

Concurrent Session D
Monday 31 August
2.25pm – 3.15pm

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30 Aug – 2 Sep 2015
Novotel North Beach Wollongong



Session 4

Environment and Sustainability Plans and Policies: Solutions, Straight-Jackets or Meaningless Drivel?

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Brigid Freeman is a University of Melbourne Research Fellow for an ARC funded project ('Humanities in the Asia Region') in partnership with the Australian Academy of the Humanities (AAH). Previously, Brigid worked with Professor Simon Marginson at the Centre for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE), on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) policy globally and Professor Fazal Rizvi on diaspora and international research collaboration projects; both sponsored through the ARC and Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) for Australia's Chief Scientist. Brigid was a Visiting Scholar at the Centre for Studies in Higher Education (CSHE) at the University of California, Berkeley and American Council of Education (ACE) in Washington DC where she led an international research project. Brigid has a Masters of Education Policy (International) and is undertaking a PhD. Brigid has worked for a number of Australian universities in both academic and professional positions.

In recent years, Australian universities have progressively put pen to paper to articulate their various approaches to the environment, and sustainability more broadly. Australian universities are operating in a difficult context of increasing regulation, reporting and accountability requirements concerning their environmental and sustainability-related activities. Concurrently, they are facing increasing calls to provide solutions reflecting myriad and potentially conflicting priorities of staff, students, and the broader community. In response, a plethora of planning, design and policy instruments has been produced to scope, evidence, guide and monitor these ambitious endeavours.

This presentation will explore how a number of Australian universities have responded. In particular, the research will examine Australian university's approaches spanning: the natural environment; the built environment and precincts; use of natural resources; sustainability focussed teaching, learning and research; and relationship between the physical and cultural environment. Publicly-available governance documentation, principally including plans and policies, will provide the lens for the research. The presentation is intended to communicate key findings to practitioners, including examples of good practice, to support ongoing development and documentation of effective planning and policy solutions for the built environment and precincts.