



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Melbourne
Climate Futures

2025 Melbourne Climate Futures Annual Report





Melbourne Climate Futures acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the unceded land on which we work, learn and live: the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples (Burnley, Fishermans Bend, Parkville, Southbank and Werribee campuses), the Yorta Yorta Nation (Dookie and Shepparton campuses), and the Dja Dja Wurrung people (Creswick campus).

The University also acknowledges and is grateful to the Traditional Owners, Elders and Knowledge Holders of all Indigenous nations and clans who have been instrumental in our reconciliation journey.

We recognise the unique place held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original owners and custodians of the lands and waterways across the Australian continent, with histories of continuous connection dating back more than 60,000 years. We also acknowledge their enduring cultural practices of caring for Country.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and future, and acknowledge the importance of Indigenous knowledge in the Academy. As a community of researchers, teachers, professional staff and students, we are privileged to work and learn every day with Indigenous colleagues and partners.

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Melbourne Climate Futures

Melbourne Climate Futures is the University of Melbourne's strategic climate initiative, leading on transformative solutions to the climate crisis for a future worth living.

We bring together research and expertise from across the University and beyond, to share knowledge and provide a trusted, evidence-based voice for policymakers, communities and industry so that we can enact real change in the face of this urgent and complex issue.

Our purpose is to accelerate the urgently needed transition to a positive climate future, using transformative thinking to build resilient and thriving communities nationally and globally, with particular attention to serving our growing Asia-Pacific region. We aim to benefit people and planet through the transformative impact of our research, convening power and capability development.

While we develop inspirational ideas, policy proposals and tools to address the climate crisis, it is vital that the transitions and transformations we make as we strive for greater sustainability are evidence-based, healthy, and equitable.

To this end, Melbourne Climate Futures unites disparate, yet constantly interacting, disciplines – such as health, justice and law, finance, policy and science – to create integrated solutions.

Melbourne Climate Futures connects and amplifies the depth and breadth of University of Melbourne research, creates a portal to share ideas and collaborate on real action, and empowers the next generation of climate leaders.



Message from the Director

2025 saw another year of climate extremes and record temperatures, reminding us again that the climate crisis is the most critical threat to human, environmental, economic, and societal wellbeing.

Dramatic reductions in global aid funding as a result of a changing geopolitical landscape have presented further challenges to climate research to which we must continue to adapt.

The University of Melbourne has committed to making a significant impact in this area, embedding a climate, sustainability and ecosystem health impact accelerator in its *Advancing Research 2030: Excellence for impact* strategy, and MCF is proud to play a key role in this ambition.

The University's capability and expertise in this area is immense and extends across every discipline. We are the only Australian university to have a lead author contributing to every Working Group in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Seventh Assessment Report.

MCF continues to apply rigorous, evidence-based research to transform our climate future to ensure it is one that is healthy, safe and equitable.

At its heart, MCF is committed to engaging in, fostering and driving the interdisciplinary research required to address the complex and interconnected challenges that climate change brings, by collaborating closely with our University of Melbourne colleagues at all faculties across the institution.

Our growing MCF Academy of early and mid-career researchers imbues future climate leaders with the skills

and knowledge to create real impact, alongside a network of senior researchers.

We have built strong, interdisciplinary networks with our partners in industry and policy, with particular focus on our neighbours in the Indo-Pacific region.

And we have furthered the University of Melbourne's reputation as a regional and global actor, playing key roles in governmental and intergovernmental policy and negotiations.

March 2026 marked five years since MCF's establishment and, as we look ahead, we redouble our efforts to create a fertile environment for interdisciplinary research across the University.

We put renewed focus on the needs and voices of our graduate researchers, ensuring that we create the foundations for the growing challenges ahead.

While we face significant obstacles, the passion and dedication of our colleagues and collaborators in the MCF networks also fills us with hope for a safe, healthy and equitable climate future.

My immense thanks to Professor Jacqueline Peel, who stepped back from the Directorship in 2025 to focus on her ARC Laureate Fellowship program. Her leadership over the last five years has set us on a path to a brighter climate future for MCF and the communities we live and work in.

This report outlines our 2025 impacts, in line with the University's Advancing Research Strategy 2030.

Professor Kathryn Bowen
Director, Melbourne Climate Futures

MCF achievements summary 2021–2025

Since its launch in March 2021, MCF has focused its resources on convening diverse stakeholders, developing rigorous, interdisciplinary research, and fostering collaborative partnerships to deliver urgent, effective action that will preserve a future worth living.

Sustainable Finance Hub

MCF launched the Sustainable Finance Hub (SFH) in 2023 as a nation-wide expert hub investigating means by which we can increase green investment and build the resources required to pay for addressing the sustainability crisis in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.



3
research streams



2
senior practitioners in residence



2
publications in *Science and Nature*



A\$780K
external funding



3
cross-institutional research collaborations

Climate CATCH Lab

MCF launched the Climate CATCH Lab in 2022 in partnership with the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, the Melbourne Medical School and the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, to accelerate the University's climate change and human health research, engagement and education for enhanced impact.



9
research streams



15
fellowships facilitated



2
annual orations



A\$18.5M
funding secured or awarded



A\$400K
interdisciplinary seed funding distributed



4
hubs



>100
projects



A\$24.7M
additional funding secured



A\$1.5M
funding distributed

ARC Laureate Fellowship

The Laureate Program on Global Corporate Climate Accountability aims to transform international law's role in incentivising and ensuring corporate accountability to global net-zero ambitions as the 2024 ARC Kathleen Fitzpatrick Australian Laureate Fellow.



