

**Alternative Futures and Regional Prospects
Symposium**

Working across Differences, beyond Carbon, Capital and Commodity

Thursday 22nd & Friday 23rd of November 2018

Organisers: The University of Newcastle Alternative Futures Network,
University of Technology Sydney, Common Alternatives Network

Venue: UTS City Campus, Building 8 , Level 5 – Room 2 (CB08.05.002)



Introduction

A two-day symposium including roundtable discussions, to cross-fertilize between several game-changing communal responses, pioneering workable policy platforms and ‘concrete utopian’ visions in the current era of economic uncertainties.

The post-mining boom era has already started, and it has posed serious challenges to the Australian economy in general and to the Hunter region communities in particular. Among the most important challenges commonly acknowledged by the entrepreneurs, small business owners and workers in the region are: prospects of rising under/un-employment especially among the youth, environmental degradations, unconstructive competitions, wage stagnation, decline in property investment and water management issues. New insights and leadership are needed for a future after coal. Prospective trajectories of change in future should be predicted. Alternatives and solutions to such challenges, instead of short-term remedies, need to be envisioned by drawing on careful analysis of the roots of today’s challenges and changes. Many lessons can be learned from projects and experiences that have already gained momentum in other places across the world.

This symposium brings together a number of leading inter/national activists, scholars, policy advocates, and research institutes from a broad range of disciplines and ideological backgrounds into a close conversation around multiple alternative modes of livelihood, governance, and sociability that function beyond the mainstream free market structure. We hope this will promote cross-fertilization and thereby collaboration among these agents of progressive change.

The event is part of a broader project that attempts to lay the comparative foundations for assessing alternatives to capitalism, and for analyzing ‘post-neoliberal futures’. The project will offer integrative analyses of post-neoliberal, post-capital, and post-carbon modes of livelihood, focusing on new variants of pluralist Commonwealth, Community Economy, Post-Keynesian reforms, Circular Economy, Post-Patriarchal Southern Experiences, Eco-feminism, Economic Democracy, Eco-Commonism, etc. Moreover, the project intends to examine the capacities of the existing initiatives (both academic and communal) to ‘traverse’ their differences and engage collaboratively to produce meaningful and comprehensive answers to the current ‘global challenges’ experienced in our regions. It ultimately aims to produce publicly-engaged and timely policy insights into the effectiveness of these initiatives and their capacity to address global crises and to rival right wing populism.

Principal Coordinator: Dr. S. A. Hamed Hosseini (hamed.hosseini@newcastle.edu.au)



Symposium Program:

Day 1 – Thursday, 22 Nov 2018

Start	End	Sessions
8:45	9:15	Arrival Tea and Coffee Welcome and Introduction
9:15	10:30	<p>Opening Session: Towards Cooperative and Ethical Futures</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Professor Emerita Raewyn Connell: <i>In Our Time: From Southern Neoliberalism to Cooperative Futures</i> 2) Dr. Michelle Maloney (Director of Earth Laws and New Economy): <i>Building an Earth Centred Future: Culture, Ethics, Law, Economy</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q & A and a discussion of the policy implications
10:30	11:00	Morning Tea
11:00	12:30	<p>Panel I: Political Utopianism and Eco-Socialism in 21st Century</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Professor Emerita Verity Burgmann: <i>Ecotopianism and the Future of Labour in 21st Century</i> 2) Associate Professor Hans Baer: <i>The Need for Democratic Eco-Socialism in Australia: A Radical Response to the Impending Socio-Ecological Crisis Down Under</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion forum chaired by: Associate Professor James Goodman
12:30	13:30	Lunch
13:30	15:15	<p>Panel II: Post-Keynesianism, Circular Economy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Professor Martin Watts and Dr. James Juniper: <i>Reconciling Social and Regional Policy with the Macroeconomic Constraints</i> 2) Mr. Steven Liaros: <i>Implementing a New Human Settlement Theory: Strategic Planning for a Network of Circular Economy Innovation Hubs.</i> 3) Michael Johnston: <i>Taming the Beast - A Challenging New Initiative</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion forum chaired by: Associate Professor Nancy Cushing (Radical Newcastle)
15:15	15:30	Afternoon Tea
15:30	16:30	<p>Roundtable Discussion: Reflections and Challenges</p> <p>Discussion drawing together themes and challenges arising from Day 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Participants: Associate Professor James Goodman, Dr. S A Hamed Hosseini & Sara Motta

Day 2 - Friday, 23 Nov. 2018

Start	End	Item
8:30	9:00	Tea and Coffee
9:00	10:30	<p>Panel III: Feminist Praxis from Global North and South</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Associate Professor Ariel Salleh: <i>'Gendered Footprints in the Green Economy'</i> 2) Dr. Sara C. Motta: <i>'Feminised Resistances and a Politics in/of the Feminine'</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion forum chaired by: TBA
10:30	10:45	Morning Tea
10:45	12:15	Panel IV: Economic Democracy, Community Economy, and Commoning Alternatives

