



School of  
Geography  
and  
Sustainable  
Communities  
Profile 2017



UNIVERSITY  
OF WOLLONGONG  
AUSTRALIA



Faculty  
of Social  
Sciences



# This is who we are

Social Science is about empowering people – particularly those in the community who are most vulnerable – to help them develop their capabilities and live happy, healthy, secure and sustainable lives. Our students learn about human behaviour, the way we interact with our environments, our institutions and with each other. With this understanding they can act to bring about fundamental social change that has a lasting impact of such significance that it can transform the lives of individuals, families and communities for the better.

The Faculty of Social Sciences is a community of academics, students and professional staff who are all dedicated to making a difference through high quality teaching and learning, research and public debate. Our partnerships, community engagement and advocacy are integral to what we do.

Our outstanding Social Science scholars are of national and international standing, renowned for their passion and high performance in undergraduate and postgraduate courses and research excellence.

Our Schools of Education, Psychology, Health and Society and Geography and Sustainable Communities offer degrees and courses that are informed by the latest research, are relevant to contemporary practice and in the case of education, psychology, social work and work health and safety, our degrees are accredited by professional bodies.

Our Early Start initiative aims to give children the best possible start in life through cutting-edge interdisciplinary research, innovative educational programs, experiences and networks that enrich the way we understand and interact with children, families and communities.

Our higher degree research training attracts Australian and international candidates who are keen to work in research centres and schools where students are encouraged to think critically, act and reflect upon their impact. Our researchers are connected to eminent Social Science academics and centres throughout the world, leading global efforts to achieve the betterment of society.

Our graduates are making a difference to the lives of people through social understanding, action and change. I invite you to join us in this pursuit.

## Contents

<b>This Is Who We Are</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>School of Geography and Sustainable Communities</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Head of School</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Executive Officers</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Our Research Entity</b>	<b>18</b>

**Glenn Salkeld**  
Executive Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences

# School of Geography and Sustainable Communities



The School of Geography and Sustainable Communities teaches and investigates issues of global significance, especially the human impact on the Earth, the management of valuable landscapes, and the planning of cities and regions.

The school has a team of internationally influential researchers who can offer a range of opportunities for undergraduate and postgraduate students.

It offers students the chance to combine wide learning with practical experience using the school's many regional and overseas networks. Graduates leave equipped with a portfolio of intellectual and technical abilities making them highly sought after.

There are degree offerings in the areas of human geography, environmental management (including land and heritage management) and socio-economic planning, with a focus on urban and regional sustainability. Students with the school have the benefit of its close relationships with physical geographers based in UOW's School of Earth and Environmental Sciences.

In 2015, the Faculty of Social Sciences which incorporates Geography & Sustainable Communities, introduced a new Bachelor of Social Sciences degree program in which Human Geography is a major. The school also contributes core subjects to the Bachelor of Social Sciences first year program.

The school staff are all internationally recognised for their research. Their interests encompass social science, humanities and environmental science, and approaches to understanding the complexities of human existence in a diverse and fast-changing world.

In recent years, inquiries by researchers and teachers into human-environment relationships have been showcased through *The Australian Centre for Cultural Environmental Research* (AUSCCER). AUSCCER aside, the school's research and teaching tackles issues of urban and regional change at a time of global economic instability and heightened mobility of workers and students.



# Head of School

**SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHY AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES,  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**Professor Gordon Waitt**

Inequality is the connecting thread of Professor Gordon Waitt's research.

His current work develops this interest in inequality through three strands with each strand addressing urgent sustainability challenges.

The first strand of 'Household Sustainability' explores the question: Who is doing the work of household sustainability? Professor Waitt explores this question through investigating who is involved in various everyday practices including driving, preparing meals, preserving food and making decisions about what is, and is not, rubbish. Everyday mundane practices are repositioned as key in household sustainability debates.

The second strand is 'Fuel Poverty'. Professor Waitt said the key to this work is the question: What can we learn from older low income households to address fuel poverty? Rather than positioning people as a problem that has to be fixed through energy efficiency policies, this project starts with the assumption that people are part of the solution to fuel poverty. Professor Waitt said the aim of this work was to understand better how energy was used to make places we called 'home'. Equipped with this knowledge, Professor Waitt said policy makers could then make more informed energy policies.