3
post-doctoral positions



3
PhD scholarships



A\$3.8M
funding received



5+
global collaborations

INPACC Hub

MCF steers the Indo-Pacific Climate (INPACC) Hub, which leverages efforts in countries across the Pacific, Southeast Asia, and South Asia, to create an expert network that enables research, knowledge-sharing and leadership on adaptation, resilience, and justice to build climate resilience across Asia and the Pacific.



4
priority thematic areas



7
key activities



100+
subscribers



90+
members across the region



20
Pacific policymakers sponsored to take Climate Fundamentals short course



A\$150K
funding received from DFAT for inception workshop

Climate Research Accelerator (CRX) Program

The CRX program supports interdisciplinary research projects with a high likelihood of making an immediate impact on the climate crisis by providing funding, facilitating capacity-building workshops, and convening researchers and partners across disciplines.



28
projects



85+
researchers



41
external partners



100%
faculties represented



A\$1.08M
funding distributed



11
capacity-building and engagement workshops

Australia Awards Fellowship

In partnership with the Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC) and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC), MCF has repeatedly received funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for fellowships designed to improve climate outcomes in the Asia-Pacific region.



45
fellows from across the region



A\$1.5M
funding received



100+
expert presenters, mentors and facilitators



30
policy notes, research papers & literature reviews

MCF Research Cluster and Research Themes

MCF convenes researchers from across the University to share ideas and innovations across 13 research themes to promote cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary, collaborative climate research.



332
research cluster members



50+
research cluster meetings



13
research themes



15
research theme leads



13
ECR co-leads



14
research theme lead meetings

MCF Academy

The MCF Academy fosters early and mid-career researchers working in climate-related fields within a diverse intellectual and interdisciplinary community, drawing from all areas across the University to promote a rich exchange of ideas.



98
graduate researchers



3
practitioners and policymakers in residence



25+
training workshops



34
seminars

PAVE–Health: Pacific action to enhance the visibility of evidence on health and climate impacts

PAVE-Health aims to strengthen Pacific populations' resilience to the health impacts of a changing climate by rapidly upskilling policymakers, researchers, and health practitioners to draw attention to and reduce climate-related health impacts across four Pacific Island Countries.



A\$4.9M
funding received from Wellcome Trust

University carbon targets

MCF worked alongside the University's Sustainability Team to advocate that new, more ambitious emissions reductions targets were incorporated into the Sustainability Plan 2030. With the University now ranked ninth in the world in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Sustainability Rankings, MCF continues to work alongside the Sustainability Strategy Team to refresh our climate targets.



carbon neutral by 2025



climate positive by 2030

UNFCCC Climate negotiations and the COP Universities Alliance

MCF has had a strong presence at UN climate negotiations from 2021 to 2024, during COP26 in Scotland, COP27 in Egypt, COP28 in the United Arab Emirates, and COP29 in Azerbaijan.



16
attending researchers



6
MCF-led official side events



20+
researchers on official panels



42
thought leadership pieces

In 2024, Professor Peel was asked to lead the establishment of the COP Universities Alliance to coordinate collaboration between over 20 Australian, New Zealand and Pacific institutions in support of Australia's role hosting negotiations at the international climate summit, COP31, in Türkiye 2026, and with a broader ambition to build a cohesive academic alliance for all climate negotiations.

MCF was established to drive the University of Melbourne's leadership role on one of the greatest and most urgent global challenges of our time – the future of our planet, and our society, in the face of climate change.

Our vision is to accelerate the transition to a positive climate future, focusing our efforts both nationally and globally, with particular attention to serving our growing Asia-Pacific region.

Following the tenets of the Advancing Melbourne 2030 strategy, we aim to become a leading voice in Australia, the Asia-Pacific region and globally, to bring about greater action on climate change. We have established three key strategic objectives, which intersect and interact to feed and inform activities across the entire MCF ecosystem.



Platform – to leverage the breadth and depth of the University of Melbourne's climate research capability, convening power and partnerships for meaningful impact.



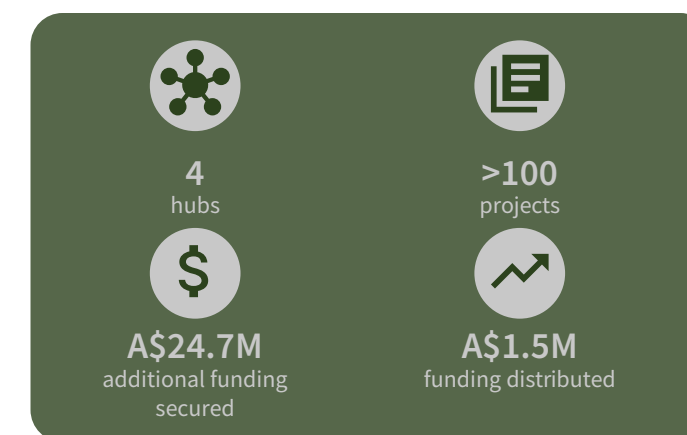
Portal – to enable access to the University of Melbourne's deep climate research and expertise for external stakeholders and research end-users to collaborate, including in the Asia-Pacific region.



Pathway – to empower the next generation of researchers, students and our local and regional communities to strive for a sustainable climate future, while also working with the University of Melbourne itself to ensure it is a world leader in decarbonisation.