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Associate Professor James Goodman and Dr Jonathan Marshall: <i>Climate Democracy on the Coal Frontier? Narrabri as a Microcosm</i> 2) Dr. Stephen Healy: <i>Community Economy: Experiences, Potentials and Challenges in 21 Australia</i> 3) Dr. S A Hamed Hosseini: <i>From Commoning the Alternatives to Commonism as an Integral Alternative to Capitalism;</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion forum chaired by: TBA
12:15	13:00	Lunch
13:00	15:00	<p>Panel V: Alternative Commons – Co-operative solutions to work, energy, housing and care</p> <p>This panel brings together a group of people who have experience in designing, analysing and implementing co-operative solutions to our most pressing everyday needs – work, energy, housing and care. The panel members will introduce four case studies that demonstrate how the co-operative model is being used in the most innovative and practical ways to solve these problems at a grass roots level.</p> <p>Case Study 1: Professor Bronwen Morgan (UNSW Law) and Dr. Joanne McNeill (UWS) will discuss the insights gained by thinking about the ownership and governance of platform cooperatives across a range of sectors through the tri-fold perspective of legal, design and urban policy perspectives. They are keen to highlight how this provides an important complement to the more traditional focus on greater regulatory protection of precarious labour in the digital economy.</p> <p>Case Study 2: Dr. Jarra Hicks (Co-Founder and Director of Community Power Agency) will discuss the work of the Community Power Agency is helping to support and build the capacity of community energy co-operatives.</p> <p>Case Study 3: James Brown (CEO, Common Equity NSW) will discuss how co-operative housing is demonstrating how to break away from developer-led models of housing to focus on people and community. Several case studies will highlight key aspects of the model, what it means to do housing co-operatively and why we should embrace co-operative housing in pursuit of a better and alternative future.</p> <p>Case Study 4: Robyn Kaczmarek (Founder and Managing Director, The Co-operative Life), will tell her story about how Australia’s first worker-owned cooperative delivers quality social care services and offers care workers a better deal.</p> <p>Discussion: After their introductory sessions, the panel members will participate in both facilitated and open discussion to answer questions about opportunities and barriers and the potential to replicate these co-operative solutions in regional and urban Australian communities. The panel has been organized by Ann Apps (Newcastle Law School) and Dr. Sidsel Grimstad (Newcastle Business School) who will provide a brief introduction to the session, linking it to the conference themes and will facilitate the general discussion at the end of the individual presentations.</p>
15:00	15:30	Afternoon Tea
15:30	16:30	<p>Closing Discussion: Reflections, Challenges, Avenues for Collaborative Research and Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roundtable Discussion hosted by: Dr. S. A. Hamed Hosseini, Professor Verity Burgmann and Associate Professor James Goodman
	16:30	Symposium Ends

Abstracts

Opening Session: Towards Cooperative and Ethical Futures

In Our Time: From Southern Neoliberalism to Cooperative Futures

Professor Emerita Raewyn Connell

The Hunter region has been through a sequence of changes that are distinctive, but in many ways reflect the wider story of Australian settler colonialism and postcolonial development. Reflecting on my own attempt to define a socialist agenda about forty years ago, I argue that systems models of power, and global-North models of transition, are not helpful. In thinking forward now, we need to reckon with a changed and increasingly unstable global economy, new organizations of gendered power, new strategies of profit and subordination, and the new authoritarian politics of fear. We also need to consider the resources currently to be found within Australian and regional society for democratic and co-operative futures. These can be seen in social movements in the public sphere, as we all recognize, but also in such practices as education, knowledge-making, and the continuous creation of domestic life. Our difficulty is not so much in imagining futures, but in imagining them simultaneously at world and local levels.

Raewyn Connell is Professor Emerita at University of Sydney and Life Member of the National Tertiary Education Union. Her books include *Southern Theory*, *Gender: In World Perspective*, *Masculinities*, and *Making the Difference*. Her new book, *The Good University*, will be published early in 2019. Raewyn has worked for labour, peace and women's movements, and for democracy in education. Website www.raewynconnell.net, Twitter @raewynconnell.

Building an Earth Centred Future: Culture, Ethics, Law, Economy

Dr. Michelle Maloney

Australia faces a deeply challenging governance and leadership crisis, as many national and state political leaders continue to support unjust and ecologically damaging corporate agendas and continue to deny the current reality and future threats of climate change. However civil society is stepping up and filling this state-centred leadership vacuum with innovation, creativity and compassion. In this presentation I'll discuss the urgent need to create an Earth-centred ethic for Australia, which can fuel and inform compassionate policy, realistic programs and urgent action to support social justice and ecological health. I'll begin with the framework created by Thomas Berry called 'Earth jurisprudence' and provide a systemic analysis of how we can build Earth-centred governance by building Earth-centred culture, ethics, law and economics. As positive examples, I'll outline the work of the Australian Earth Laws Alliance (AELA) and its bioregional and other governance projects, as well as the approach of the emerging New Economy Network Australia (NENA) which is a network of civil society organisations, initiatives and individuals who are building cohesive strategies that support people and planet.

