



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health Sciences
**Melbourne School of
Psychological Sciences**

GRADUATE STUDENT COMPLETION SEMINAR

**The relationship between Climate change
and psychological distress:
A case study from Tuvalu**

Presented by Kari Gibson

Mpsych (Clinical) /PhD

Supervisors: Prof Nick Haslam, Prof Jon Barnett, Dr Ida Kaplan

**Monday, 16 July, 12pm – 1pm
Room 625, Redmond Barry Building**



Kari Gibson is a psychologist with a background in international development and refugee health. She previously worked in a clinical setting, assessing and treating individuals from refugee and asylum seeking background who had experienced torture or trauma prior to resettling in Australia. Kari is completing a combined Masters of Clinical Psychology and PhD program at the University of Melbourne. Her PhD examines the intersections of climate change and psychological distress in the Pacific atoll nation of Tuvalu. Kari is also an Acting Clinical Research Specialist at Phoenix Australia – Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health, where she is managing a project investigating the acceptability, feasibility, and safety of the Skills for Life Adjustment and Recovery (SOLAR) program in Tuvalu.

This thesis explored the relationship between climate change and psychological distress among residents of the small Pacific Island atoll nation of Tuvalu. The thesis employed an exploratory sequential mixed methods research design. Interviews with a total of 137 residents were conducted during two fieldwork phases and subjected to mixed method analyses. Thesis findings affirmed the consequential importance of climate change for mental health, and the relevance of multiple types of climate change stressor to individual distress. Transactional stress and coping theory aided understanding of how distress arises, and reasons for variation in distress across individuals.

These seminars are free of charge. Visitors are welcome to attend.