Message from the Director

The past months have seen major changes in ANCORS’ work, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions on international travel that have accompanied it. ANCORS academics were in 2019 among the University’s greatest travellers, operating throughout the Pacific and South East Asia as well as Africa and beyond. Since April 2020, no one has left Australia, and this has compelled a radical change in the way we interact with our partners and our research abroad.

The online has been embraced, with contacts maintained by the usual combination of email, Webex and Zoom common in other workplaces. However, we have also benefitted from our early take up of online teaching, with live short courses running into Indonesia and the Philippines, new recorded classes for new partners at home and abroad, and 30 new students signing up to the Australian Government’s COVID response-sponsored online Graduate Certificate in Maritime Studies. This has meant ANCORS staff are busier than ever, and our finances are in robust health. We also have a packed schedule of activities and projects to see us through to year’s end, when hopefully the green shoots of a recovery from the pandemic have emerged.

ANCORS revises and grows its online course offerings

The ANCORS postgraduate coursework program is nearing the end of a successful first year under the revised model. Our first cohort of students have been working through new and refreshed subjects, both online and on-campus, including our new introductory subject Foundations in Ocean Law and Policy. Students have appreciated the time spent in this subject on updating their academic research and writing skills as they learn more about the international law background to the Law of the Sea.

At the other end of the program, our first cohort of students are busily working on their capstone projects in which they bring together their formal learning and broader work experience on a topic of personal or professional interest.

Travel restrictions have seen a boom in demand for online learning and ANCORS has been well-placed to meet this need. ANCORS staff have been busy producing new material for online subjects as well as tailor-made training courses for a number of organisations. Fisheries students in particular will be pleased to know that new online subjects in Fisheries Management and International Fish Trade are now offered and that our remaining fisheries subjects are on track for 2021 delivery.

We will soon be offering new online subjects in Public International Law and the Law of Naval Warfare, in addition to online versions of our popular existing subjects. All ANCORS postgraduate coursework programs, the Graduate Certificate in Maritime Studies, the Master of Maritime Policy and the Master of Fisheries Policy are now able to be undertaken fully online.—Ruth Davis, Masters Programs Coordinator
ANCORS moves into new UOW faculty in tough economic climate

Universities around Australia have had to make tough economic and human resources decisions in the wake of the global COVID-19 pandemic and the slide into a major national economic recession. Campuses temporarily closed, with some now re-opening under public health restrictions; salaries have been cut and many staff have already been let go; student enrollments are down; research activities have been forced to adapt, be postponed, or be cancelled; and, teaching and learning has been moved online. In its efforts to mitigate contract job losses and streamline operational processes, UOW has merged two of its faculties. As a result, ANCORS retains its institute status but now sits independently within the new UOW Faculty of Business and Law. This administrative move has been minimally disruptive to Centre operations thus far and has had its benefits, including an updated and streamlined research page on the ANCORS website at the following URL: https://www.uow.edu.au/ancors/our-research/. Finding information and contact points for courses and higher degree studies should now also be easier. While there have been a few challenging personal circumstances, ANCORS staff and students have thus far weathered the COVID-19 pandemic relatively well. There have been no known positive cases among staff, fellows, or students to date. Physical distancing and stronger sanitization regimes are now being observed in the return to office spaces. The Centre also remains in a strong position for the remainder of 2020, and continues to grow in size. Having diverse funding streams, adaptable funders and researchers, and a core of staff who are already relatively familiar with online course delivery has helped ANCORS stay the course so far in these uncertain times.

ANCORS partners with Nippon Foundation Ocean Nexus Center

This article is abridged from a July 1 UOW Media Office release. See the full article at the following URL: https://www.uow.edu.au/media/2020/ancors-joins-the-nippon-foundation-ocean-nexus-center.php

ANCORS has joined a research partnership with The Nippon Foundation Ocean Nexus Center, a new interdisciplinary research group that studies changes, responses and solutions to societal issues that emerge in relationship with the oceans. The Ocean Nexus Center will be housed in the University of Washington’s EarthLab, and will coordinate a US$32.5 million 10-year research program with partners from universities from around the world. Within this partnership, the ANCORS Ocean Nexus Program comprises an ANCORS Ocean Nexus Chair, a post-doctoral research fellow, two PhD students, and a team of research fellows.