Dr. Michelle Maloney has a Bachelor of Arts and Law (Hons) from the Australian National University and a PhD in Law from Griffith University, Australia. She has more than 25 years' experience creating and managing social justice, community development and ecological justice programs, including ten years working with First Nations Peoples in Queensland, on social justice and cultural heritage projects. As Co-Founder and National Convenor of the Australian Earth Laws Alliance (AELA), Michelle designs and manages AELA programs, partnerships and events, including AELA's Peoples Tribunal for Community and Nature's Rights. As Co-Founder and

National Coordinator of the New Economy Network Australia (NENA), Michelle works in partnership with dozens of other people building a strong civil society network for a new economy in Australia. Michelle has written a dozen articles and co-edited two books about Earth jurisprudence and wild law - "Wild Law in Practice" (2014) with Peter Burdon and "Law as if Earth Really Mattered: The Wild Law Judgments Project" (2017), with Nikki Rogers. She teaches an annual Earth Laws Summer School at Griffith University Law School and is currently working on a book with Mary Graham, Kombumerri First Nations Elder and Adjunct Associate Professor at UQ, called "Future Law: Ancient and Emerging Ecological Law and Ethics As a Foundation for Governance in Australia". Michelle is the Australian representative on the Executive Committee of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature, a member of the Steering Group of ELGA, the Ecological Law and Governance Association and is co-founder and Steering Group member of the New Economy Network Australia (NENA). Michelle lives in Brisbane, (Queensland) with her husband, daughter and Raz the Wonderdog.

Panel I: Political Utopianism and Eco-Socialism in 21st Century

Ecotopianism and the Future of Labour in the Twenty-First Century

Professor Emerita Verity Burgmann

The potential role of organized workers in combatting environmental problems and global warming is rarely discussed in academic considerations of these problems. For example, Ulrich Beck on *The Risk Society* ignores the role of working-class organisations when dealing with the question of how to confront ecological irresponsibility. The ecotopian imagination is similarly unresponsive to the potential of labour movements to bring about significant social change towards an egalitarian and sustainable green future. Environmental philosophers and speculative fiction writers alike evince little interest in the working-class as a subject potentially capable of exhibiting agency to achieve ecotopian ends. Yet workers have power at the point of production; and are not the dying force depicted in neoliberal media. Globalisation has hugely expanded the size of the international proletariat, inadvertently creating militant labour movements in developing economies and encouraging novel strategies from embattled workers everywhere. Workers can withdraw their labour from exploitative and environmentally damaging production, as the green bans movement in the 1970s dramatically demonstrated. And in their everyday working lives, workers are in the frontline of improvements in production practices to decarbonise economies. 'Climate Change is Union Business', according to an ACTU pamphlet. Internationally, Trade Unions for Energy Democracy is ensuring that Just Transition is no longer merely a redundancy policy but a transformative agenda that brings trade unions into radical collaboration with climate activists to build a better, greener future. Workers not only have the capacity to effect sustainability, if not ecotopia, but also the greatest interest in so doing, because they are much more vulnerable than richer people to environmental problems and climate change, including extreme weather events, as Hurricane Katrina vividly demonstrated.

Professor Emerita **Verity Burgmann** (Fellow of ASSA) is Adjunct Professor of Politics in the School of Social Sciences at Monash University and Honorary Professorial Fellow in the eScholarship Research Centre at the University of Melbourne, where she is Director of the Reason in Revolt website. Burgmann's research interests are international labour movement responses to globalization, radical political ideologies, contemporary protest movements, environmental politics, anti-globalization and anti-corporate politics, and Australian labour history. She has established a significant reputation both as a labour historian and as a political scientist of social movements and social change.

The Need for Democratic Eco-Socialism in Australia: A Radical Response to the Impending Socio-Ecological Crisis Down Under

