

The Crawford Fund Annual Conference

Scholar Program - Speaker Bios

04 and 06 September 2023

(as they appear in the program)

Cathy Reade, Director of Outreach and NextGen Programs, Crawford Fund

Cathy is the Director of Outreach at the Crawford Fund and runs the suite of NextGen programs. She spent her early career working for a range of Canberra-based lobby groups. Cathy manages the Fund's outreach program; some fundraising activities; developed and manages a Crawford Fund Master Class in Communications for scientists in developing countries, and is passionate about the Fund's NextGen work to encourage young Australians in their study, careers and volunteering for food security. Cathy has served on the Board of the World Vegetable Center, and is currently on the Board of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics.

Belinda Nielsen, President, RAID Network

Belinda is President of the Researchers in Agriculture for International Development (RAID) Network, a program of the Crawford Fund which is also supported by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR). Belinda is a keen agricultural enthusiast, with particular interest in how the power of agriculture and collaborative thinking can be harnessed to help people. Belinda was formerly an ACIAR graduate officer in the soil and land management portfolio and is now Regional Soils Coordinator at NRM South in Tasmania.

The Hon John Anderson AC, Chair of the Crawford Fund, farmer and former Deputy Prime Minister

John Anderson has been a long-serving member of the Board of the Crawford Fund and has been Chair of the Board since 2017. He was recently appointed companion of the order of Australia (AC) in the Queen's Birthday 2022 Honours List for eminent service to rural and regional development, to leadership in international agricultural research and food security, to social commentary, and through contributions to not-for-profit organisations. Following a career in politics, John returned to farming and is active in the not-for-profit sector.

Dr Éliane Ubalijoro, CEO of the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and World Agroforestry (ICRAF)

Éliane Ubalijoro, PhD is Chief Executive Officer of the Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF) and Director General of ICRAF. An accomplished leader with a background in agriculture and molecular genetics, she serves on several boards and has been recognized for outstanding contributions in the areas of innovation, gender equity, and sustainable prosperity creation.

Dr Ubalijoro has been a professor of practice for public-private sector partnerships at McGill University since 2008, with research interests focusing on innovation, gender and sustainable development for prosperity creation. From 2021 to March 2023, she was the Executive Director of Sustainability in the Digital Age and the Canada Hub Director for Future Earth.

Dr Deirdre Lemerle, Crawford Fund Laos Program Mentor

Deirdre is an agricultural weed scientist who worked 25 years for DPI NSW and she led the Cropping Program of the Weeds Co-operative Research Centre for 10 years. Deirdre was the inaugural Director of the Graham Centre for Agricultural Innovation, an alliance which aimed to increase sustainable productivity for mixed farming systems. She is a member of the Crawford Fund's NSW Committee and is active in our Laos project which involved young Australian volunteers through the Australian Volunteer Program.

Jessica Fearnley, RAID Vice President

Jess works for the NSW Department of Primary Industries, and has been working in many areas of crop production and supply chain research in temperate fruits. As the cherry industry lead, Jess works with growers across NSW to improve crop yield, quality and market access. Jess received a Crawford Fund Student Award in 2018, and she has a keen interest in helping growers improve their climate adaptation through management practices and digital technology. As part of RAID, Jess works with grower groups around the globe improving crop production and adapting to climate change. Last year, Jess was named the Royal Agricultural Society 2022 NSW Rural Achiever.

Greta Stark, RAID Committee

Greta currently works for ACIAR, as a Graduate Research Officer. She is a soil scientist with an Honours in agriculture. Greta is passionate about the links between nutrition and agriculture, loves soil and legumes and has experience with AG4D volunteering in Fiji.

Dr James Quilty, Research Program Manager for Soil and Land Management, ACIAR

James is the Research Program Manager for Soil and Land Management. Prior to joining ACIAR, James worked at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), based in the Philippines for seven years. After completing his PhD, James worked with Forests New South Wales studying the impacts of managed pine forests on soil carbon and soil respiration in the central tablelands of NSW. He completed his PhD in Soil Science at the University of Sydney studying the soil health implications of organic amendments in conventional irrigated cotton systems in central western NSW.