The third strand is 'Urban Revitalisation' and the starting point for this research is the question: How can we make regional city centres more lively places? Professor Waitt said this project sits with wider concerns that not everybody has equal access to city centres. He said the focus was on how different processes of discrimination and marginalisation operate through impressions, transport modes and routes or pathways.





**Dr Leah Gibbs, Senior Lecturer, School of Geography and Sustainable Communities**

How do we make decisions about nature and what are the social, cultural and environmental implications of those decisions? For instance, people and sharks.

Dr Leah Gibbs’ work on people and nature examines this very question— specifically the meanings, values and relationships that people form and associate with nature.

She also works on interdisciplinary research on how we might bring together different traditions of thought and practice to better understand and address problems.

In recent years, Dr Gibbs’ research has focused on people and sharks. Specifically, she is interested in how we might best negotiate shark hazards and ocean use, and find appropriate methods for keeping people safe and protecting sharks and other marine life. This work has contributed to public debate and a parliamentary inquiry.

Dr Gibbs is currently enjoying working on an interdisciplinary project focusing on managing shark species that are both potentially threatening to people and recognised as threatened species. She highlights a big challenge as finding appropriate, effective, and ethical methods for protecting people and sharks, and responding to shark incidents.

Dr Gibbs is fascinated by learning about problems from different perspectives.

She believes that by bringing diverse understandings into conversation it helps us to understand the complexity of social and environmental problems, and look for creative approaches for overcoming them.

Before coming to UOW, Dr Gibbs worked in the UK at the Universities of Glasgow and Sheffield. At UOW, Dr Gibbs is also the Head of Postgraduate Studies for the School of Geography and Sustainable Communities. Beyond UOW she is a Councillor for the peak national body for the discipline of Geography, the Institute of Australian Geographers.



**Dr Andrew Warren, Lecturer, School of Geography and Sustainable Communities**

The acoustic guitar industry has traditionally been reliant on a small range of tropical rainforest timbers which are now increasingly scarce. So how does the industry adjust to this situation? As an economic geographer, this is the sort of question at the heart of a project now being explored by Dr Andrew Warren.

He is particularly interested in understanding the drivers of, and responses to, industrial change. In regard to the acoustic guitar, Dr Warren said that the timbers required are now increasingly scarce and the global trade more strictly regulated.

He is collaborating on the project with Professor Chris Gibson and they have benefited from the research assistance of Nicole Michielin and the Faculty of Social Sciences’ former Executive Dean John Steele who is a passionate woodworker himself.

The researchers have developed a clearer understanding of how manufacturers successfully transition to more sustainable resource use, which in Dr Warren’s case involves a process stretching from the trees to final guitar consumers. The research has also highlighted the ‘material knowledge’ developed around timber by workers in the industry and how this ensures the resource is used productively.

Dr Warren said these skills and practices are crucial for a future where society must do more with less. The researchers have built links with colleagues in the Department of Geography at the University of Hawaii and University of British Columbia.

Dr Warren and Professor Gibson are currently in the process of writing a book based on the research, which should be finished in early 2018.

For field work and data analysis, Dr Warren has received a Faculty of Social Sciences Early Career Researcher Award and funding from the Australian Centre for Cultural Environmental Research (AUSCCER) which is a strategic research strength of UOW.



**Professor Pauline McGuirk, Head of Research, School of Geography and Sustainable Communities**

As an urban political geographer, Professor Pauline McGuirk is helping reveal how urban transformations—from urban regeneration, to energy transition, to developing smart cities—are crucial to creating more just and sustainable futures.

Her particular focus is the governance of cities. The research she undertakes traces the alliances, territories and practices involved in governing different aspects of the city, and the political outcomes associated with these aspects.

Professor McGuirk’s current work has three strands: (1) exploring the diverse actors and practices involved in realising urban regeneration to consider how we can promote more just, inclusionary forms of urban regeneration; (2) the critical role of cities — materially, socially and politically — in governing energy transitions and (3) new research on the emerging geographies of smart cities in Australia, considering how making cities ‘smart’ might transform them and their governance.

