



understanding climate science, that they can make sense of its implications through sophisticated socio-economic analyses, that they fearlessly engage politically with varied injustices, and that they are adept at organising themselves to take critical and reflective collective climate action. Contrary to conservative politicians such as Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison who argues that we need 'more learning, and less activism, in schools', it is clear that young people are learning a dynamic suite of skills and applied knowledge through striking from school (Menzie-Ballantyne, 2019).



[Sign at Melbourne School Strike 4 Climate, November 2018.](#)

Photo by Julian Meehan for [School Strike](#) on Flickr, CC-BY 2.0. Slightly cropped.

Not only have young people involved in the strikes been learning, they have been educating others, from their peers, to their parents, teachers, communities and politicians (see e.g. School Strike 4 Climate, 2019; Thackeray et al., 2020). The young people at the forefront of this movement have been adamant that they do not want adults to find hope in kids, rather, they want adults to act alongside them (Curnow & Helferty, 2019). But it is unclear to what extent the 'adult world' in general has increased their engagement (knowledge, concern, action) with climate change because of young people striking, with Greta Thunberg stating at the end of 2019 that the school strikes have so far failed because emissions continue to rise (Harvey, 2019).

Beyond politicians and adults in general, the school climate strikes pose an existential challenge to schools and the education system. The very notion that children feel they need to strike from school regarding climate inaction is a deep challenge to the presumptions that education, and schooling in particular, have children's best interests at heart and are helping create a future in which today's young people, and their co-entangled biomes, are able to flourish (e.g. Whitehouse & Larri, 2019; Thunberg et al., 2019).

While environmental educators are likely to suggest this indicates the need to 'mainstream' environmental education, it is not self-evident that we can see the school strikes as a clear 'win' that vindicates our efforts to increase people's, and especially children's, climate literacy and action



competence. Mobilising global social movements, having a voice at the United Nations, becoming *Time's* Person of the Year, and walking out of school have rarely, if ever, been aspirations or actions advocated by environmental educators to children. Have we been selling children short by focusing on their scientific literacy and over-emphasising the value of 'little things' they can do to help them feel hopeful in the short term? Given we are rapidly racing towards a barely-habitable planet, are we guilty of de-politicising climate change and dis-empowering young people in what will be the fight for their lives?

This CFP is seeking papers exploring the educational dimensions of the school strikes. We believe that the school climate strikes offer many challenges and opportunities for environmental education research and practice, and envisage that a broad range of topics, questions, approaches, theories and angles may have a place in this special issue.

We welcome various kinds of articles (e.g. media analyses, empirical work, theoretical explorations, methodological experimentation), work from a range of disciplines, as well as multi-, inter-, trans- and a-disciplinary approaches, and articles engaging with a range of ontological, theoretical, conceptual and/or methodological approaches (such as Indigenous philosophies, social movement theory, posthumanism, geophilosophy, new materialism, child/youth-framed research, postqualitative, etc). We encourage papers that move away from a deficit model of young people's environmental knowledge, concern and action and which emphasise their sophisticated, nuanced and capacious abilities as informed, savvy and agile social activists (Spyrou, 2020; Bowman, 2019).

In line with the school strikes' ethos of empowering young people to have their voice heard, we encourage young people, early career researchers and research students to submit proposals. We also encourage researchers to consider co-authoring their papers with youth climate strikers, if possible and appropriate (for ideas see Verlie and CCR15, 2018; Rousell, Cutter-Mackenzie & Foster, 2018). And, we are also keen to support school and university strikers to publish in this special issue, so we are open to discussing with potential authors what formats might make this possible.

Please contact Dr. Blanche Verlie (lead Guest Editor) if you have any questions or ideas that you would like to discuss.

Timeline

- Abstracts/proposals of no more than 300 words emailed to Blanche Verlie at blanche.verlie@sydney.edu.au (please copy in Alicia Flynn at alicia.flynn@unimelb.edu.au) by July 27, 2020
- Authors notified of acceptance into the special issue by August 17, 2020
- Full papers due November 23, 2020
- Papers will be published online first as soon as they are accepted for publication, with publication of the full issue anticipated for the end of 2021.

About the journal

The *Australian Journal of Environmental Education* is an internationally peer-reviewed academic journal which publishes papers and reports on all aspects of environmental education. It presents information and argument which stimulates debate about educational strategies that enhance the kinds of awareness, understanding and actions which will promote environmental and social justice. For more information about the journal, article types and the peer-review process, please see the journal's website at <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/australian-journal-of-environmental-education>



About the editors

Dr. Blanche Verlie is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Sydney Environment Institute at the University of Sydney, living and working on the unceded Country of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. Blanche is a climate change educator, and her research explores young people's emotional and affective experiences of learning about and with climate change, and climate change engagement strategies more broadly. Blanche works with feminist and more-than-human theories. You can find her research at https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Blanche_Verlie and more information here <http://sydney.edu.au/environment-institute/person/blanche-verlie/>. Contact Blanche at blanche.verlie@sydney.edu.au

Alicia Flynn is an educator, activist and doctoral candidate at the Graduate School of Education (University of Melbourne). She lives, works, and learns in the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, and comes from the freshwater biomes of sovereign Gunaikurnai land and sea country. Her doctoral research with an inner-urban, creek-side high school, is a deep inquiry with more-than-human bodies into pedagogies for these precarious place-times, chronicled through the Common World Research Collective's microblog series <http://commonworlds.net/what-are-the-stories-and-methods-that-might-contribute-to-researching-our-ways-out-of-the-ruins-of-the-anthropocene/>. Alicia is currently the Pedagogical Leader of a cluster of early childhood education centres, co-designing play-full programs and mentoring early childhood educators to engage with children through pedagogies of intergenerational justice. Contact Alicia at alicia.flynn@unimelb.edu.au

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