Dr Warren Lee, Senior Nutrition & Food Systems Officer, Asia and the Pacific, UN FAO

Dr. Lee co-ordinates food systems and nutrition related policy, programmes and research in the Asia Pacific region. He supports countries to implement food systems and nutrition related programmes. Dr. Lee is also interested in undertaking scientific and implementation researches to generate evidence-based nutrition policies and programmes. While working at FAO headquarters, Rome (2012-18), Dr. Lee headed the Nutrition Assessment and Scientific Advice Group at the Nutrition and Food Systems Division, FAO. He coordinated programmes on nutrition assessment, human nutrient requirements and Codex scientific advice on nutrition.

Dr Elena Martin-Avila, Assistant Director, Agricultural Development and Food Security Section and 2015 Conference Scholar

Elena works for the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. She was one of our 2015 Crawford Fund scholars, and a volunteer for an AVID assignment in Samoa as a tissue culture officer/advisor while working as a postdoctoral Fellow at the ARC Centre of Excellence for Translational Photosynthesis in Canberra where she explored approaches to improve the catalytic efficiency of the carbon dioxide fixing enzyme, Rubisco.

Dr Vivienne Anthony, Senior Science Advisor, Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture

Viv has a special interest in innovation, entrepreneurship, and plant breeding for crop improvement and food security in developing countries. Her current work focuses on demand-led breeding for smallholder farmers and their value chains in sub-Saharan Africa. Viv was Head of Crop Enhancement Research at Zeneca, and Global Head of Crop Protection Product Development & Regulatory Affairs for Seeds and Biotechnology at Syngenta. She spent her early research years in fungicide invention and is a named inventor on over 25 patents. She has a Ph.D. in plant pathology and crop improvement from the University of Wales, Bangor, and a Master's in Business Management from Boston University. Viv is also an Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Western Australia's Institute of Agriculture.

Larissa Mullet, Communication Coordinator, The Crawford Fund

Larissa has been working with the Crawford Fund since 2016 as part of the communications and outreach team. She highly recommends working in Australia's environmental and agricultural sectors if you want a diverse, rewarding and interesting career.

DAY TWO

Mike Foley, Journalist, The Age and the Sydney Morning Herald

Mike Foley is the climate and energy correspondent for The Age and The Sydney Morning Herald, based in Parliament House. Prior to writing for the Age/SMH, Mike was the National Reporter in Parliament House for the then Fairfax Ag Media. Mike has been to India on a Crawford Fund journalist visit and has regularly reported on agriculture for development.

Dr Anika Molesworth, Crawford Fund NSW Committee, RAID Network

Anika, a member of the RAID Network, is a recognised thought-leader of agro-ecological systems resilience and international farming development. With a passion for rural communities and healthy ecosystems, she is committed to help create sustainable and vibrant rural landscapes now and for the future. Anika was a former Crawford Fund scholar and volunteer and sits on the Fund's NSW Committee. She is a Founding Director of Farmers for Climate Action and also the author of the book, Our Sunburnt Country. Anika lives and works on her family's farm near Broken Hill.

Michael Scobie, RAID Committee

Michael is a member of RAID and has been involved in research for development projects in South and South East Asia for the past nine years. He has degrees in biological science and environmental engineering and is currently writing his PhD on digital technology adoption by coffee farmers in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. His background is in water management with a focus on energy and water efficiency in irrigated cropping systems.

Dr Tristan Armstrong, Senior Sector Specialist, Agricultural Development and Food Security, DFAT

Tristan Armstrong is Senior Sector Specialist from The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. He followed an evolutionary genetics pathway to international agriculture for development.