Professor McGuirk has had a longstanding academic collaboration with Professor Robyn Dowling (University of Sydney), and has recently been working with Professor Harriet Bulkeley (Durham University), Associate Professor Kathy Mee (University of Newcastle) and Associate Professor Kristian Ruming (Macquarie University).

The key funding source for her research has been the Australian Research Council. Professor McGuirk has had 10 ARC grants (7 Discovery and 3 Linkages). The Linkage partners have been government agencies – NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet and NSW Housing.

Professor McGuirk recently received funding through the UrbanGrowth NSW Universities Framework Agreement which was set up to support research aimed at enhancing urban policy and urban transformation projects. She is also part of a team at UOW, CSIRO, UNSW and the Co-operative Research Centre for Low Carbon Living which has received funding from the Office of Environment and Heritage for a Research Node on Energy Efficiency Decision-Making.

Professor McGuirk is an Editor of the leading journal, *Progress in Human Geography*. She was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Social Sciences in 2016.



**Associate Professor Michael Adams, School of Geography and Sustainable Communities**

Associate Professor Michael Adams has undertaken extensive research on shared governance arrangements between government conservation agencies and Indigenous communities in national parks and World Heritage Areas, including direct contributions to policy development.

In addition, he has examined Indigenous and local knowledge systems and how these interact with Western knowledge frameworks. More recently, Professor Adams has focused on the cultural dimensions of hunting, especially around knowledge, respect and sacredness.

He has extensive collaborative field research experience with Indigenous and other communities across Australia, in Arctic Scandinavia, and more recently in India. One of his Indian projects aims to address the changing dynamics of customary knowledge in that country and its role in biodiversity conservation, specifically with respect to hunting and harvesting of wildlife and the specialised forms of knowledge and skills that local communities possess for this purpose.

Before joining academia, Professor Adams had 20 years of professional experience integrating teaching, research, professional and community roles. He has worked for community-based organisations, Non-Government Organisations, government agencies, Indigenous organisations, and as a consultant.

Professor Adams has worked across a number of areas at UOW including at the Woolyungah Indigenous Centre which is responsible for Indigenous student recruitment, access and support.

Professor Adams was recently awarded the prestigious Australian Book Review’s Calibre Essay Prize for his essay ‘Salt Blood’, a deep dive into the ancient practice of freediving. His research examines how humans can tap into our ancient evolutionary origins and can willingly expose themselves to coming close to death. Considered Australia’s most revered essay prize, his piece was selected from a field of 180 submissions from 14 countries.



**Dr Natascha Klocker, Senior Lecturer, School of Geography and Sustainable Communities**

Dr Natascha Klocker tackles confronting and sometimes controversial topics. Her earliest research explored racism directed towards refugees in Australia at the height of controversy surrounding asylum seekers.

Dr Klocker, from UOW’s Australian Centre for Cultural Environmental Research, analysed quantitative data on media reporting bias, demonstrating how racism operated within depictions of refugees. Her articles on the subject have been highly cited and were influential in shifting the public debate nationally.

She has also confronted the often distressing topic of the exploitation of female child workers in one of the world’s poorest countries – Tanzania. To achieve this, Dr Klocker relocated overseas and volunteered with an international child rights Non-Government Organisation. She learnt to speak Swahili, developed an ambitious action research project to document the experiences of child workers and employed former child workers as co-researchers.

The research results were published in top international journals and helped Dr Klocker establish a reputation as an international expert in action research.

Dr Klocker now leads a successful Australian Research Council Discovery Project on cultural diversity for environmental sustainability. Informed by the research outcomes, she is currently developing another action research agenda with partners in rural Mildura to gain access to farmland for refugees with skills and aspirations in food cultivation to address problems of unemployment, food security and marginalisation.

She is also Chief Investigator on a gender equity project -- Visible Parenting in the Workplace – which is funded by UOW Global Challenges.

Dr Klocker is an exemplar of how someone can pursue social sciences research and make the world a better place while producing the highest quality scholarly outcomes. Rigorous empirical research is her means to provide evidence to such ends.



**Dr Thomas Birtchnell, Senior Lecturer, School of Geography and Sustainable Communities**

The spread of 3D printers could enable greater access to the means of production for those enduring poverty in the Global South.