Associate Professor Quentin Hanich is the Chair of the ANCORS Ocean Nexus program. The research program sits at the interface between science, policy, law, and development studies. Its studies will directly address key challenges to achieving equitable outcomes in transboundary ocean conservation, governance and development. Research will focus on two linked themes: Ocean Science, Technology, Knowledge and Capacity; and Collective Strategies and Decision Frameworks.

Food systems project analyses Pacific agri-food systems

Officially started in August 2019, Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) project Agriculture and fisheries for improved nutrition: integrated agri-food system analyses for the Pacific region (FIS/2018/155), or “Food Systems”, aims to characterize Pacific agri-food systems, recommending action to improve local food environments, and supporting national policies that promote healthier, more diverse diets for people in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Kiribati.

This 3-year, AUD2.3 million project is led by ANCORS Professor Neil Andrew and engages a number of ANCORS staff and students. It also brings together communities, provincial and national line agencies, UOW, the Pacific Community (SPC), Worldfish Center, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and the Charles Perkins Centre at the University of Sydney. As part of this work, Worldfish and ANCORS recently reported on changes and adaptations in village food systems in the Solomon Islands during COVID-19. The report, led by Assoc. Prof Hampus Eriksson, is cited in this newsletter’s Recent Publications section on p6.

Preparing local foods in a Vanuatu market. Photo: Paul Jones, UOW Media Office.
Professor Richard Kenchington retires

At the start of September, Professor Richard Kenchington retires after a long and active career.

A marine ecologist by training, Richard was a founding staff member of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority in 1977. He was also a foundation director of the planning team for the initial process of declaration and zoning of the Marine Park and nomination of the Great Barrier Reef as a World Heritage Area.

Richard has been associated with ANCORS, and its predecessor the Centre for Maritime Policy, since serving as Secretary of the Resource Assessment Commission Coastal Zone Inquiry in the early 1990s. After retiring as Executive Director of GBRMPA in 1999, Richard became the Chair of the International Coral Reef Action Network as well as an Honorary Visiting Professor at ANCORS.

From 2010 to 2015, he was an ANCORS Professorial Fellow and Integration Theme Leader of the CSIRO Coastal Cluster project concerning barriers to the application of science in coastal zone management for climate change.

Richard has been a valued academic staff member at ANCORS for a decade, bringing knowledge and experience in marine conservation and government policy development in marine affairs. He taught into a range of short course offerings and supervised PhD students. As secretary to the ANCORS Advisory Board he has been a key contributor to ANCORS’ long term strategic planning.

He is also a prolific publisher of academic papers and management materials on use, conservation and management of marine environments and resources. He retires with an h-index of 28, indicating a sizeable body of published work that is regularly and extensive cited. His Managing Marine Environments and IUCN Guidelines on the Establishment of Marine Protected Areas – co-authored with Graeme Kelleher – are testaments to his influence upon the establishment and operation of such areas worldwide.

Richard’s sage advice, collegial nature and good humour will not be lost completely to ANCORS. Upon retirement, he reverted to his Honorary Professorial Fellowship appointment, and will continue to be a welcome visitor to UoW.

Ocean panel Blue Papers for a sustainable ocean economy

Three early and mid-career ANCORS academics have contributed to the development of a series of ‘Blue Papers’ for the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy.

Established in September 2018 and currently co-chaired by Norway and Palau, the Ocean Panel is a unique initiative by 14 world leaders who are building momentum for a sustainable ocean economy in which effective protection, sustainable production and equitable prosperity go hand in hand.

In the spirit of achieving a number of global law and policy commitments, the Ocean Panel commissioned a comprehensive assessment of ocean science and knowledge that has significant policy relevance. The Ocean Panel identified 16 specific topics for which it sought a synthesis of knowledge and opportunities for action.

In response, 16 teams of global experts—over 200 authors from nearly 50 countries—reviewed and analysed the latest knowledge. They then provided new thinking and perspectives on how technology, policy, governance and finance can be applied to catalyse a more sustainable and prosperous relationship with the ocean.

ANCORS Research Fellow Dr Harriet Harden Davies contributed to the Blue Paper ‘Towards Ocean Equity’. Dr Karen Raubenheimer co-authored ‘Leveraging Multi-Target Strategies to Address Plastic Pollution in the Context of an Already Stressed Ocean’. Senior Research Fellow Dr Michelle Voyer contributed to the Blue Paper entitled ‘The Human Relationship with our Ocean Planet’. Further details on the Ocean Panel, and full copies of all the Blue Papers can be found at: www.oceanpanel.org.

