



Members in Profile

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Miriam Williams

I'm currently a PhD candidate in Human Geography at the University of Newcastle, NSW. In 2004 I started a Bachelor of Development studies at Newcastle, majoring in urban and regional development. My interest in geography was sparked by an engagement with the complex and interconnected nature of the political, social, cultural, economic and spatial aspects of society through my undergraduate geography courses.

Geography offered ways for me to think critically about how I wanted to be involved in social justice and social change. I

completed honours in 2007, looking at the discourses surrounding the supply of Fair Trade coffee in Australia and was fortunate to receive first class honours and the university medal.



In 2008 I was inspired to complete a PhD in geography because of the hopeful writing of JK Gibson-Graham and the fascinating research of my honours supervisors, Dr Kathy Mee and Professor Pauline M^cGuirk. I began to think about the potential of cities to be sites of justice and care. My current PhD research looks at everyday practices of care and justice through a case study of three different community organisations in Newtown and Enmore in Sydney. I am particularly interested in how community organisations are sites in cities where people can encounter one another and explore different ways of doing/being/thinking urban life. How are people changing the way they live to care for the environment and marginalized people in cities?

In 2008-2010 I became involved in the Institute of Australian Geographers (IAG) as the postgraduate representative. As part of my role on council, I co-coordinated two postgraduate workshops at the annual conference of the IAG that helped connect and resource postgraduate geographers. In 2009-2011 I was also the Geographical Society of NSW postgraduate representative. The highlight of these experiences has been getting to know other postgraduate students and academics in Australia, and around the world. It's always exciting to hear about the range of work that geographers are doing—from growing community economies, to thinking through housing policy.

In 2012 I will complete my PhD and continue to work in geography. I am encouraged by the emphasis in geography on questioning and investigating the political and the passion geographers have to vision more just outcomes for the future. Geographers are often motivated by

values of justice, sustainability and care, placing questions of ethics and the politics of research practice at the forefront of their academic writing and practice. As a discipline, geographers have much to offer in regards to thinking through how people might collectively address living more just, caring and sustainable lives. That's why I'm a geographer.