2025 achievements

Platform – Building research capacity



Fostering interdisciplinary research capacity

In 2025, MCF continues to create interdisciplinary linkages to strengthen and enrich the University's climate research and its impact, in line with the Advancing Research 2030 climate, sustainability and ecosystem health impact accelerator.

By fostering spaces where researchers from across faculties can confer and collaborate, such as the MCF Research Cluster, MCF enabled our broader expert community to deliver robust, evidence-based advice to colleagues across the University, creating opportunities for deeper collaboration and understanding.

MCF further invites and nurtures faculty engagement through senior research fellows, such as Professors David Karoly and Peter Christoff, and through its 13 research themes, each co-led by faculty-embedded senior and early to mid-career researchers, who consult with the core MCF team through regular meetings on new means by which to engage their faculties in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary climate solutions.

By fostering these interdisciplinary environments, MCF builds the foundation for grants and funding that flow through to faculties via the extensive MCF research network. Our efforts also enable meaningful engagement and partnership with external climate policy leaders and practitioners, all while strengthening the University's reputation as a leader in climate research and impact.

Building capacity in needed areas through core MCF research

To drive the University's research impact contribution to the global climate challenge, MCF focuses on three key areas – climate and health, sustainable finance, and law and policy for climate action and accountability – in which we can dedicate resources to create the biggest impact.

We leverage this expertise alongside our networks to lead, convene and collaborate through strategic partnerships on a global scale.

Climate and health

The changing climate is already creating a number of direct and indirect effects on human health and wellbeing, whether it be from injury and death caused by extreme weather events or food insecurity, novel diseases and mental health impacts. MCF has prioritised research that allows communities to adapt to these risks, with particular focus on our Asia-Pacific region.

MCF researchers have created meaningful relationships with research groups across the globe, as well as policy leaders, governments and intergovernmental bodies in order to deliver the University's rich climate and health research to those who are best placed to implement the changes that will shore up human wellbeing in a changing climate. Just some highlights of these include:

- MCF Director Professor Kathryn Bowen's appointment as Lead Author for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change *Seventh Assessment Report*, Working Group II, Chapter 19 on 'Human Health and Wellbeing'
- A strong relationship with the World Health Organization, that saw MCF experts such as Professor Kathryn Bowen attend events such as the COP31 Health and Climate Roundtable, convened by the World Health Organization and attended by the Special Envoy Climate Kate Thwaites and Assistant Minister for Health Rebecca White
- Professor Kathryn Bowen's appointment to Co-Chair, alongside Dame Christiana Figueres, for the *Lancet Commission on Sea Level Rise, Health and Justice*.
- A partnership with Sustainability Victoria
- Researchers appointed to the Federal Government's Climate and Health Advisory Group



An integral part of MCF's climate and health work is the **Climate CATCH Lab**, a joint initiative of MCF, the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, the Melbourne Medical School and the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences (MDHS). The Lab oversees nine research themes from sustainable healthcare, to just energy transitions, to art and creative responses, bringing together the deep and broad climate and health expertise at the University. It is a collaborative platform for researchers to provide integrated, evidence-based advice to policy leaders.

In 2025, it held its second annual oration featuring Angharad Wynne-Jones, Facilitator of Creative Climate – Australia's First Nations and artist-led climate and arts peak body, among a number of other events and policy roundtables, including the 2025 *MJA-Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change* regional launch.

To date, the Lab's research and capability-building programs have garnered over A\$20 million in grants and funding, distributed across MCF, MDHS and other faculties. Its extensive partnership work is explore further in the Portal section of this report.

Sustainable finance

One of the key questions at the heart of climate action is how and who will pay for the cost of mitigating and adapting to its effects.

The **Sustainable Finance Hub** (SFH) was launched in 2023 as a nation-wide expert hub investigating means to increase green investment and build the resources required to address the sustainability crisis in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

In 2025, a new SFH Director, Simon O'Connor, was appointed to lead this program of work, bringing immense expertise to the role with his extensive experience operating at the intersection of economics, finance and sustainability for over two decades.

Simon presented two keynote presentations and moderated a panel session at an event hosted by the Australian High Commission, Malaysia, and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Partnerships for Infrastructure program, 'Unlocking Sustainable Financing for Malaysia's Green Economy: A dialogue with Australia'.

The SFH contributed to the organisation and delivery of the Sustainable Finance Futures Forum as part of the University's Sustainability Week, bringing together a diverse audience and speakers from industry, government, philanthropists and the University to address the challenges for the finance sector to play a bigger role contributing to a sustainable future.

It engaged directly with stakeholders to foster engagement and build relationships with the dual goal of influencing industry to improve sustainability practice and garnering opportunities for external funding.

Law and policy for climate action and accountability

Policy and law have the power to shape the roles and responsibilities of governments and private companies, to address climate change by putting mitigation and adaption frameworks in place, creating accountability, and placing burdens of liability for harm.

MCF's law and policy research brings together deep expertise from across the Faculty of Science, Melbourne Law School, the Melbourne Centre for Law and the Environment and the Faculty of Arts, and intersects with every facet of climate research to push forward law and policy developments.

MCF researchers regularly liaise with policymakers and climate leaders to provide advice and make submissions to government regarding current and prospective policy changes across topics such as corporate accountability, duty of care, sustainable finance strategy, and many more.

