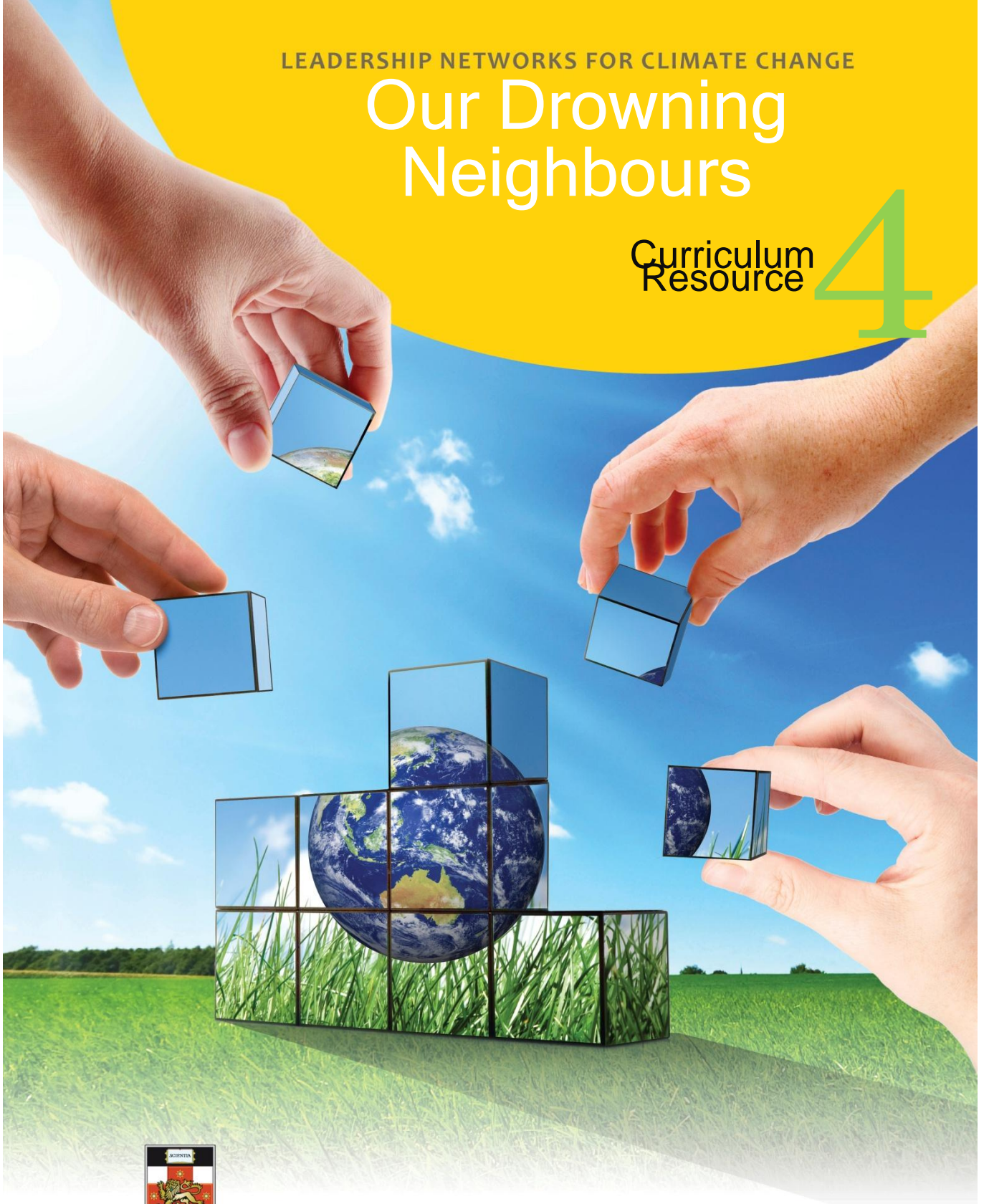


LEADERSHIP NETWORKS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

# Our Drowning Neighbours

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**UNSW**  
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**AUSTRALIAN  
LEARNING  
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# Our Drowning Neighbours

The concept for a mock trial focusing on climate change  
& displacement

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## Themes

- Interdisciplinarity
- Cross-disciplinary collaboration
- Team teaching & learning
- Student-led learning

## Description

The network came up with the idea of holding a mock trial set in the future, dealing with the impacts of climate change on vulnerable Island states and addressing the question of responsibility of developed nations.

A network member from the Law faculty was immediately interested and displayed leadership in coordinating the mock trial working group and recruiting another member of the Law faculty (working in the area of climate change displacement) to help write a concept note covering the background 'story' of the trial, the issues it should cover, and ideas for players.

The mock trial working group included:

- 2 academics in law
- 1 practitioner & 2 academics from the faculty of arts and social sciences
- 2 Master level research students from the Institute of Environmental Studies
- 3 PhD students

The PhD students provided information from their climate change/policy theses, and the two Master level research students were given project briefs written by the Network Integrator to conduct essential background research to inform both sides of the mock trial.

Both decided on their own topics and conducted the research independently. This research was completed in Semester 1, 2011.

The concept note that eventuated was pitched to the ABC (unfortunately they did not take it up). After much rumination & discussion by the mock trial working group it was decided to scale down the event and try to make it into a classroom assignment.

Initial brainstorming proved that a climate change “game” would be more suitable than a mock trial, if the group were to produce a truly cross-disciplinary classroom exercise. Two brainstorming sessions produced an as-yet incomplete game, to be finalised at the end of 2011 for incorporation into courses in early 2012.

## Excerpts from student research papers...

“When considering whether Australia should be held responsible...we need to consider their role in the contributing to the problem of climate change. The most straightforward way to do this is by examining Australia’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. However, there are a number of different ways to view a country’s contribution ...”

From *How to achieve Climate Justice for low-lying Pacific islands*, research paper by Samantha Bones

“The outcome of the trial begins to turn on the issues of causation and accountability for the global impacts of Australia’s domestic and exported GHG emissions; and on the attribution of these impacts to failures of previous Australian governments to enact timely policy reforms....**this is a case of Coal Karma coming back to bite you**”.

From *Informing our drowning neighbours*, research paper by Philip Booth

## Reflections

*The Master level students were both excited that their research would be used, almost immediately, to inform a public event (as often these Master level research projects are read only by the Lecturer in charge of the Research course, and never used to inform policy or practise).*