

## History Seminar

*Dr Linden Ashcroft  
Senior Researcher*

*Centre for Climate Change (C3), Universitat Rovira i Virgili (URV)  
Avinguda de Remolins, 13–15, 43500, Tortosa, Spain*

### Uncovering Australia's climate history since European settlement

The climate of Australia is notoriously variable: we truly live in a country of droughts and flooding rains. Historical records offer an insight into past climatic events, helping us determine what is natural variability, and what is human-induced climate change.

In this presentation I will focus on the rescue of instrumental weather observations for southeastern Australia from 1788 to 1860. These “old numbers” can support documentary accounts of past weather and climate, and help to calibrate natural indicators of past change, such as tree rings and ice cores.

I will introduce some of our most dedicated 19<sup>th</sup> century weather observers, including publicans, governors, painters and doctors. Records taken by these men are the earliest numerical information we have on the temperature and rainfall in Australia's most highly populated region. A good example is Algernon Belfield, a landowner from Eversleigh, near Armidale, NSW (data record 1877 to 1922).

Using their data along with supporting documentary evidence, I will then look into some of the more interesting climate events that occurred during the first 72 years of colonial settlement in Australia.

### Linden Ashcroft Bio

Linden is a climate researcher who completed her PhD at the University of Melbourne's School of Earth Sciences in early 2014. Her research focuses on the rescue and analysis of historical weather observations in Australia and Europe, to improve our understanding of past, present and future climate. She is also a qualified science communicator, and have shared her passion for “old weather” through channels including BBC World Radio, *The Conversation* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Linden is currently completing a post-doctoral position at the Centre for Climate Change Universitat Rovira i Virgili in southern Catalonia, Spain.

For publications and more information, visit [lindenashcroft.com](http://lindenashcroft.com) or get in touch on Twitter @lindenashcroft.