Climate litigation has emerged as a major site for climate governance and law-making in countries around the world and particularly in Australia, which has the second-highest number of climate cases globally. MCF oversees management of the Australian Climate Litigation database, a repository of all past and current climate litigation cases in Australia, which has had 46,504 pageviews over 27,881 website sessions in 2025 alone and is widely consulted by environmental civil society groups and practitioners.

In June 2025, former MCF Director Professor Peel commenced the **Laureate Program on Global Corporate Climate Accountability**, a five-year research program funded by an Australian Research Council Laureate Fellowship and Kathleen

Fitzpatrick Award. The Laureate program aims to transform the role of international law and global standards and mechanisms in raising the ambition and ensuring delivery of companies' climate promises.

As well as hosting a number of visiting fellows, some highlights of the Laureate programs 2025 activities include:

- Contributing to the Taskforce on Net Zero Policy's landmark COP30 report, launched at COP30 Brazil, offering the most comprehensive independent global update on net zero policy progress, gaps and suggested best practice for governments, companies and financial institutions.
- Awarding of the Marles Medal to Professor Jacqueline Peel for her world-leading and transformative contribution to global climate governance through her pioneering research on climate litigation.
- Hosting a workshop on climate attribution science and litigation, privately partnered with the Australian Conversation Foundation.
- Taking over as the new editorial team for *ANZSIL Perspective*, the online publication of the Australian and New Zealand Society of International Law
- Production of the policy brief, *What are the implications of the ICJ Climate Advisory Opinion for EIA in Australia?*, in partnership with Melbourne Centre for Law and the Environment and the Institute for International Law and the Humanities.

Enabling interdisciplinary research

Climate Research Accelerator (CRX) program

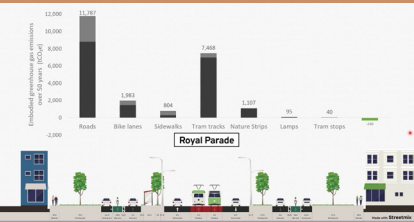
Since August 2021, MCF has awarded four rounds of 'seed' and 'sapling' funding through CRX to 28 diverse interdisciplinary projects with a high likelihood of making an immediate impact on the climate problem. The CRX program nurtures new interdisciplinary collaborations and provides teams with an existing collaboration with additional funding to partner externally and accelerate their impact.

In 2025, the CRX program concluded its third round of funding and capability-building training to five diverse projects, which were provided a total of A\$150,000 across five projects.

In November 2025, MCF awarded seven projects from six faculties up to \$50K per project (\$250K in total) across a broad range of topics. These seven projects continue the program into 2026.

CRX Spotlight: Nested Phoenix

The Nested Phoenix modelling engine enables building designers, engineers, planners and other actors of the built environment to make robust decisions that effectively improve the net life cycle overall performance of built assets and built stocks, from the material level to the city level.



‘The MCF CRX has been a lifeline that enabled me to continue my research activities on my flagship project and has provided enough momentum and impetus to secure multiple sources of funding subsequently..’

— André Stephan, CRX Project Lead

Melbourne Accelerator Program

In 2025, MCF once again sponsored a place in the Melbourne Accelerator Program for a start-up that is working to address the urgent challenges of the climate crisis. It provided A\$20,000 in funding to Reswitch, an end-to-end community benefit management platform enabling utility-scale wind, solar, battery storage and transmission projects to deliver, administer and report on community shared benefit commitments with transparency and confidence.

Portal – Collaboration, partnerships, engagement and reputation



MCF works tirelessly to develop its relationships and reputation. We have built strong collaborative networks and partnerships across research, policy and industry, at national, regional and global levels, while also increasing the University’s standing as a climate research and impact leader.

Activating internal linkages to enable external partnerships

By collaborating across disciplines, MCF has leveraged the relationships University researchers and research groups have built to develop new external partnerships. The results of this work speak to our strategic focus on enabling and supporting our neighbours in the Asia-Pacific region by further increasing capacity where the need has been identified.

PAVE-Health

Through the Climate CATCH Lab, MCF has partnered with the Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC) to rapidly up-skill policymakers, researchers, and health practitioners to draw attention to and reduce climate-related health impacts across four Pacific Island Countries: Samoa, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, and Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). The project was awarded nearly A\$4.9 million in funding from Wellcome to strengthen Pacific populations’ resilience to the health impacts of a changing climate.

In March 2025, members of the Climate CATCH Lab met with their project partners from PCCC, and Ministerial climate and health representatives from the four participating Pacific countries, in Samoa to begin planning work for the three-year program.

PAVE-Health was formally launched in September 2025. The University hosted policymakers, researchers and health practitioners from the participating countries for an intensive week-long 'training of trainers' workshop in climate-resilient health policy, assessment, and adaptation planning.

Intergovernmental climate policy

MCF researches and experts continue to contribute to the highest levels of climate policy advice at an intergovernmental level.

In 2025, Professor Jacqueline Peel was appointed a Coordinating Lead Author for the IPCC Seventh Assessment Report, Working Group III, Chapter 6 on ‘Policies and governance, and international cooperation’ and Professor Kathryn Bowen was appointed a Lead Author for Working Group II, Chapter 19 on ‘Human Health and Wellbeing’. Four other University researchers have been named lead authors on the report.

Professor Jacqueline Peel, Dr Roanna McClelland and Arthur Wyns attended the United Nations Conferences of the Parties (COP30) in Belém, Brazil. Professor Robyn Eckersley, Professor Kathryn Bowen and Dr Suzanne Varrall joined virtually.