Associate Professor Hans A. Baer

I offer a vision of a socially just and environmentally sustainable Australia that draws on the concept of democratic eco-socialism, a term which I along with Merrill Singer and Ida Susser coined over 20 years ago and conflates the notions of democratic socialism and eco-socialism. Following from my recent book *Democratic Eco-Socialism as a Real Utopia* (Berghahn, 2018), I delineate the following ‘non-reformist reforms’ or ‘system challenging reforms’ for transitioning Australia toward a democratic eco-socialist society as part and parcel of a larger transition to a democratic eco-socialist world system. I delineate the following transitional reforms as loose guidelines for shifting Australia from a capitalist liberal democratic system to a democratic eco-socialist system: (1) the creation of a new left party to capture the Australian state; (2) the implementation of a steep carbon tax; (3) revisiting and expanding public ownership of the means of production; (4) dramatically increasing social equality; (5) rejuvenating the labour movement and promoting workers’ democracy; (6) promoting green energy and green jobs; (7) reclaiming the 40 hour work week and beyond; (8) challenging the culture of consumption and adopting a simpler way; (9) creating sustainable settlement patterns and local communities; (10) promoting sustainable population and refugees policies; (11) implementing sustainable transport; (12) promoting sustainable food production and forestry; (13) increasing domestic manufacturing and tariffs and minimizing free trade agreements; and (14) drastically reducing the staunch military alliance with the United States. As the global socio-economic and ecological crises, particularly anthropogenic climate change, unfold, it is important for progressive people to envision radical alternatives to the existing capitalist world system, particularly in its neo-liberal phase, at the world-wide, regional, national, and local efforts. Anti-systemic movements can play a significant role in achieving the transition to democratic eco-socialism.

Hans A Baer is Principal Honorary Research Fellow in the School of Social Political Sciences at the University of Melbourne. He earned his PhD in Anthropology at the University of Utah in 1976. Baer taught at several US colleges and universities both on a regular and a visiting basis, as a Fulbright Lecturer at Humboldt University in East Berlin in 1988-1989, and at the Australian National University and the University of Melbourne. He has published 21 books and some 190 book chapters and articles on a diversity of research topics, including Mormonism, African-American religion, socio-political life in East Germany, critical health anthropology, medical pluralism in the US, UK, and Australia, the critical anthropology of climate change, and Australian climate politics. Baer’s most recent books include *Global Warming and the Political Ecology of Health* (with Merrill Singer,) *Global Capitalism and Climate Change*), *Climate Politics and the Climate Movement in Australia* (with Verity Burgmann), *The Anthropology of Climate Change* (with Merrill Singer), *Democratic Eco-Socialism as a Real Utopia*, and *Urban Eco-Communities in Australia: Real Utopias or Market Niches?* (with Liam Cooper).

Panel II: Post-Keynesianism and Circular Economy

Reconciling Social and Regional Policy with the Macroeconomic Constraints

Professor Martin Watts and Dr. James Juniper

This Conference is focused on Alternative Futures and Regional Outcomes, as a means of creating a vision of an inclusive and sustainable future for us all. There is a tendency within Economics and other disciplines to extrapolate from successful regional solutions to economic and social problems (e.g. the Mondragon commune in the Basque region of Spain) to proclaiming that there is a limited role for the state and that replication of these successful arrangements across the world will yield sustainable futures. The paper argues for “bringing the state back in” not only as a means for promoting effective demand and thus achieving full utilization of labour and productive capacity, but also in providing “mission-oriented” finance to boost innovation, redress inequalities of wealth and income, and achieve desirable environmental outcomes. Furthermore, coordinated fiscal policy is defended over New Regionalist approaches that ignore the macroeconomic constraints which operate in all economies.

Implementing a New Human Settlement Theory: Strategic Planning for a Network of Circular Economy Innovation Hubs

Mr Steven Liaros

Whilst the energy transition from fossil fuels to renewables offers significant environmental benefits, the other transition—from a centralized to a distributed energy system—underpins a disruptive model for planning cities, towns and villages. A local energy micro-grid can power a local water micro-grid, which in turn can irrigate a local food system, offering a community the opportunity to harvest, store and distribute food, water and energy within their immediate catchment. Designing the layout of the built environment in the form of a campus or resort—with smaller private spaces and a wide range of accessible shared spaces and facilities—would also minimize energy demand while simultaneously providing opportunities for social interaction and connection. Creating places where local residents can collaborate to provide their basic needs is a form of Place-Making as well as an achievable alternative to the Universal Basic Income (UBI). The direct delivery of basic needs—consumed by the producing community—rather than the provision of money to pay for the purchase of these same needs, addresses the issue of wealth distribution but also re-imagines how wealth is created. It requires communities to take responsibility for their local environment, supporting infrastructure and others in their community. Described as a Circular Economy Innovation Hub, such a planning strategy adopts the principles of the *Circular Economy*—systems thinking, life-cycle planning and striving for zero waste. By integrating the water, energy, food and built systems; waste can be re-purposed, and the overall efficiency of all component systems is significantly increased. The more efficient delivery of the identified natural needs then offers residents more free time for *innovation* and creativity. Finally, such places are not isolated villages but *hubs* or nodes in a network, connecting and collaborating with others in their bio-region and beyond. Discussions are currently underway with Local Councils in Northern NSW and South Australia to develop pilot projects that would provide tangible examples of this form of regenerative land development. The process of land development also proposes to concurrently inform land use and infrastructure planning policies that would encourage the replication of such Circular Economy Innovation Hubs.