—Dr Michelle Voyer

New seed grant investigates global mercury emissions and Australian fish consumption

Vice Chancellor’s Post Doctoral Research Fellow Dr Anna Farmery is part of a research team that saw recent seed funding success through the UOW Global Challenges program.

*From Power Plant to Table: Linking global mercury emissions to Australian fish consumption* lays the ground- work for mercury policy-to-impact analyses that can quantify the health benefits of emission reduction driven by the Minamata Convention.

The project, which is lead by Science Medicine and Health (SMAH) Assoc. Prof Jenny Fisher, aims to understand the links between emission reduction policies enacted in response to the United Nations’ Minamata Convention on Mercury, mercury deposition to marine zones, and exposure in the Australian population.

Progress towards a new global agreement to prevent plastic pollution

There has been much political commitment shown in the realm of the United Nations system for a binding global agreement to prevent plastic pollution, with support from many of the major groups and stakeholders.

This activity prompted the Nordic Council of Environment and Climate Ministers to adopt a declaration in April 2019 calling for the development of a global agreement to more effectively and comprehensively deal with marine plastic litter and microplastics.

The Declaration requested the preparation of a Nordic Report to inform future decision making by sketching out possible elements and approaches of a new global agreement covering the whole lifecycle of plastics.

ANCORS’ Dr Karen Raubenheimer was lead author of this report, together with Mr Niko Urho of the University of Massachusetts, Boston. A variety of sources and inputs informed the report, including the organization of two technical workshops and a literature review of scientific and policy outlets.

The report moves beyond pollution of the marine environment to pollution of land, air, freshwater systems and the ocean. A global objective and four strategic goals are outlined, with global commitments that countries would agree to implement. The report is due to be published later this year.

The core of the agreement is to provide countries with the tools to regulate the plastics placed on their domestic markets in line with their ability to manage the products at end of life. The tools also assist in developing market-based instruments to incentivise greater product stewardship by producers, but also incentivise behaviour change on the part of consumers. The agreement can therefore bring us closer to the goal of sustainable consumption and production of plastics globally.

- Dr Karen Raubenheimer

ANCORS provides fisheries and aquaculture materials to FAO

ANCORS has been active in international fisheries and aquaculture information and training.

In relation to aquaculture, ANCORS staff wrote National Aquaculture Legislation Overviews (NASO) for the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO). Aquaculture provides a high proportion of global fish production, currently already 60%. This figure is still rapidly increasing as global fish consumption is growing despite the volume of fish captured at sea having peaked by 1990.

The NASOs will be published on the FAO website to provide information for investors wishing to set up aquaculture farms: www.fao.org/fishery/collection/nalo/en. The overviews were updated or new for Bangladesh, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Federated States of Micronesia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Philippines, Spain, Thailand and Zambia. Staff involved were Prof Greg Rose, Dr Leonardo Bernard and Ms Brooke Campbell.

In other work on fisheries for the FAO, ANCORS staff also prepared two online international studies courses. The first course concerned the context and concept of illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing (‘IUU Fishing’). The second course was on the FAO Port State Measures Agreement to Prevent Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing. Both courses were prepared for use by the FAO eLearning Academy: https://elearning.fao.org/.

The FAO eLearning Academy provides free online courses for professionals working in food and nutrition security, social and economic development and sustainable management of natural resources to promote the development of their capacities to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. ANCORS staff involved were Prof Greg Rose and Dr Aurélie Delisle.—Prof. Greg Rose

The staggering costs of marine debris in the ASIA-Pacific

The following is abridged from a June 18 UOW Media article by Ben Long. The full article is available at URL: www.uow.edu.au/media/2020/marine-debris-costs-asia-pacific-economies-us108b-annually-report.php

A recent report to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) showed marine debris cost the economies of countries in the region US$10.8 billion (A$15.7 billion) in 2015.

ANCORS produced the report for APEC’s Oceans and Fisheries Working Group (OFWG), funded by the US Department of State.

While many APEC countries have enjoyed strong economic growth over the past three decades, an unfortunate by-product has been an increase in marine debris along the coastlines and in the seas of the Asia-Pacific region. Marine debris includes plastic and other litter, discarded and lost fishing equipment, industrial rubbish and other human-created waste that enters the seas and oceans.