Professor Kathryn Bowen also attended the 62nd sessions in Bonn, Germany, of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Implementation and Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, providing important foundations for COP30 negotiations in Brazil.

INPACC Hub

Established in 2023 at an inception workshop in Bangkok funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, MCF steers the Indo-Pacific Climate (INPACC) Hub. The INPACC Hub leverages efforts in countries across the Pacific, Southeast Asia, and South Asia, to create an expert network that enables research, knowledge-sharing and leadership on adaptation, resilience, and justice to build climate resilience across Asia and the Pacific.

The network consists of more than 90 members from across the region, and has been briefed to representatives of high-level policy groups such as the US embassy and the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment. In

2024, the INPACC Hub sponsored 20 regional policymakers to undertake the MCF Climate Fundamentals: Risks and impacts for decision-makers short course.

Convening policy discussions at the highest levels

MCF activates its internal University linkages by leveraging its research cluster, research themes and hubs, in order to expand the network of external partners with which it engages. This has significantly increased MCF’s visibility and that of the University of Melbourne’s climate research over the four years we have operated, growing from a new initiative to a recognised and trusted source of expertise and advice in Australia, the region and internationally. In addition, the MCF Advisory Board, comprising recognised climate leaders across different fields of endeavour, links MCF with members of their networks in order to enhance the impact of MCF’s events and policy roundtables and provide the expertise of University of Melbourne climate researchers to where it will have the most impact.

COP Universities Alliance



In 2024, MCF was instrumental in establishing the COP Universities Alliance, in anticipation of Australia's role in leading COP31 negotiations in 2026. The COP Universities Alliance, chaired by Professor Jacqueline Peel, aims to support policymakers in advancing Australia’s role in international climate cooperation by providing expert advice and the evidence base for evaluating options and proposing ambitious climate policy.

The Alliance was formally launched at the Impact X Summit in Climate Action Week in Sydney March 2026, where Professor Peel spoke on the panel ‘Hosting COP31: How Australia and the Pacific can hold a successful and ambitious UN climate summit’.

Including over 20 Australian, New Zealand and Pacific institutions, the Alliance aims to assist in developing capacity and networks through its partnership program, proposing and exploring alternative COP formats to improve their effectiveness, inclusivity and sustainability, and providing a forum for authentic dialogues on complex issues that generate options for policy innovation.

In 2025, the Alliance hosted six meetings, as well as four workshops and roundtables aimed at providing policy and format advice to: the Australian Federal Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water; the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; and a business and industry roundtable with Minister for Climate Change and Energy Chris Bowen and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Stiell.

Engagement and profile-building

In order to build its audience and engage with a broad range of stakeholders, including University of Melbourne staff and students, researchers, government bodies and the corporate community, MCF has produced a suite of content and events in 2025.

MCF also collaborates with researchers across the University to produce novel media content that engages non-traditional audiences.

Climate Kids



Climate Kids is produced to answer the questions that children, aged 6 to 15, have about our changing climate and its effects.

Creator and host, Dr Lily O’Neill, consults with University of Melbourne experts to get the most accurate and up-to-date information, then translates it for these young people who will inherit the climate future.

In 2025, the Climate Kids team won the University of Melbourne Excellence Award for community-based initiatives. Climate Kids has produced 5 episodes to date with over 83.3K total views.

Climate Talks



The Climate Talks podcast tracks and analyses the journey to the annual United Nations Climate Change Conferences – or COPs – each year.

Produced in partnership with Melbourne Centre for Cities and with support from the Melbourne Law School, the podcast features different guests each episode to unpack national and global climate policy trends and how they will influence negotiations and outcomes.

In 2025, Climate Talks released 10 podcast episodes with 3,033 total listens.

Pathway – Empowering climate leaders

MCF is deeply invested in empowering the next generation of climate leaders by building their knowledge and capabilities. We run capacity-building programs with practitioners in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region to provide them with the tools to address and mitigate climate impacts in their communities.

In keeping with the Advancing Melbourne 2030 strategy, students are at the heart of everything we do, and MCF is passionate about nurturing their knowledge and leadership skills through providing interdisciplinary research skills and a space for cross-disciplinary collaboration among early career researchers.

MCF Academy

The MCF Academy (MCFA) is an interdisciplinary network of over 100 Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Researchers, co-located in the MCF space in Melbourne Connect. MCFA brings together early career researchers from various schools and faculties across the University of Melbourne, united by a common goal: to understand the implications of climate change and energy futures from interdisciplinary perspectives, including STEM, humanities, health, education, and social sciences. Members contribute to a broad range of expertise within MCF on climate change and societal transitions.

These early to mid-career researchers benefit from the inclusion of senior researchers and policymakers- and practitioners-in-residence, such as Liz Bennett, Simon O'Connor, and Susan Mizrahi, who generously share their expertise with the fellows.

MCFA offers significant added value to graduate researchers through social and professional networks, training workshops, workspaces, and public seminars. A key offering of MCFA membership is the fortnightly team meeting, which is run by members of the Academy on a rotating schedule and includes a paper presentation designed to foster interdisciplinary knowledge by leveraging the broad range of disciplines represented within the Academy. Additional activities include workshops on research methods and employment options, the opportunity to run brown-bag sessions to gain feedback on research ideas, monthly social activities and annual retreats.

In addition to this, the Academy provides graduate researchers with valuable mentoring, assistance with publications, research output and academic development. Academy members have high visibility in University of Melbourne engagement and community relations, some examples of which include the Climate Talks podcast and various thought leadership pieces published on University outlets and beyond.

