

Wednesday 16th August, 2017



UNSW
SYDNEY



ABC
Australian
Broadcasting
Corporation



Create NSW
Arts, Screen & Culture



Cli-Fi: Climate Change and Big Ideas for the Small Screen

Leading international and Australian climate scientists and screen creatives come together in Sydney

A unique one day forum will today bring together prominent national and international climate scientists with some of Australia's leading screen creatives, to explore 'Cli-fi', or climate-fiction, an emerging small screen genre.

The forum will be held under the auspices of the UNSW Climate Change Grand Challenge, via a partnership between UNSW, ABC TV, Jungle Film and TV, Screen Australia, Create NSW and venue partner AFTRS.

The purpose of this event, which is being held at the Australian Film Television & Radio School (AFTRS) during Science Week 2017, is to present independent TV writers and creatives with hard facts and forecasts from leading scientists and thinkers working in the climate change space, in order to encourage the creation of TV drama series and telemovie proposals.

Speakers will include John Collee, the screenwriter of *Happy Feet*, *Walking with Dinosaurs* and *Master and Commander*, and American climate scientist Professor Michael E. Mann. Currently director of the Earth System Science Centre at Pennsylvania State University, Professor Mann has contributed to the scientific understanding of historic climate change, developing in 1998 the so-called hockey stick graph.

The event is the brainchild of UNSW marine ecologist Dr Adriana Vergés who recognises the importance of popular culture in raising awareness about an issue.

"The idea behind this event is to use high quality fiction to communicate the very

Wednesday 16th August, 2017

latest climate science. This is because while factual documentaries such as Al Gore's 'An Inconvenient Truth' have had a major impact, factual programs now often largely preach to the converted, whereas fiction has the potential to reach a much greater audience, and help us adapt to our rapidly changing world" says Dr Adriana Vergés, from the Evolution & Ecology Research Centre at UNSW Sydney.

Australian scientists speaking include Dr Sarah Perkins-Kirkpatrick, a senior research associate at the Climate Change Research Centre at UNSW, a 2013 NSW Young Tall Poppy and an expert in heatwaves, and Professor Stephan Lewandowsky, a cognitive scientist at the University of Bristol in the UK, and expert in the psychology of climate denial.

A morning of presentations from specialists in climate science, geoengineering, psychology, human health, renewable energy, politics and history - will be followed by a discussion led by John Collee seeking input and ideas from all quarters of the room. The goal is to bring science and story together to stimulate ideas for powerful screen content.

"The increase in strength, length, and number of heatwaves over the past few decades has been the canary in the coal mine, telling us climate change is happening now. If it continues, unabated parts of the world such as northern Australia will become unliveable" said climate scientist Dr Sarah Perkins-Kirkpatrick from UNSW Sydney.

"These heatwave statistics mean something to scientists but it will be through the stories and imaginations of screenwriters and filmmakers portraying the impact of future climate change that they will come to mean something for the general public" she added.

Following the event, there will be a call for proposals for TV series and telemovies in the Cli-fi genre for funded development. The deadline for submissions is Friday September 29, 2017.



Media enquiries: Rachel de Mestre - TM Publicity
Email: Rachel@tmpublicity.com