Mr Steven Liaros has qualifications in Civil Engineering, Town Planning and a Masters in Environmental Law. With 30 years of experience in local government and as a consultant, Steven

has expertise in strategic planning, infrastructure funding and in the negotiation of planning agreements. His core interest is the relationship between public infrastructure and private developments. He is currently undertaking a PhD research project at The University of Sydney's Department of Political Economy with the aim of designing a replicable process for sustainable, resilient and affordable land development. Specifically, this involves the development of public policies and economic strategies that would drive the implementation of the Circular Economy and Steady State Economy as a framework for building resilient and globally connected, local communities.

Taming the Beast: A Challenging New Initiative

Michael Johnston

The systematic degradation of the commons must be contained and reversed if future generations are to survive and prosper. The air we breathe, the temperature in which we live and extreme weather events are now risking our very existence. How did we get into this mess? What contribution have corporations made towards creating the dire circumstances we face? What can we do to harness the power of modern corporations to solve these meta issues? While we have made inroads towards containing and restricting corporate behavior, through penalties and sanctions, it is clear from recent events that there is a long way to go. The GFC taught us that greed dominated consideration of the financial instruments that nearly brought the global financial system to its knees; then, revelations of impropriety in our own Banking Royal Commission shocked the community who previously held banks as revered and trusted models of corporate culture. There are many initiatives being pursued around the globe such as cooperatives, elected worker directors, semi-autonomous work groups etc. The list is endless. However, they barely scratch the surface of this beast we know as capitalism. There is a tiny light at the end of the tunnel which is attracting growing interest around the world. It is the creation of *Benefit Corporations*. It's hard to pinpoint an exact origin of the concept as it probably owes its provenance to many contributing factors. However, a few entrepreneurs, dissatisfied with their experiences of corporate life, got together to set some standards that they thought would satisfy the elements required for companies to be socially responsible and provide a public benefit. They formed a non-profit standards evaluation enterprise called 'B Lab'. The standards are comprehensive and demanding, they are not a walk in the park. There are now many thousands of companies across the globe that have achieved 'B Lab Certification' but most are concentrated in America. There are hundreds in Australia. An essential driver of this initiative is that the certification is provided by an independent third party.

Michael Johnston's career spans 35 years across a range of industries in the public and private sectors in education, business, and human resources management. He has a reputation hallmarked by innovative practices, and practical bottom line achievements. His focus has been on sustainable workplace reform by creating working cultures and environments that are both satisfying for employees and productive for employers. His career is characterized by recurrent, lifelong learning and constant translation of theory into practice.

Panel III: Feminist Praxis from Global North and South

Gendered Footprints in the Green Economy

Associate Professor Ariel Salleh

In a time of ecological breakdown on a planetary scale, governments, business and United Nations agencies advance the Green Economy idea and Sustainable Development Goals as panacea. These programs look to entrepreneurial partnerships and research on innovative product design to 'join the dots' of society, economy, and ecology. But a sex-gendered reading of the Green Economy exposes the full depth of contradictions existing beneath and between these 'three pillars'. For example, environmental policy makers, academic theorists, even activists tend to overlook the multiple effects of learned sex-gender attitudes. Yet a structural analysis of energy consumption patterns shows women across cultures have a relatively small 'ecological footprint'. Moreover, women as reproductive labour skilled in multi-tasking tend to problem solve integratively. These sex-gender differences are not inborn but historically assigned, then reinforced sociologically by material necessity and lessons learned in everyday care-giving labour. This ecofeminist observation holds major implications for environmental politics. The paper outlines how the Green Economy idea came to dominate the discourse of global environmental politics, and what class, race, and sex-gender interests it serves. A critical analysis of 'ecological modernist' assumptions behind the Green Economy and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals reveals serious flaws on both justice and sustainability grounds. Conversely, it is argued that a global 'meta-industrial' labour majority, a sociologically 'unnamed class' at the domestic and geographic peripheries of capitalism, already demonstrates 'real green jobs', reproducing social relations while keeping the humanity-nature metabolism whole. The short-term international competitiveness of the Green Economy is contrasted with the locally oriented provisioning approaches of ecofeminism, buen vivir, and degrowth - as alternative social models for people engaging creatively in the re-vitalisation of post-industrial regions.