"The MCF Academy has enhanced my research by giving me that space to interact with people from very different disciplines. Bringing together diverse ideas and people into the room allows me and my research to thrive because it opens my eyes to problems and solutions that I didn't think about."

— Navam Niles, MCF Academy Fellow and PhD candidate, School of Geography, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences

Australia Awards Fellowship programs



In 2025, MCF concluded its second round of an Australia Awards fellowship program, funded by DFAT, in partnership with the Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC), aimed at improving climate outcomes in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Fellowship program brought 15 fellows from across the Asia-Pacific region to Samoa for a week-long capstone intensive rounding out the 'Advancing Climate Adaptation, Resilience and Just Transitions in the Indo-Pacific' program.

In 2025, MCF was awarded a \$500,790 grant to coordinate a fourth round of the program, titled 'Enhancing climate, energy and health resilience across the Pacific and Caribbean', which commenced in 2026.

"I'm able to learn from my mentors, the lecturers. The activities that we are doing builds knowledge and understanding on areas that we need to look at in terms of climate change adaptation and mitigation."

— William Nunufana, Australia Awards Fellow and Senior Climate Change Officer, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology, Solomon Islands

Contributing to a sustainable Melbourne

MCF is committed to ensuring a safe, healthy and climate-positive place for our students, staff and communities here in Melbourne and abroad.

We have ongoing links with the City of Melbourne to advise and collaborate on climate mitigation and adaptation measures, partnering with them in 2024 to present a climate leadership discussion as part of Melbourne Connect Innovation Week.

We work with equally driven and ambitious institutions to compare and contribute advice on creating sustainable research, teaching programs and campuses, such as Cambridge Zero.

MCF regularly consults with the Sustainability Strategy team. In 2025, Deputy Director Associate Professor Ben Neville worked closely with them in the development of the Sustainability Plan 2030 refresh, as well as on a range of other implementation activities, including procurement and air travel emissions.

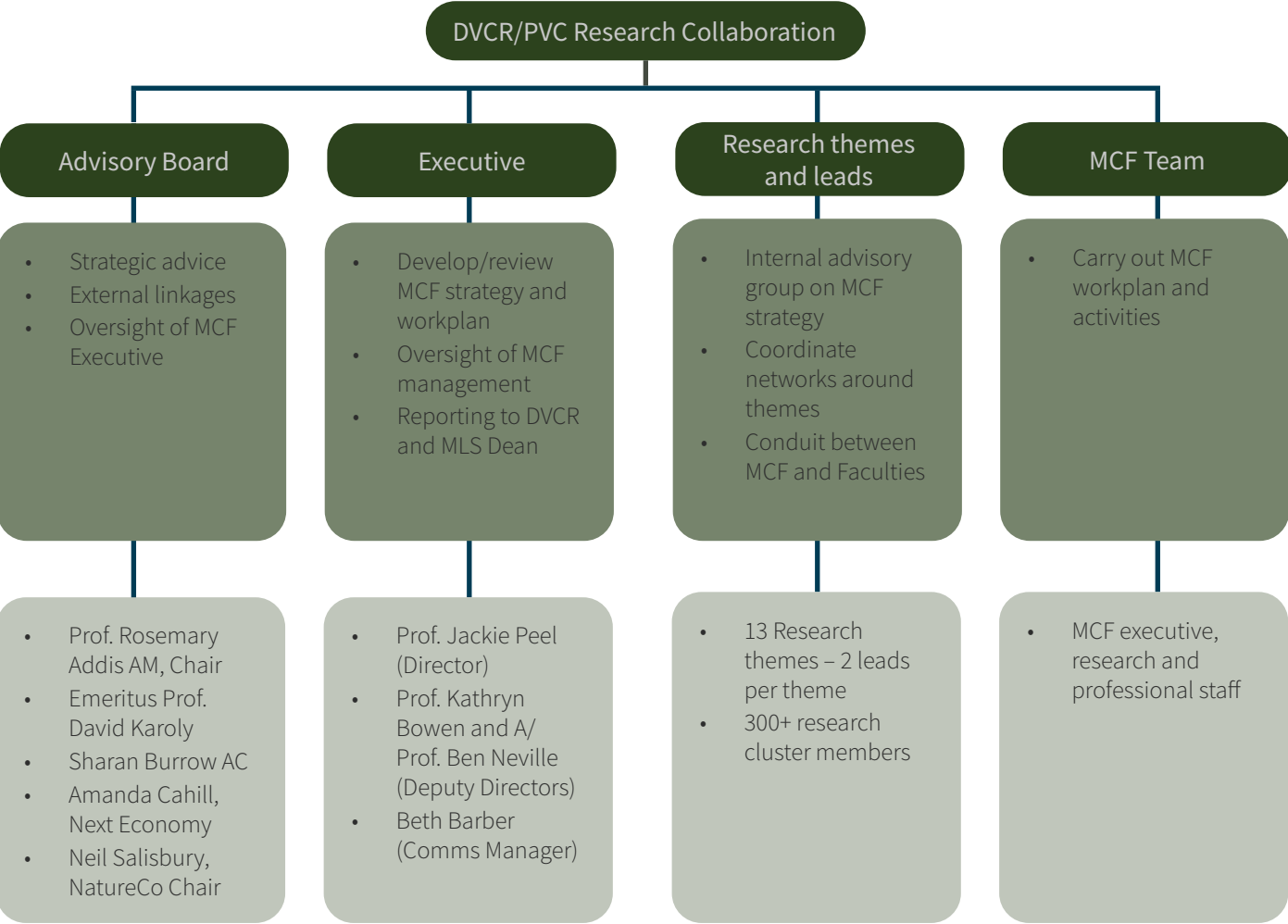
The MCF team came second in the University's 2025 Green Impact program, contributing to sustainable change across the University of Melbourne and beyond and Dr Joanne Burns sits on the Sustainability Advocates Group, which connects staff from across the University to contribute to and shape a more sustainable university community.



