.

This research project is a qualitative study focused on addressing the nuances of diaspora wellbeing in a time where the needs of extended families and communities overseas are impacted by the various effects of climate change. Based in Canterbury, the project aims to discuss this collaboratively with members of the Samoan community here in Christchurch.

Mohamoud, A., Kaloga, A., & Kreft, S., (2014). Discussion Draft: Climate Change, Development and Migration: an African Diaspora Perspective. African Diaspora Policy Centre, German Watch, Berlin. [www.germanwatch.org/en/8456](http://www.germanwatch.org/en/8456)



### NEW BOOK

Hayward, Bronwyn, (2021)  
**Children Citizenship and Environment #SchoolStrike Edition London:** Routledge

This significantly revised edition with new contributing authors examines how students, with teachers, parents, and other activists, can learn to take effective action to confront the complex drivers of the current climate crisis including: economic and social injustice, colonialism and racism. The global school strikes demand adults, governments, and businesses take far-reaching action in response to our climate crisis. The school strikes also remind us why this important youthful activism urgently needs the support of all generations.

The #SchoolStrike edition of Children Citizenship and Environment includes all new contributions by youth, indigenous and disability activists, researchers and educators: **Raven Cretney, Mehedi Hasan, Sylvia Nissen, Jocelyn Pappriil, Kate Prendergast, Kera Sherwood O' Regan, Mia Sutherland, Amanda Thomas, Sara Tolbert, Sarah Thomson, Josiah Tualamali'i, and Amelia Woods.**

As controversial, yet ultimately hopeful, as it was when first published, Bronwyn Hayward develops her 'SEEDS' model of 'strong ecological citizenship' for a school strike generation. The SEEDS of citizenship education encourage students to develop skills for; Social agency, Environmental education, Embedded justice, Decentred deliberation and Self-transcendence. This approach to citizenship supports young citizens' democratic imagination and develops their 'handprint' for social justice.

## THE NEAR FUTURE

Hannah Watkinson



*Hannah Watkinson completed her Masters in Fine Arts in 2021 and is a photographer and visual artist based in Ōtautahi Christchurch.*

Drawing on a decade of photographic work and research, Watkinson produced a photographic exhibition and book publication, 'The Near Future' which

considers the psychological landscape of the Buller region. Exploring the key elements that make up the socio-political climate of the Westport area - coal and gold mining, cement production, natural environment and climate change, this series raises a number of fundamental questions about the future of the place. It delves into the lack of clarity around what a Just Transition could mean for the local residents and visitors as well as the impact of the extraction industry downturn on wider New Zealand and the economy.

Watkinson began photographing the coastline of the Buller region with the knowledge that at some point, in the near future, the topography would change; rising sea levels, coastal erosion, the winding Coast Road slipping towards the deep blue. "In 2015 I was unaware that,

like most of the timeframes in Buller, the near future would come a lot sooner than I expected and would unfold before my eyes."

When Solid Energy went into debt crisis talks in February of 2013, Prime Minister John Key said that it was "very unlikely Solid Energy would be sold in the near future." The country's largest coal mining company went into voluntary administration in August 2015. In March 2018, Solid Energy was put into liquidation. "I watch the houses in Granity get evacuated in high tides. I wander around Carters Beach on tennis courts that are now part of the beachfront. I have learnt that 'the near future' is a concept that occupies the minds of all who live on the West Coast."

## YOUTH STRIKES FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE? UNDERSTANDING ADOLESCENTS' PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES OF CLIMATE ACTIVISM AND CLIMATE JUSTICE IN NEW ZEALAND

Amelia Woods



*Amelia Woods is a PhD researcher at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. Her research examines School Strike 4 Climate as a youth-led social movement and a site of political socialisation and justice learning. Amelia has previously studied environmental management and policy, and worked in the areas of sustainable housing, urban development, and planning.*

During 2019, approximately 13 million people, many of them children and young people, from over 228 countries went on strike in protest of government inaction in addressing climate change. Young people's protests have continued online during COVID 19 and on the street with the

most recent strike in New Zealand taking place on 9 April 2021. As well as striking from school, participants are taking a range of other action on climate change. In Christchurch, the 2019 school strikes reflected some of the largest proportional turnout and in addition to protests, strike organisers have held tree plantings, made submissions during local and central government processes, and have also encouraged other young people to do the same by running submission writing sessions. Through their participation in the school strikes, children and young people are engaging with complex and sometimes confronting ideas of fairness and justice in climate change.