Hon Associate Professor **Ariel Salleh**, Political Economy, University of Sydney and Senior Fellow in Post-Growth Societies, Friedrich Schiller University Jena: www.arielsalleh.info

Feminised Resistances and a Politics in/of the Feminine

Dr Sara C. Motta

As Marxist feminist political economists demonstrate reproductive labour is a key, oft, invisibilised feminised place, of value production (Federici 2004). As decolonial feminists demonstrate the raced and gendered body is faced with complex forms of onto-epistemological violences (Motta, 2018). The contemporary period has witnessed both the feminisation of precarious labour and the continuation of feminised social reproductive labour combined with the intensification of onto-epistemological violences against the raced and feminised body. Such a context leads to the intensification of the precariousness and precarity of everyday life for large sections of the Global South. In this talk I will explore how feminist nonviolent movements in Colombia are responding to such a double burden in the context of intensifying onto-epistemological violences through exploration of the politicisation of social reproduction, precariousness and precarity into new forms of feminised resistances and a politics in/of the feminine. In particular I will discuss the prefigurative and decolonising praxis being developed by women and men in movement through enflashed epistemologies, insurgent temporalities, an ethics of care, and a politics of life.

Sara C. Motta is a mother, critical theorist, poet and popular educator who currently works in the

Politics Discipline at the University of Newcastle, NSW Australia. At present she is co-facilitating a number of projects including ‘La Política de la Maternidad (The Politics of Motherhood)’ with militant mothers and grandmothers in Colombia, Brazil and Australia. She has published over 40 academic articles/chapters covering the topics of decolonial feminism, another feminised politics, emancipatory pedagogies, and prefigurative epistemologies. Her latest books include ‘Constructing 21st Century Socialism in Latin America: The Role of Radical Education’ with Mike Cole (2014, Palgrave Macmillan Press) and ‘Liminal Subjects: Weaving (our) Liberation’ (2018, Rowman & Littlefield).

Panel IV: Economic Democracy, Community Economy, and Commoning Alternatives

Climate Democracy on the Coal Frontier? Narrabri as a Microcosm

Associate Professor James Goodman
Dr Jonathan Marshall

James Goodman is an Associate Professor in the Social and Political Change Group of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Technology, Sydney. James Goodman conducts research into socio-political change and climate justice. His focus on global political change was maintained through a second ARC Discovery project, ‘Mapping Justice Globalism’, which investigated ideas and alternatives emerging from successive years of debate at the World Social Forum. His work addresses these issues at the nexus between international relations and international sociology, with a particular interest in environmental sociology.

Jonathan Marshall is currently a Future Fellow at UTS, working on a project entitled "Society and Climate Change: Social analysis of a disruptive technology". The project explores problems with the use of climate technologies, in the transition to a sustainable future. Climate technologies includes: renewable energies; biofuels; carbon trading, geoengineering, energy efficiency, transport reforms and so on. It investigates the likely unintended social consequences of these technological responses to climate change and ecological destruction, and the likely social disruption of those technologies. The investigation aims to increase the possibility of informed acceptable and possible technological adaptation.

Community Economy: Experiences, Potentials and Challenges in 21 Australia

Dr Stephen Healy

The Community Economies Research Network (CERN) is an international network of 200 scholars, activists, and artists working in locations throughout the world to enact a postcapitalist politics in economies understood to be already more than capitalist. Seeing the economic landscape as intrinsically heterogeneous changes the optics of post-capitalism directing our gaze away from a utopian horizon to the possibilities for ethically negotiating and politically shaping our shared existence in an imperfect present. A current research project with Australian CERN members uses a case example approach to imagine other futures for manufacturing in Australia studying enterprises of various sizes, operating across a range of scales and organizational forms—capitalist enterprises, as well as cooperative and social-enterprises—including two within the Hunter region. We selected these case examples based on the idea that they are already practicing what Julien Agyeman calls just-sustainability, attending to ecological concerns by means of social inclusion, and in so doing contributing to what Tony Fry terms the radical

unmaking of unsustainability. Looking through a post-capitalist lens we can see how social innovations coming from non-capitalist social enterprises may be broadened into a reimagining of a new culture of manufacturing that is sensitive to 21st century social and ecological challenges.

Stephen Healy is a Senior Research Fellow at ICS. His research has concentrated on the relationship between economy, subjectivity and the enactment of new econo-socialities exploring various topics: health care reform policy, cooperative and regional development, and the solidarity economy movement. His current ARC project, with CIs Katherine Gibson, and Jenny Cameron (DP160101674) *Reconfiguring the Enterprise: Shifting Manufacturing Culture in Australia* reimagines the future of manufacturing in Australia. He is co-author of *Take Back the Economy an Ethical Guide for Transforming our Communities* (UMP 2013), presently translated into Korean, Spanish and Finnish with planned translations into Greek and French. Stephen has been published in *Geoforum*, *Antipode*, *Gender, Place and Culture*, *Professional Geographer*, *New Zealand Geographer*, *Journal of Political Ecology* and *Rethinking Marxism* and elsewhere and in numerous edited volumes. Stephen is a founding member of the Community Economies Research Network (CERN).