Governance and management

Governance and management bodies

MCF's governance and management has evolved over the past five years to meet growing needs. The current MCF governance and management structure is summarised below.



Reporting to DVCR and PVC Research Collaboration

As a strategic initiative under the Advancing Melbourne 2030 strategy, Melbourne Climate Futures has regularly reported on its activities to University Executive and University Council.

The DVCR and PVC Research Collaboration provide regular oversight of MCF activities and delivery against its strategic objectives, as MCF's funding is presently sourced from the DVCR portfolio. The MCF Executive team provides bi-monthly progress reports to the DVCR and PVC Research Collaboration, along with the Dean of MLS (as MCF's host faculty), and also meets with the PVC Research Collaboration to discuss this reporting on a monthly basis.

Advisory Board

The MCF Advisory Board was established in 2023. Its functions are to:

- Provide advice on the development of research projects
- Share insights into the business, political and competitive environments that may impact MCF
- Promote the interests of MCF externally, including making introductions to potential partners
- Identify potential financial support for MCF in the private and public sectors
- Provide other strategic advice on matters raised by the Director.

The MCF Advisory Board meets on a quarterly basis.

A fifth Board member during 2023 and 2024, Ms Karrina Nolan, is a descendant of the Yorta Yorta people and an experienced organiser and manager of complex programs and initiatives in Aboriginal communities, including Original Power and the First Nations Clean Energy Network. Ms Nolan is departing the Board in 2025 due to her extensive other commitments and the Board will consider recruitment of a replacement member.

Executive

The MCF Executive consists of the Director and the two Deputy Directors of the initiative, supported by the MCF Manager, Mr Anthony Stark, and the Communications Manager, Ms Beth Barber. The MCF Executive has primary responsibility for developing and reviewing the MCF Strategy and annual workplans and reporting on progress to the DVCR/PVC Research Collaboration and MCF host faculty, MLS. It also oversees implementation of strategic plan objectives through the work of the MCF team and broader UoM climate research ‘ecosystem’ (see Figure 1 [p.7]).



Rosemary Addis AM - Chair
Globally recognised director and strategist at the forefront of innovation and investment for impact in the climate and sustainability field.



Sharan Burrow AC
Global advocate for human rights, climate action and Just Transition and former General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation



Amanda Cahill
CEO of The Next Economy with over two decades' experience working across Australia, Asia and the Pacific to create positive change on issues as diverse as economic development, public health, gender equality and climate adaptation



David Karoly
Emeritus Professor and Councillor, Climate Council, Australia and former Leader of the Earth Systems and Climate Change Hub in the Australian Government's National Environmental Science Program, based in CSIRO



Neil Salisbury
Entrepreneur and sustainability leader with over 25 years of international experience in climate and energy technologies, environmental markets, sustainable finance and broader ESG issues.

Research themes and leads

A key strategic objective of MCF has been to create a University-wide platform for leveraging the breadth and depth of Melbourne's climate research capability, convening power and partnerships for meaningful impact on the global challenge of climate change.

In order to activate this platform, MCF established a series of Research Themes led by paired senior and junior academics within different Faculties. The now 13 Research Themes convene interdisciplinary networks of researchers around their theme area and provide a conduit between Faculty climate researchers and the central MCF initiative.

Research Theme leads meet quarterly with the MCF team to provide updates on their activities, to discuss proposals for projects or events and to input advice on avenues for facilitating engagement with Faculty researchers and MCF. The members of different themes and the MCF team, along with other members of the University with interests in climate research, also collectively take part in the Climate Futures Research Cluster which meets bi-monthly, in person and online, to familiarise attendees with the breadth of climate research going on across the University and to discuss climate issues of the day of broad interest to the membership.

MCF Team

The MCF Team of academic and professional staff constitutes the ‘engine’ for carrying out the MCF workplan and activities. It also supports research capacity building, administration, communications and events for the wider University climate research ecosystem.