Dr Thomas Birtchnell examined this concept as co-author of *3D Printing for Development in the Global South* (published in 2014) with William Hoyle who is the CEO of *TechforTrade*.

A 3D printer is literally a technology that ‘prints’ out an object in three dimensions from a CAD file. 3DP is being hailed in some quarters as the harbinger of a third industrial revolution. It allows computers to convert virtual data into physical matter.

Dr Birtchnell said some people viewed the greatest potential 3D printing offers the developing world was not for the products made but for putting the means of production into the hands of the local people.

In their book, Dr Birtchnell and Hoyle explore how printers, designs, materials and infrastructures all need to be ‘just right’ in order for meaningful social change to happen with appropriate scale. The 3D4D Challenge suggests 3D printing could reach scale in the Global South, even perhaps having the same impact as the mobile phone or microfinance in development.

Dr Birtchnell’s other latest research is an examination of the present and future impact of artificial intelligence on the creative industries.

He is a consultant for the Intellectual Property Office, UK Government for the project ‘Rethinking IP in the Digital Manufacturing Age’ with Dr Angela Daly (Queensland University of Technology), Professor Thierry Rayna (Novancia Business School, Paris) and Dr Ludmilla Striukova (University College London).





**Associate Professor Nicholas Gill,  
School of Geography and Sustainable Communities**

Associate Professor Nicholas Gill enjoys the experience of undertaking fieldwork to see first-hand how landholders perceive their own land and how that in turn influences their management.

A human geographer, Professor Gill's research targets the social and cultural aspects of rural land use, natural resource management and stewardship.

In his research he aims to bridge conventional natural resource management research and research on cultures of nature. Professor Gill is interested in how people occupy landscapes and seek to inhabit, use, protect, and conserve those landscapes, usually simultaneously, and in ways that defy neat compartmentalisation of these activities.

It includes research on peri-urban (the landscape interface between town and country) and lifestyle-oriented rural land ownership, particularly around stewardship and weed and bushfire management. Some of Professor Gill's research has been co-authored with US collaborators.

His latest research is on weed management and stewardship by lifestyle-oriented rural landowners.

In the past his research has focused on arid rangelands, outback mythology, pastoralism (or ranching), Aboriginal pastoralism, and Aboriginal pastoral history. Much of this research focussed on the responses of pastoralists to social and economic change, especially environmental and Aboriginal land rights movements.

Professor Gill has long-standing collaborations and/or a publishing record with researchers in the USA at Colgate University and Oregon State University and in Canada at the University of Waterloo. He has also recently co-authored a paper (currently in review) with researchers from five other US and Canadian universities - Stanford University, the University of Montana, the University of Idaho, Purdue University and the University of Alberta.



**Dr Christine Eriksen,  
Senior Research Fellow, School of Geography and Sustainable  
Communities**

By bringing natural hazards into dialogue with cultural geography, Dr Christine Eriksen has become an internationally recognised leader in the field of disaster geographies.

Dr Eriksen's research focuses on social dimensions of natural disasters at scales ranging from individual households and community networks to official management agencies. Essentially, she examines how people engage with social and environmental uncertainty in everyday life.

Her collaborative work crosses interdisciplinary teams of human and physical geographers, ecologists, sociologists, engineers, Indigenous land stewards, disaster researchers and practitioners.

Her book, *Gender and Wildlife: Landscapes of Uncertainty* (2014), is a cutting edge exploration of how intersecting social characteristics affect coping capacity. She argues, for example, that the bushfire emergency in Australia is not just an environmental crisis but rather it has social, ethical and political causes hidden in embedded vulnerability, social norms and institutional structures.

Dr Eriksen believes these are critical obstacles to bushfire preparedness, response and recovery. She sees clear evidence of how a gender divide in activities at time of death during a bushfire historically correlates with the plans of actions of men and women during bushfires.

Her research has triggered a range of media interest with a large focus on why gender matters in emergency management.

During 2015-2016, Dr Eriksen was an invited expert committee member on an initiative by the Association for Fire Ecology to examine gender discrimination and sexual harassment within the wildland fire profession internationally. A Position Paper with accompanying info-graphic was published in December 2016, resulting in an invited written testimony to a US Congressional Hearing on the topic.