One of the aims of this research is to understand what the justice concerns are of young school strike participants in New Zealand, and the research draws on focus groups, semi structured interviews, surveys, and document analysis in order to answer this question. Early findings from interviews suggest that intergenerational justice is an overarching concern for participants, however young people are also articulating

wider justice concerns. Students are concerned about the unjust effects on already marginalised groups, issues of ecological justice, and are thinking about the intersections of capitalism, colonisation and climate change. In 2021 the Auckland chapter of the school strike movement disbanded citing racism of its own movement. Through interviews and focus groups with climate strike organisers and participants, and analysis of social media posts, this study asks how do young people understand 'climate justice'? Although the issue is complex and could be overwhelming, initial results suggest young people interviewed report feeling empowered and hopeful by their experiences of participation in collective action. The lack of meaningful engagement from adults and decision-makers however is described as a significantly 'deflating' and frustrating experience.

Woods, A (2021): School strikes: A bottom up approach to climate justice" p 150 in Bronwyn Hayward, Children Citizenship and Environment #SchoolStrike edition (London: Routledge)

## THEME THREE CIVICS Lab

*What are the skills and ideas of \*citizenship and how can we ensure these ideas, practices of citizenship support democracies in a changing world?*

### FEES FREE EDUCATION AND EQUITY OF TERTIARY ACCESS

**Wendy Alabaster**



*Wendy Alabaster is a third-year PhD student researching the equity implications of the fees-free policy. Her PhD in public policy and education involves a qualitative longitudinal study to identify the barriers and enablers for under-represented students accessing tertiary study. Wendy teaches part-time at Karanga Mai Young Parents College in Kaiapoi.*

In New Zealand, students from high decile schools are four times more likely to access degree level study than students from low decile schools. Inequality in access to tertiary education is problematic from a human rights perspective because of the many potential benefits such as higher-paying jobs, and better health and well-being outcomes that are associated with completing tertiary study (Kotzmann, 2018). A key aspect of current debates in New Zealand is whether 'fees-free' policies help to improve access for groups who currently face barriers, particularly income barriers (Smyth, 2019; Sotardi et al., 2019). To date, research is undecided with suggestions that students from middle-income and above benefitted most from free tertiary education.

To research the equity implications of the fees-free policy, Alabaster has developed a qualitative longitudinal study of a small group of 10 students from Christchurch which has been designed to think about what conditions support students from low-income backgrounds or who are first in family to access tertiary education?

The study involves semi-structured interviews with students three times over the year to gain rich information and a deeper understanding of the barriers to tertiary education faced by these students.

Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach is used as a theoretical framework to identify the barriers to tertiary education that are preventing

students from flourishing (Nussbaum, 2010). Nine capabilities have been identified in the framework and include practical reason, educational resilience, learning disposition, and emotional integrity.

Initial findings suggest the first year free from fees is influential for students, who are the first in their family or who are from low-income backgrounds, when making the decision to first access tertiary education. More interviews will help understand what student's feel sustains their study and successful academic outcomes.



*Above, and top right: On 21 May 2021 Hei Puāwaitanga helped host the Child Poverty Action Budget breakfast, student volunteers with Dame Sue Bagshaw centre and keynote speaker at the breakfast: Ihorangi Reweti-Peters of VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai and Christchurch Youth Council.*



## STUDENT DEBT AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

**Dr Sylvia Nissen**



*Sylvia Nissen (she/her, Pākehā) is a Senior Lecturer at Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki / Lincoln University. Prior to this role she was a PhD student in the Department of Political Science at the University of Canterbury from 2013-2017, before taking up a role as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the department from 2017-2018. During this time she was the Coordinator of CYCLES including facilitating the focus group study in Christchurch.*

Student debt informs the political action and participation of university students. The scale of student debt is unprecedented, particularly in the English-speaking world. In these democracies, debt has become an increasingly integral part of student life for many young people

to enable participation in education and the wider economy.

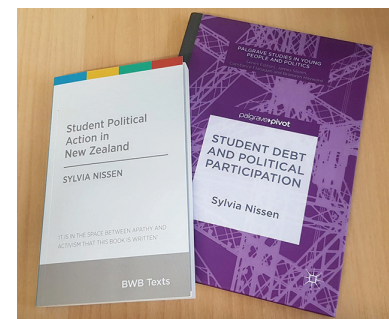
It was not long ago that students were dismissed as apathetic. Yet, today, a new generation of young political actors is making waves in New Zealand and around the world. What explains this apparent shift and what is driving these new forms of youthful political engagement and expression?

Exploring the terrain between activism and apathy, Sylvia Nissen's work examines what it means to be a political actor from the perspective of students today. Drawing on indepth interviews with New Zealand tertiary students, she traced their 'desires' for different types of politics, the 'demands' they experienced at university, and the 'doubts' that underscored their political engagement.

Using New Zealand as a case study, Nissen's research challenges existent assumptions about student attitudes towards loans by analysing how students speak about the impact of debt on themselves and their peers, including politically. Listening to these perspectives will provide a more nuanced insight into

the underlying tensions and challenges of participating politically in a context of rising debt.