From Commoning the Alternatives to Commonism as an Integral Alternative to Capitalism

S A Hamed Hosseini

Knowledges of the inner nature, deep structures and conflictual dynamisms of capitalism potentially constitute a transformative cognitive Commons. Likewise, to achieve an inclusive understanding of the existing post-capitalist praxes and the imaginary visions of utopian futures require cumulative, collective and cooperative learning. Thus, theories of capital and the post-/counter-capital alternatives can be generated and treated as the Commons. In this paper, I argue that although there is no single/exclusive line of historical progress beyond capital, it is possible to create integral frameworks for orchestrating common actions across different alternative praxes. This becomes a strong possibility if our knowledge of the existing or imminent post-capitalist experiences is liberated from the disintegrating forces of the corporatized intellectual institutions. A *transformative scholarship* in collaboration with communities of struggle is therefore vitally needed today to generate educational Commons as a means for establishing organic unities among alternative praxes. This in itself is a prefigurative movement.

The political goal should then be to go beyond the localized fragmented radical struggles without reducing their multiformity in order to challenge the totalizing effects of the capitalist markets and states. The process of building organic unities or what we may call ‘Commoning the alternatives’ requires ‘organic intellectuals’ to help post-capitalist initiatives to self-reflectively explore and address their limitations. Therefore, Commoning the knowledge and experiences of alternatives is a self-rectifying endeavor that translates paralyzing assortments into collective learning processes through which each movement becomes capable of traversing (rather than transcending) their self-inflicted ideological boundaries and developing integral macro-political projects with the purpose of transcending capitalism; i.e. a *Commonist* project.

Commonism, in general, is about developing: (1) self-sufficient modes of livelihood/existence independent from the detrimental forces of private capital and undemocratic authorities, based on egalitarian self-sustaining socio-ecological systems of redistribution and re/production that promote well-living (*being and living*); (2) Co-determining modes of governance that effectively translate internal conflicts and divisive disparities into cohesive solidarities, consensus building processes and collective will-to-freedom (*willing and enabling*); (3) transversal modes of sociality capable of producing cooperative solidarities and egalitarian systems of mutual recognition (*learning and liaising*); and (4) transformative modes of praxis to de-commodify social relations

and to realize post-capitalist utopian dreams (*becoming and begetting*).

Thus, to common our knowledge of the various alternative ventures, we need to start with examining their capacities with respect to each one of the above four components of Commonism. Out of such systematic examinations, investigative frameworks can be drawn to explore ways of overcoming limitations and actualizing potentials to pave the way for the emergence of dynamic integral projects out of such commoning processes.

S. A. Hamed Hosseini, PhD in "Sociology and Global Studies" from the Australian National University (ANU), is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology and Anthropology (School of Humanities and Social Sciences, UON), lead CI of The *Alternative Futures Network*, first editor of *The Routledge Handbook of Transformative Global Studies*, and the co-founder and chief editor of *Common Alternatives* website (<http://thecommonalts.com/>). As a political and economic sociologist, Hosseini's main field of research is shaped around the studies of Alternative Futures beyond Carbon / Capital / Growth (post-capitalist policy development and Eco-Commonism)

Panel V: Alternative Commons – Co-operative solutions to work, energy, housing and care

This panel brings together a group of people who have experience in designing, analysing and implementing co-operative solutions to our most pressing everyday needs – work, energy, housing and care. The panel members will introduce four case studies that demonstrate how the co-operative model is being used in the most innovative and practical ways to solve these problems at a grass roots level.

Case Study 1

Professor Bronwen Morgan (UNSW Law) and **Dr. Joanne McNeill** (UWS) will discuss the insights gained by thinking about the ownership and governance of platform cooperatives across a range of sectors through the tri-fold perspective of legal, design and urban policy perspectives. They are keen to highlight how this provides an important complement to the more traditional focus on greater regulatory protection of precarious labour in the digital economy.

Bronwen Morgan is a Professor at UNSW Law School with a strong interest in new and diverse economies, mostly of the kind affiliated with solidarity and the creation of a commons. Bronwen has longstanding research interests in regulation, especially the interaction between its technocratic interstices and collective commitments to democracy and conviviality. Her more recent empirical research has focussed on energy, food, water and new kinds of lawyers.

Joanne McNeill is Research Projects Manager with Western Sydney University's Institute for Culture & Society, a Visiting Fellow at UNSW Law, and a founding Director of the fledgling Community Economies Institute. Her professional experience and research interests focus on various dimensions of alternative economic organising, including around social procurement, cooperatives, social enterprises, capacity building and demonstrating 'impact'. She is a Churchill Fellow, awarded in 2008.

Case Study 2

Dr. Jarra Hicks (Co-Founder and Director of Community Power Agency) will discuss the work of the Community Power Agency is helping to support and build the capacity of community energy co-operatives.

Jarra is a passionate advocate, researcher and participant in the creation of community-owned renewable energy projects. She holds a PhD from University of New South Wales, and an Honours degree in Development Studies from the University of Newcastle. Jarra is an environmental activist and grass roots organiser. She is co-founder of the Beanstalk Organic Food Coop, and co-founder and director of Community Power Agency, a not-for-profit cooperative that supports the growth of a vibrant community-owned renewable energy future in Australia.