Megan Williams, RAID Capacity Building Team

Megan is an early to mid-career researcher currently completing her Master's of Science. The research of her Masters was completed in Switzerland in 2022 focusing on disease control with biological seed treatments and soil drench alternatives to synthetic chemistry. She also works full time with Syngenta in a technical role for their Vegetable seeds division. She has worked on numerous projects throughout the last few years in developing countries mainly remotely. From 2020-2023, she has been volunteering as a Client Lead for a "Seeds for Impact Program" aiming to support and develop the business needs and goals of a seed company in Ghana. She has also been involved with VNUA and Australian volunteers on projects from 2020-2023 primarily as a research mentor and research support coordinator with Vietnam. Megan has been an active member of RAID for just over 5 years. Throughout her career she has worked in various technical roles with seeds either in the field or in laboratories in Australia, Europe and China. Her focus and love is biological disease control in both broadacre and horticulture. She also loves hiking in her spare time.

Mikayla Hyland-Wood, RAID Committee

Mikayla currently works for ACIAR as a Graduate Research Officer. She became passionate about AR4D when undertaking research in Tonga and PNG through university.

Bethany Smith, WorldFish

Bethany Smith is a 2023 Crawford Fund Scholar! As part of her studies at James Cook University, she was also awarded a 2022 Student Award for a project in the Solomon Islands assessing risk within social-ecological systems. Titled, using capacity building to operationalise a spatial decision support tool, guiding resilient livelihood development in Solomon Islands, her work is part of an ACIAR project.

Ollie Gales, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Ollie works in Climate Adaptation and Finance in the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water. He is a Rhodes Scholar and Crawford Fund 2019 Student Awardee. His passion is to contribute to international and cross-cultural policy and governance, to make tangible differences and create frameworks for public good. Policy and governance have the potential to make real advances towards combating world issues in a way that is sustainable, ethical and socially inclusive. He is continuing my journey armed with commitment, courage and energy to further his skills, knowledge and experience to play a part in delivering sustainable development for communities and countries around the world.

In addition to the speakers and chairs listed above, we would like to thank the members of RAID who will be helping with facilitating the Scholar Activity Sessions, including:

Aditya Baxi

After working in kitchens around the world, Aditya is currently pursuing masters in global food and agriculture at the Uni of Adelaide. He now works towards understanding the complete supply chain with particular interest in Agronomy, AgResearch and Food Policy.

Camilla Humphries

Camilla works in Research and Development for the Australian Horticultural Industry. She is an avid traveller and is dedicated to increasing agricultural production efficiencies, minimising food waste and improving accessibility to food for developing countries.

Anna Mackintosh

Anna is on RAID's Central Committee and is passionate about agriculture for international development to achieve food security through international and cross-cultural mechanisms. Since she was a Crawford Fund Conference Scholar in 2019, Anna has been a scholar mentor and speaker throughout the Scholar Program. Whilst studying a Bachelor of Agricultural Science (Honours), she also received a Crawford Fund Student Award to travel to Timor-Leste to work on a project targeting improved maternal and child nutrition through nutrition-sensitive agriculture.

Anna is currently working as a Senior Policy Officer at the Department of Industry, Science and Resources in the Strategic Policy Division. Prior to this, she was a Program Support Officer at ACIAR in the Social Systems program. Anna is also a Keynote Listener for this year's conference.

Bridget Mullany

Bridget is a PhD candidate at the University of Technology, Sydney. She is a passionate social researcher with an interest in small scale fisheries and sustainable livelihoods. Her current PhD project is investigating the impact of coral reef restoration on livelihoods in the Philippines.

Alex Russell

Alex grew up on an irrigated grain farm in the Riverina region of NSW. After completing a Bachelor of Environmental Science and Management, he gravitated back to working in agriculture in various roles from farmhand to operations manager. More recently, Alex has pursued work in international agricultural development, managing projects in India and Vietnam, something he maintains a passion for. In aid of this, he completed a Master of Agricultural Sciences with a strong focus on extension.