

ROUTLEDGE ADVANCES IN CLIMATE CHANGE RESEARCH

Climate Change and Anthropos

Planet, people and places

Linda H. Connor

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Climate Change and Anthropos

Anthropos, in the sense of species as well as cultures and ethics, locates humans as part of much larger orders of existence – fundamental when thinking about climate change. This book offers a new way of exploring the significance of locality and lives in the epoch of the Anthropocene, a time when humans confront the limits of our control over nature. Many scholars now write about the ethics, policies and politics of climate change, focusing on global processes and effects. The book's innovative approach to cross-cultural comparison and a regionally based study explores people's experiences of environmental change and the meaning of climate change for diverse human worlds in a changing biosphere.

The main study site is the Hunter Valley in southeast Australia: an ecological region defined by the Hunter River catchment; a dwelling place for many generations of people; and a key location for transnational corporations focused on the mining, burning and export of black coal. Abundant fossil fuel reserves tie Hunter people and places to the Asia Pacific – the engine room of global economic growth in the twenty-first century and the largest user of the planet's natural resources. The book analyses the nexus of place and perceptions, political economy and social organisation in situations where environmental changes are radically transforming collective worlds.

Based on an anthropological approach informed by other ways of thinking about environment–people relationships, this book explores the social and cultural dimensions of climate change holistically. Each chapter links the large scales of species and planet with small places, commodity chains, local actions, myths and values, as well as the mingled strands of dystopian imaginings and strivings for recuperative renewal in an era of transition.

Linda H. Connor is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Sydney, Australia.

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This book is dedicated to the people of the Hunter Valley,
especially those who struggle against the unfettered expansion
of the coal industry.

Qui iusta pro causa certant denique vincent

Acknowledgements

The research on which this book is based was carried out in the Hunter Valley between 2008 and 2012. It was part of a collaborative project with Glenn Albrecht and Nick Higginbotham, with whom I have been researching environmental change in Hunter Valley communities for more than a decade. Apart from our many adventures on field trips, much of the excitement of this research has come from our mutual engagement with ideas and methods from our different disciplinary perspectives (anthropology, environmental ethics and social psychology). As a research team, we set out to develop a strong interdisciplinary framework for a regional and community-based study of environmental change. We were motivated by our interest and concern for the Hunter Valley: as an ecological region defined by the Hunter River catchment; a dwelling place for many generations of people; and a key site for resource extractive capital accumulation focused on the mining, burning and export of black coal.

Results of our research have appeared in publications and presentations over the years and some are cited in this work. In completing this book, I am fulfilling an undertaking written into the original grant application, to produce a monograph focusing on contributions of the ethnographic research to understandings of climate change. I am indebted to Glenn and Nick for their insights throughout the life of the project and for travelling with me on this journey.

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A book on this subject crosses into many areas of scholarship, and over the years of researching and writing I have relied on ideas and advice from colleagues in disciplines that include archaeology, geography, history, sociology, statistics

and political economy, as well as fellow anthropologists. I thank all these people for their interest and timely contributions when called upon. I want to mention by name Fran Baker, Belinda Burbidge, Stephen Hancock, Jonathan Marshall, Phil McManus, Rebecca Pearse, Stuart Rosewarne and Peter White. Thank you to Paul Roche and Nick Riemer for the Latin. My persistence with the writing has also been sustained by the interest and encouragement of family, friends and colleagues.

Hunter regional newspapers have been an important resource for this study. The *Newcastle Herald* provides detailed and rigorous reporting on regional issues and has cast a particularly strong investigative gaze upon the often-opaque dealings between the mining industry and New South Wales state government. Several *Newcastle Herald* journalists require special mention for their high-quality, consistent reporting on issues of particular relevance to the subject of this book. Thanks to Matthew Kelly, Damon Cronshaw, Greg Ray, Michelle Harris and Joanne McCarthy, and also to Peter Lewis, whose daily cartoons are an inspiration and a delight.

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I am indebted to the people of the Hunter Valley who generously participated in the study in so many ways. They are too numerous to name, and pseudonyms have been used for those whose words are quoted in private interviews. I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to learn from their lives in the many places and situations encompassed by the study. This book is dedicated to them.

Acronyms and abbreviations

AAC	Australian Agricultural Company
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AGL	Australian Gas Light Company
BHP	Broken Hill Proprietary Company
CAG	Climate Action Group
CAN	Climate Action Newcastle
CANA	Climate Action Network Australia
CRDC	Climate Ready Dora Creek
CSG	coal seam gas
CTAG	Coal Terminal Action Group
DCCG	Dora Creek Catchment Group
EDO	Environmental Defender's Office
EIS	environmental impact statement
ENGO	environmental non-government organisation
ENSO	El Niño-Southern Oscillation
GFC	global financial crisis
GHG	greenhouse gas
HCEC	Hunter Community Environment Centre
HEL	Hunter Environment Lobby
HTBA	Hunter Thoroughbred Breeders Association
HVPA	Hunter Valley Protection Alliance
ICAC	Independent Commission Against Corruption
IK	Indigenous knowledge
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IQ	<i>Inuit Qaujimatuqangit</i>
LGA	local government area
LK	local knowledge
LMCA	Lake Macquarie Climate Action
LMCC	Lake Macquarie City Council
LMS	London Missionary Society
LtG	Lock the Gate Alliance
MTpa	mega tonnes per annum
NSW	New South Wales

NSWMC	New South Wales Minerals Council
NVDA	non-violent direct action
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PAC	Planning Assessment Commission
PACC	Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change
PEL	petroleum exploration license
PWCS	Port Waratah Coal Services
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RT	Rising Tide Newcastle
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SLR	sea level rise
SOE	state-owned enterprise
TEK	traditional ecological knowledge
TK	traditional knowledge
TN	Transition Newcastle
TT	Transition Towns
TTCP	Transition Town Coal Point
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

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