## Australian Centre for Cultural Environmental Research (AUSCCER)

AUSCCER comprises a group of geographers who, in a range of ways, seek to understand and improve the ways people interact with both natural and constructed environments.

The team is interested in both everyday environments and extraordinary situations. Staff work very closely with their research students, so in addition to the current 16 full-time staff, the group extends to nearly 40 geographers.

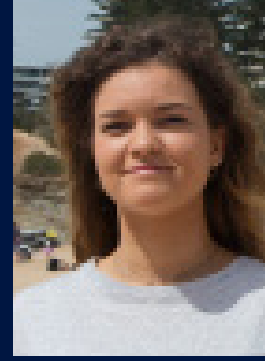
They seek to answer pressing questions about society and environment. For instance, how does capitalism use the biophysical world and can it really be 'greened'?; how can households contribute to less environmentally destructive ways of living?; and how can we live better with non-human species that are both threatened and threatening? They recognise, and frequently work with, those whose voices often go unheard in social, economic and political life.

From 2009 early career geographers, along with more experienced colleagues, focussed their energies into the new research centre called AUSCCER. The Centre was initially funded by Professor Lesley Head's ARC Laureate Fellowship, a Future Fellowship awarded to Professor Chris Gibson, and funding from UOW. Professor Head was AUSCCER's inaugural Director and Professor Gibson the Deputy Director.

AUSCCER aimed to develop and apply cultural understandings of how different social groups perceive, value and use both biophysical and built environments. One significant ARC Discovery Project, *Making Less Space for Carbon*, was led by Professor Gordon Waitt. This project involved a ground-breaking longitudinal study of household sustainability practices, and spawned a raft of PhD research theses, sub-projects, case studies, and publications, including the book *Household Sustainability: Challenges and Dilemmas in Everyday Life* (by Gibson, Farbotko, Gill, Head, Waitt, published by Edward Elgar, 2013).

At the same time, bushfire management research continued, with new ground being broken around the gender dimensions of preparedness for, and response to, fire events. AUSCCER researchers also developed new links with UOW's Sustainable Buildings Research Centre, while Indigenous lifeways and knowledge were (and remain) a particular focus, coupled with more recent explorations of migrants and refugees' environmental knowledges and capacities.

# find your why



“

Growing up I always had a passion for environmental and ocean conservation. I chose Human Geography because it allowed me to study that and explore that passion, but in a way which incorporated people. I want to use my passion for ocean and environmental conservation, combined with the skills I've learned in my degree to create a sustainable future.

---

**Taneesha**

Bachelor of Social Science (Human Geography)

“

Studying Human Geography at UOW has given me the opportunity to focus on my interest, which is the challenge of urban population growth and carbon intensive lifestyles. My research focuses on understanding the everyday lives of urban residents, including the way people consume, share and interact in the context of apartment living.

---

**Sophie-May**

Doctor of Philosophy (Human Geography) - Current  
Advanced Bachelor of Science (Human Geography) Class 1 Honours - 2014



“

During my honours year I was encouraged and supported to attend a geographer's conference in New Zealand, an experience that opened my eyes to the width and breadth of the discipline and its broad applicability to a huge diversity of social, culture and environmental management scenarios.

---

**Tom**

2010 Bachelor of Science (Honours) Land and Heritage Management  
Training and Development Coordinator, Kimberley Ranger

“

My PhD project explores the process of home and homemaking within the context of new build master-planned estates. Specifically, my fieldwork focuses on the increasing adoption of master-planned estates as a form of housing supply along the New South Wales coastline.

---

**Charles**

Doctor of Philosophy (Human Geography) - Current  
Advanced Bachelor of Science (Physical Geography) (Human Geography) Class 1  
Honours - 2012





# Executive Officers

We are a community of academics, students and professional staff who are all dedicated to making a difference through high quality teaching and learning, research and public debate.



**EXECUTIVE DEAN,  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
Professor Glenn Salkeld

Professor Glenn Salkeld has more than 30 years' experience in public health research and has held senior academic management positions in public health.

Glenn is a health economist with a particular interest in screening and diagnostic test evaluation based on the implementation of multi-criteria decision analysis. The latter has resulted in the creation of an online translation platform – a decision support program that combines the best available evidence with an individual's preferences to produce an opinion when comparing prevention or treatment options.