From her doctoral research Nissen has published two books, *Student debt and political participation* (Palgrave, 2018) and *Student Political Action in New Zealand* (Bridget Williams Books, 2019), as well as several articles relating to student debt and wellbeing. Her current work examines civic engagement in a context of crisis, including following disaster and in a changing climate.



# Masters Dissertations

## 2020 Masters dissertation projects

### CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**Abby Mather**

*Having completed her Masters, Abby works in EQC and in August 2021 takes up a full time study PhD scholarship as a part of the UC CUR-e research cluster. The aim of this research project is to build upon the lessons learned from disruptions to urban food systems, including COVID-19 and the Canterbury earthquake sequence, and understand ways to foster greater resilience to better protect the communities these food systems serve recognising food access as a human right.*

This study examined citizen assemblies as practical examples of deliberative democracy where a representative sample of the population learns, deliberates and makes suggestions for policy implementation. Citizens' Assemblies are increasingly being used in liberal democracies globally to address issues that are often difficult to gain political momentum or turned to as a solution to solve issues of lack of public consultation. Initial findings from this project included confirmation that Citizens' Assemblies can create a mandate for action. Given the need for urgent action on climate this is positive, however, constitutional arrangements and obligations under Te Tiriti, should guide the implementation of such a method in Aotearoa. Māori led deliberation would create a truly collaborative partnership for climate action.

### POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR ADAPTING THE NEW ZEALAND VITICULTURE INDUSTRY TO A CHANGING CLIMATE

**Edward Lewis**

*Graduate policy analyst, Climate Commission.*

This study asked, what policy directions may be needed to ensure that the New Zealand viticulture industry can effectively adapt to a changing climate? Despite the risks presented by climate change, there is little research around adaptation for the New Zealand viticulture industry, and existing research suggests that little is being done to prepare for the impacts of a changing climate. This is particularly concerning given the fact that climate change may impact viticulture before it impacts other primary industries, which may experience similar problems later on.

### COMMUNITY HOUSING STRATEGIES

**Emily Gibson**

My dissertation assesses the Christchurch council community housing strategy to understand the extent to which mixed tenure housing models can offer affordable housing for low-income households and decrease segregation and inequality experienced under current rental and ownership models.

### ASSESSING COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES IN FRESHWATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE CANTERBURY WATER MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

**Matt Gowans**

*Matt is Executive Support and Researcher to Hon Eugenie Sage, MP.*

The study examined Collaborative Governance Theory, as most extensively developed by Elinor Ostrom (Ostrom, 1990). The theory sets out to describe the role of collaboration between stakeholders, the wider public, and governing institutions in the management of natural resources. The study considers the extent to which Environment Canterbury's (ECan) water management framework and strategy meets the Collaborative Government theory objectives in management and governance of water as a sustainable resource.

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**Josiah Tualamali'i**  
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Hei Puāwaitanga graduate event in February 2021.

## SCHOOL FOOD GARDENS AND URBAN FOOD INSECURITY

**Rachel Hickling**

Growing inequalities and disruptions caused by natural hazards and climate change are having significant impacts on children and their ability to access food. Edible cities and school food garden projects in particular are emerging as a potential solutions to food issues, however cities face significant difficulties when implementing these plans. Schools are leading the edible city policy implementation and it is clear the city can learn from its schools but there are significant challenges remaining. Such as time, funding, and expertise. Christchurch's Edible city plan is only the beginning of transforming the garden city into an edible supermarket for its residents. The purpose of my project is to determine the effectiveness of Christchurch's edible city plan, especially for children in schools. I am hoping to conduct interviews with schools about their gardening projects, local government, and others involved in providing food justice to children through nature based solutions.

## DIVERSITY AND PUBLIC POLICY

**Nin McKay**

New Zealand's demography has changed rapidly over the last 30 years and is set to continue to change significantly. This dissertation examines the contestable and highly politicised ideas of 'diversity' and 'social cohesion' and asks to what extent case studies of public service processes of community engagement suggest that the public service is meeting the needs of diversifying communities.

## INDIGENOUS SOVEREIGNTY AND FRESHWATER PROTECTION

**Emma Pratt**

*Graduate Analyst Office for  
Māori Crown Relations - Te Arawhiti.*

Case studies from Aotearoa, Canada and Israel compared arrangements to uphold Indigenous freshwater sovereignty and human rights.

## CAN INNOVATIVE PROJECTS BOOST PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

**Amelia Rushbrook**

In Ōtautahi, public participation in local government decision-making has declined to levels that bring democratic legitimacy into question. Can innovations such as participatory budgeting and online citizen's panels increase public interest and participation in local government decision-making? Amelia Rushbrook assesses the strengths, weaknesses and potential for replication of two emerging local case studies.

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND INSURANCE

**Ann Garton**

My dissertation focuses on a New Zealand perspective of the challenges that the insurance industry face from a changing climate. My interest is in the viability and survival of the insurance industry in response to increasing demands from compounding climate change related disaster events.



## **CONTACT US**

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