



University of  
Western Sydney

INSTITUTE FOR  
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# 2015 Seminar Series

INSTITUTE FOR CULTURE AND SOCIETY

## Exploring Indigenous Peoples' Experiences of Wildfire Evacuation: First Nations Wildfire Evacuation Partnership

***Dr Tara K McGee***

Date

Thursday 30 April

Time

11.30am – 1pm

Venue

EB.2.21 Parramatta (South)  
Campus

### Abstract

Each year, thousands of Canadians are evacuated from their homes due to wildfires. Between 1980 and 2007, almost 1/3 of wildfire evacuations involved Indigenous communities. In 2011, 35 First Nations and Metis communities were evacuated for up to three weeks due to smoke, close proximity of the fire, and power outages due to wildfires. In 2012, a team of researchers started to develop the First Nations wildfire evacuation partnership to examine how First Nations are affected by wildfire evacuations and identify ways to reduce the negative impacts of wildfire evacuations on First Nations people and communities. The partnership includes researchers, eight First Nations communities across Canada that have been evacuated due to recent wildfires, and representatives from government and non-government organisations involved in administering or providing support during evacuations of First Nations communities. In this presentation I will introduce First Nations and wildfire evacuations in Canada and describe the First Nations wildfire evacuation partnership. I will also present initial results from one First Nations community in the province of Alberta, which provide insights into how evacuations are carried out in First Nations communities, residents' evacuation experiences, and factors that positively and negatively affect residents' evacuation experiences.

### Biography

**Tara McGee** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Earth & Atmospheric Sciences at the University of Alberta, Canada. Her research focuses on individual, community, and organisational responses to environmental hazards. A major area of research focus is wildfire risk perception and mitigation activities by homeowners and local governments. Tara is also a team member of the Scientific Diversity, Scientific Uncertainty and Risk Mitigation Policy and Planning project based at ICS and led by Jessica Weir.