Case Study 3

James Brown (CEO, Common Equity NSW) will discuss how co-operative housing is demonstrating how to break away from developer-led models of housing to focus on people and community. Several case studies will highlight key aspects of the model, what it means to do housing co-operatively and why we should embrace co-operative housing in pursuit of a better and alternative future.

James Brown is the CEO of Common Equity NSW, the peak body for Housing Co-operatives in NSW. James has more than 15 years' experience in Executive and leadership roles in local government, public health, aged care and housing. James has experience in diverse roles covering political, strategic and practical perspectives in pursuit of the public good. He is seeking to bring about change in Australia's housing market by fostering a consumer-led approach to housing.

Case Study 4

Robyn Kaczmarek (Founder and Managing Director, The Co-operative Life), will tell her story about how Australia's first worker-owned cooperative delivers quality social care services and offers care workers a better deal.

Robyn Kaczmarek is the founder and managing director of The Co-operative Life, Australia's first worker-owned cooperative in social care services. The cooperative began operating in 2013 with a single employee but has grown to around 75 staff members. Before entering the social care services sector, Robyn studied naturopathy, Chinese medicine and acupuncture (UTS) and ran a clinic in Mosman. She later completed a diploma in the coordination of care services. In setting up and continuing her passionate commitment to The Co-operative Life, Robyn strives to break the vicious cycle of poor work conditions for support workers and deliver improved quality of care services to the vulnerable.

Discussion

After their introductory sessions, the panel members will participate in both facilitated and open discussion to answer questions about opportunities and barriers and the potential to replicate these co-operative solutions in regional and urban Australian communities. The panel has been organized by **Ms Ann Apps** (Newcastle Law School) and **Dr. Sidsel Grimstad** (Newcastle Business School) who will provide a brief introduction to the session, linking it to the conference themes and will facilitate the general discussion at the end of the individual presentations.

Ms. Ann Apps is a lecturer in the Law School at University of Newcastle Law School. Ann currently teaches Contracts, Law of Business Organisation and Co-operative Law and Governance. Ann has previously practised as a solicitor in regional New South Wales and is interested in the provision of legal services to support diverse and vibrant

communities. Ann is completing her PhD at the University of Newcastle on the impact of regulation on co-operatives in Australia. Her research interests include corporate and co-operative governance, legal models for social enterprise and co-operative housing.

Dr. Sidsel Grimstad is a senior lecturer and Director of New Postgraduate Programs in the Newcastle Business School. She is the Program Convenor for the Graduate Certificate in Co-operative Organisation and Management. Sidsel is currently working with a team of researchers funded by Common Equity NSW to look at the future of co-operative housing in Australia. Sidsel brings to the team her comparative knowledge of co-operative housing in Norway and other Scandinavian countries.

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Alternative Futures and Regional Prospects Research Network

Alternative Futures Network is a world-first collaboration that studies and promotes alternative modes of development beyond Carbon, Capital, and (extracted) Commodities with a focus on the prospects of urban development in Australian regional areas.

The team is uniquely comprised of experts from a broad range of disciplines who strongly share a common interest in contributing scholarly research to support the creation of a sustainable, inclusive future. The projects run by the network robustly correspond to the UON's New Futures Plan (more particularly: Driving Global and Regional Impact, Engaging Across the Globe, and A Shared Future with our Communities).

Our Intellectual Mission

1. We aim to bring together leading inter/national activists, scholars, policy advocates, and research institutes from a broad range of disciplines and ideological backgrounds into a close conversation around multiple alternative modes of livelihood and sociability that function beyond the mainstream free market structure. We hope this will promote cross-fertilization and thereby collaboration among these agents of progressive change.
2. Our mission is to help the public, academic and policy circles, and social movements liberate their understandings of self, nature, history, and society from the requisites of Eurocentric, Capital-driven systems of (knowledge) production.
3. We aim to question the mainstream conceptions of major social issues and myths that have become widely acceptable even among the critics of the establishment. We hope that this would pave the way for the re/invention of alternative concepts that equip our discourses of change.
4. Our projects lay the comparative foundations for assessing alternatives to capitalism, and for analyzing 'post-neoliberal futures'. They offer first integrative analyses of post-neoliberal, post-capital, and post-carbon modes of livelihood, focusing on new variants of pluralist Commonwealth, Community Economy, Post-Keynesian reforms, Circular Economy, Post-Patriarchal Southern Experiences, Eco-feminism, Economic Democracy, and Eco-Commonism, etc. We aim to produce publicly-engaged and timely policy insights into the effectiveness of these initiatives and their capacity to address global crises and to rival right wing populism.

<https://www.newcastle.edu.au/research-and-innovation/centre/alternative-futures-regional-prospects-research-network>