The report calculated that marine debris cost the region’s tourism industry US$6.41 billion (A$9.29 billion), shipping and transport US$2.94 billion (A$4.26 billion), and fishing and aquaculture US$1.47 billion (A$2.13 billion).

ANCORS marine economist Professor Alistair McIlgorm, who led the research, said the report showed “business as usual is not acceptable”. 
ANCORS around the world

With COVID-19 putting a stop to international travel, ANCORS members have been active in projects a little closer to home. When she’s not busy working for the Pathways project, Research Fellow and disaster management specialist Dr. Astrid Vachette volunteers with her local Rural Fire Service in NSW, Australia.

UoW-ANCORS alumnus and fellow checks in

UoW-ANCORS PhD graduate (2007) and Honorary Fellow Captain (Dr) John Mansell reached out earlier this year to check in with the wellbeing of the Centre, to give his regards, and to update us on what he has been up to.

The following text is from an email sent to Director Stuart Kaye and is edited and republished with Dr Mansell’s permission.

“The arrival of ‘The Anchor’ prompted me to get in touch from sleepy Martinborough in New Zealand to say hello and let you know what I’ve been up to.

Firstly though, I sincerely hope that you and all at ANCORS are well and weathering the current storm.

I’ve been retired for five years and, apart from one interesting commission from a London firm of lawyers on possible insurance fraud regarding a Kiribati flagged tuna boat lost through fire, I’ve not sought any ongoing consultancy work regarding flag, port and coastal State responsibilities but keep up to date with current developments through IMO and other sources.

My current project is the completion of an authoritative work on the development of national and customary law for the safety of ships and seafarers in Great Britain throughout the nineteenth century; the basis for shipping legislation throughout the world well into the twentieth century, including Australia and New Zealand.

The idea came through my Doctoral research during which I discovered significant flaws in that legislation. The work is written in the context of the political, technical and societal influences and issues of the time and recasts long forgotten shipping tragedies and the enormous loss of life at sea throughout that century.

On another note I’m pleased to be able to report that my academic success at Wollongong along with the associated assignments I undertook for UoW, IMO and the NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in the Pacific region has recently been recognised by my peers in the shipping industry through the award of a Chartership by the Honourable Company of Master Mariners of London. This is a relatively new honour.

I’m the first Chartered Master Mariner in New Zealand, an achievement I can directly sheet home to my enrolment for Master of Maritime Studies at UoW in 2002 and all the doors that opened from that.”

We’re glad to hear that your UOW-ANCORS education has served you well John, stay well, and congratulations on your award!

Captain (Dr) John Mansell reached out earlier this year to give his regards and update ANCORS on his recent professional activities and awards.
Recent Publications


The extended ANCORS family has grown by two members!

Congratulations to Sr Research Fellow Dr Dirk Steenbergen and partner Aditi (Dee) on the birth of their baby girl Leela Heleen Steenbergen in May.

Congratulations also to ANCORS Honorary Sr Fellow and UOW alumna Dr Mary Ann Palma-Robles and her husband Garret on the birth of their baby girl Sofia Margaret in August.

Welcome to new PhD student and Associate Research Fellow Ms. Jessica Scott, who joins the Food Systems project to provide nutrition expertise. Her applied PhD research will investigate food systems for improving nutrition and health in low and middle income countries.

Welcome also to Ms. Helani Kottage, who joins the Food Systems Project as a data scientist and statistician and will focus on Pacific food trade data, HIES analyses, and providing high level statistical support.

Congratulations to Associate Research Fellow Dr Leonardo Bernard, who has been approved for a post-doctoral visa by the Australian Government! The visa means he is able to stay on at ANCORS for the next few years and pursue further research.

Best wishes to Professor Richard Kenchington on his recent retirement! Richard will retain an Honorary Fellow role with ANCORS.

Happy birthday to Stuart, Leo, Ruth, Chris, Alistair, Anthony, and Randa!

Finally, some sad news. The Pathways project team would like to extend their heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Ms Rutiana Teibaba on her recent passing. Rutiana was a wonderful and dedicated young woman who started with the CBFM team as a volunteer, went on to further studies, and recently joined the Kiribati Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resource Development as a Fisheries assistant trainee. She was both a friend and a colleague and she will be deeply missed.

Want to receive this Newsletter? Subscribe to our electronic mailing list at [http://eepurl.com/bysM-v](http://eepurl.com/bysM-v)