Academic Team



Jacqueline Peel
Director



Kathryn Bowen
Deputy Director, Knowledge Translation and Policy Impact



Ben Neville
Deputy Director, Strategic Partnerships and Community Impact



Simon O'Connor
Head of the Sustainable Finance Hub



Janine Felson
Enterprise Fellow



Lily O'Neill
Senior Research Fellow



Belle Workman
Senior Research Fellow



Stephanie Campbell
Research Fellow



Arthur Wyns
Research Fellow



Suzanne Varrall
Laureate Research Fellow



Roanna McClelland
Laureate Research Fellow



Simon Batterbury
MCF Academy Convenor



Kelvin Say
MCF Academy Convenor



Rebekkah Markey-Towler
Research Fellow



Liz Stevens
Program Manager



Sophie Cullen
Research Assistant

Professional Team



Beth Barber
Communications Manager



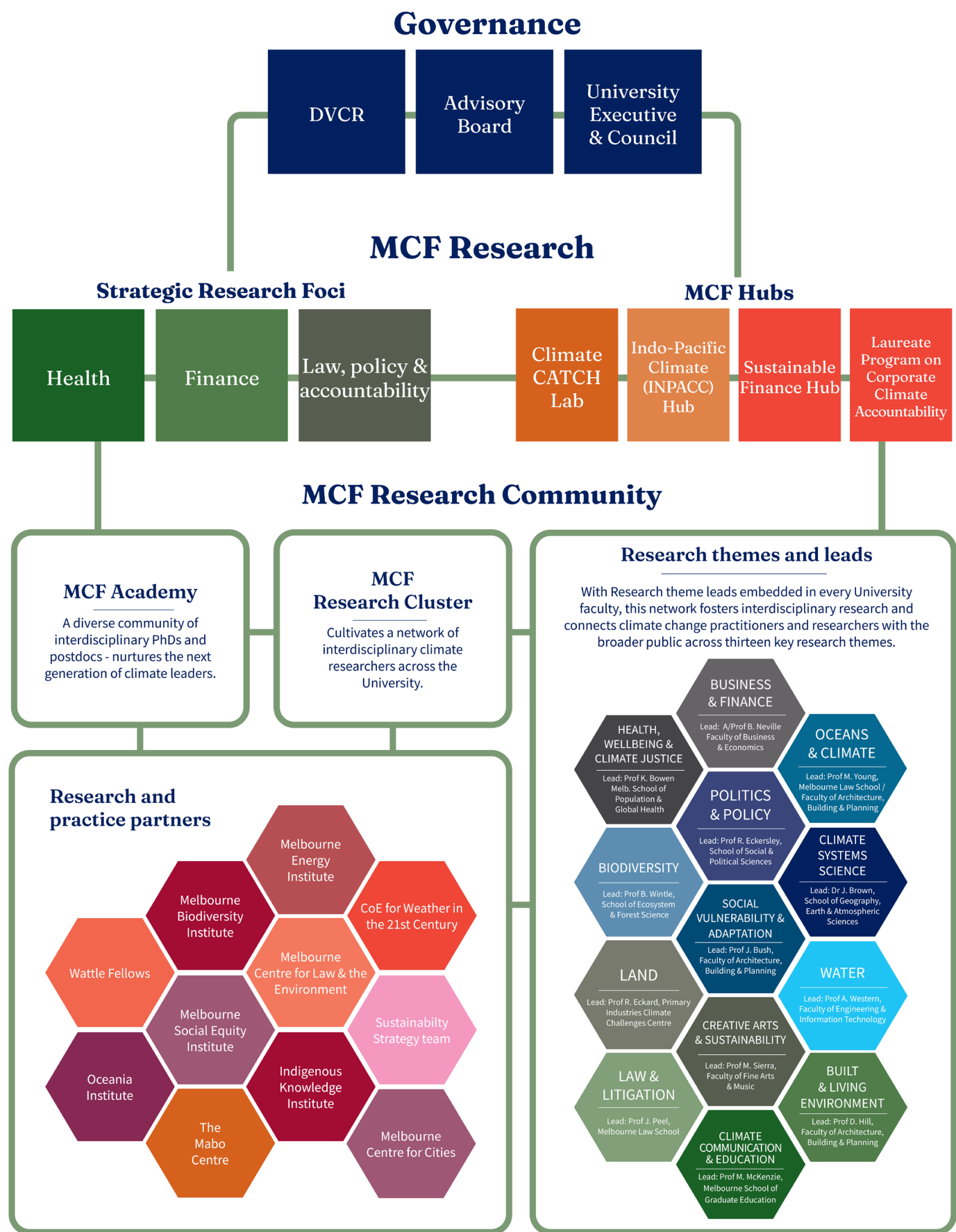
Joanne Burns
Administrator and Project Support Officer



Philippa Garrard
Administrator supporting special programs



Claudia Ghoundar
Events Officer



Financial performance

In 2021, MCF was allocated a five-year funding envelope (2021–2025) of A\$7.5 million. From 2021 to 2025, we have employed a conservative and responsible financial management strategy while building the profile of the group with internal and external stakeholders, funding crucial climate start-up initiatives and delivering world-class research.

In addition to the University-allocated budget provided by DVCR, MCF has been proactive in seeking and securing A\$24.2 million of external funding for both MCF and interdisciplinary University research, amplifying our overall impact and reputation.

MCF has used the available resources to focus on developing strategic interdisciplinary pillars, such as finance, health, policy and partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region. The activities and initiatives that serve these pillars, such as the Sustainable Finance Hub, the Indo-Pacific Climate (INPACC) Hub, and the Climate CATCH Lab, were designed to easily scale up as our resources increase, thereby building long-term capabilities and impact for the University of Melbourne.

MCF has demonstrated effective financial management in balancing resource allocation and impact over the last five years. Our final five-year budget position at the end of 2025 will be a small overrun; this deviates by 4.4 per cent from the allocated budget.

EXPENSES						
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total 2021–2024
Salaries						
	609,628	839,695	1,024,254	1,018,331	1,183,704	6,332,101
Research-enabling expenditure						
CRX	400,000	288,939	0	139,047	250,000	1,077,986
Travel & partnership development	5,446	77,727	44,634	34,634	43,333	205,774
Other	6,448	31,816	35,816	47,256	91,554	212,890
TOTAL	1,183,381	1,678,038	1,595,550	1,803,190	1,568,592	7,828,751



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—
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