Professor Salkeld was a member of the Australian Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee Economic Subcommittee for six years, has been a consultant to the World Health Organisation on the Essential Medicines Program, a Member of the NHMRC Public Health Panel, a Member of the Bowel Cancer Implementation Committee and a Director of the Board of the Sax Institute.

He has also worked extensively for AusAID in teaching economics and evidence-based medicine to health professionals in numerous countries including South Africa, India, Iran, Estonia, China and Hungary.



**EXECUTIVE MANAGER,  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
Katrina Gamble

Katrina has served in her current role as Executive Manager of the Faculty of Social Sciences at UOW since 2013.

She comes from a career background in business development and project management for organisations contracted by the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, AusAID and numerous governments around the world. They all shared a similar aim to deliver capacity development activities that have a sustainable impact.

Katrina has worked on projects in Kenya, Pakistan, Bangladesh, East Timor and Indonesia. These projects were in a range of sectors including education, public sector capacity development and health – particularly with a focus on public health.

She enjoys the fact that her work enables her to engage with people from across the world in an attempt to bring about social change that has an impact on the lives of others.

Katrina has been with UOW for almost seven years having initially been employed as the Business Manager for the Faculty of Education (now the School of Education).

A key factor about UOW which strikes a particular chord with Katrina is the University's international focus and real desire to engage in a meaningful way across the globe. A clear example she highlights is UOW being an Australian pioneer in establishing a presence in 1993 in Dubai – an education presence which has grown markedly in strength over the years.

Katrina holds a Bachelor of Arts in History and Politics and a Master of Arts (International Relations), both from the University of Wollongong.



**ASSOCIATE DEAN (RESEARCH)  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
Associate Professor Lisa Kervin

Associate Professor Kervin is particularly interested in the ways children use language in their play, the ways they create text and how educators and families can support these practices.

Prior to academic appointment, Professor Kervin was employed as a primary-school teacher, with experience in school leadership. She graduated with her PhD in 2004, from UOW. In 2005, she was appointed to the then Faculty of Education. Beginning with an International Reading Research Fellowship (2006) her career has taken a research pathway. During her time at UOW she has held research governance roles including Honours Coordinator, Head of Postgraduate Studies, Head of Research (Education) and most recently, Associate Dean (Research).

Professor Kervin's research over the last decade has provided fresh perspectives to the role of technology in the lives of children. Typically, her research designs are qualitative, multi-site and ethnographic. Her research has been acknowledged through International awards including the Elva Knight Award in 2011. In 2016, she was awarded the Australia Literacy Educators' Association Medal for services to literacy education locally, nationally and internationally. Professor Kervin leads research focused on technology, pedagogy and curriculum in Early Start Research. She is regularly called upon to consult in literacy practices in educational contexts at service, school and system levels.

Professor Kervin has published more than 60 journal articles and has been successful in obtaining competitive internal and external grants (including five ARC Discovery grants and an OLT grant). She has graduated 15 Higher Degree Research students.



**ASSOCIATE DEAN (INTERNATIONAL),  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
Professor Wilma Vialle

Professor Vialle's research has made an important contribution in improving the educational experiences of bright young minds on a global scale.

The Professor in Educational Psychology's research focuses on excellence, expertise and gifted education.

Her work has contributed to a broadened understanding of giftedness that is not restricted to IQ definitions. Originally a high school teacher of English and Speech and Drama in Tasmania, she completed her doctorate at the University of South Florida in 1991.

Professor Vialle is currently working on the educational and learning resources that support the development of talent. Another of her research projects is an investigation of the development of excellence in competitive Scrabble players.

Professor Vialle is the Chief Editor of the international journal, 'Talent Development and Excellence', and is on the Executive Board of the International Research Association for Talent Development and Excellence. She works collaboratively with colleagues at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg and the University of Regensburg in Germany.

At UOW, she is Chair of the Academic Senate which is the peak body for advising the University Council and the Vice-Chancellor on academic matters and broad issues which affect and promote the academic excellence of the University.

In 2006, Professor Vialle was awarded the Eminent Australian Award by the Australian Association for Education of the Gifted and Talented to recognise her contributions to the field of gifted education in Australia.



**ASSOCIATE DEAN (EDUCATION),  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
Dr Julie Kiggins

In her role as Associate Dean (Education), Dr Kiggins plays a central part in delivering excellence in learning and teaching across the Faculty to give effect to UOW's Strategic Goal, 'Learning and the Student Experience'.

It's a Strategic Goal that has certainly had its effect. *Education for Social Equity* began as an elective in 2009 with humble beginnings and an enrolment of 10 students. In 2017 more than 1,000 students have either completed or are near completion of this subject.

In *Education for Social Equity* students undertake a Service Learning placement that is designed to assist them gain a sense of social equity and justice. Students have reported very positively on the experiences that the subject has given them.

Dr Kiggins also introduced in 2010 a Capstone Task for students which provided them with opportunities to integrate their knowledge and experiences from their whole program in preparation for the next stage of their careers.

It enabled students to work collaboratively, and among other things, allowed them to understand and manage as novice teachers many of the issues surrounding the work of contemporary primary schools and students.

Dr Kiggins' work has been recognised with a range of teaching awards including a Vice-Chancellor's Outstanding Contribution to Teaching and Learning (OCTAL); Carrick Citation for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning; Carrick Australian University Teaching Award for a program that Enhances Student Learning for the "Knowledge Building Community" Program; and an Australian College of Educators: Outstanding Achievement in Education.

# Our Research Entity



## EARLY START

Officially opened in July 2015, UOW's \$44 million Early Start initiative represents a new way of thinking about how universities can share their intellectual capital and research with the community, and how technology can bring about better outcomes for children.

Early Start is transforming lives through education to reduce current gaps in inequality. By 'investing' in the earliest years of life, Early Start is working to create a landscape for learning and social change that is markedly different to the image traditionally associated with higher education.

With state-of-the-art teaching, research and community engagement facilities, utilising enhanced technologies, the Early Start building acts as a hub connecting to a network of partner centres in regional, rural and remote communities across NSW.

Within the building is the Early Start Discovery Space, a public, hands-on creative learning space specifically designed for children from birth to 10 years and their accompanying families, carers, educators and teachers.

[earlystart.uow.edu.au](http://earlystart.uow.edu.au)



**Anita Kumar**  
Chief Operating Officer, Early Start

Anita Kumar is a passionate advocate for the rights of children and families, especially those dealing with complex life issues or living in vulnerable circumstances.

Anita began as the Chief Operating Officer of Early Start at UOW in March 2017.

In her previous role as CEO of The Infants' Home in Sydney, Anita was committed to developing quality services that support the wellbeing of children and their families, and building a socially cohesive community. She focused on strengthening the organisation's leadership in integrated service delivery for children and families through research, partnerships and engagement.

Anita brings to Early Start a strong track record of forging impactful strategic partnerships across government, corporate, philanthropic, agency and sector organisations as a means to build a sustainable social enterprise.

In May this year, Anita oversaw Early Start celebrate its second birthday. Early Start is an initiative that brings together early childhood researchers and educators with families and the community with the guiding aim of supporting all children to have a happy and healthy childhood, and become engaged citizens, especially those growing up in regional and remote Australia or living in vulnerable circumstances.

Anita said Early Start was delighted to contribute to children's development and their love for learning.

Early Start has built important links between UOW and the Illawarra community it serves, allowing carers, early childhood educators, childcare centres, schools and volunteers to benefit from the educational and research-based resources of a university.

Early Start has partnered with 41 early education and care centres in regional and remote Australia through face-to-face and virtual programs to build capacity, influence quality practice, connect and integrate services and support and strengthen community. It is committed to creating a socially and just civil society.

## CONTACT

Faculty of Social Sciences  
School of Geography and Sustainable Communities  
University of Wollongong NSW 2522 Australia

[ssc@uow.edu.au](mailto:ssc@uow.edu.au)  
[facebook.com/uowsocialscience](https://facebook.com/uowsocialscience)  
[socialsciences.uow.edu.au/dgsc](https://socialsciences.uow.edu.au/dgsc)

**#ThisIsUOW**



UNIVERSITY  
OF WOLLONGONG  
AUSTRALIA