



## Member in profile

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### Sophie-May Kerr



I'm a PhD student in the School of Geography and Sustainable Communities at the University of Wollongong (UOW). I also completed my BSc (Hons) at UOW in 2014. I became a member of the Geographical Society of NSW in 2014 and in 2015 I joined council as the student representative. I am also the President of the UOW Human Geography Society. I really enjoy opportunities to engage with other geographers and like-minded people through the events we organise through societies.

I've always had an interest in different cultures, places and communities. Geography was my favourite subject at school and I had a fantastic teacher at the time, which (along with some pretty awesome fieldtrips) really sparked my interest. I enjoy the diversity of topics and research areas within human geography. I have always enjoyed working on research projects, however it wasn't until my honours year that I decided I'd like to continue further into academia rather than graduate and head into the public sector as I'd originally planned.

One of my favourite parts of research has always been fieldwork – again with the opportunity to get out and engage with the community and learn so much from others experiences. I am also fortunate to have my PhD funded by the Global Challenges Program at UOW. This has given me the chance to travel to international conferences and also to meet with academics from different disciplines to discuss my research. With society facing so many challenges, I believe interdisciplinary research plays an increasingly important role in the way we approach these issues.

My research interests are primarily urban focused. As our cities face challenges relating to climate change and a growing urban population, I'm interested in exploring everyday living practices that may address high carbon and space intensive lifestyles. In my honours research I

explored the everyday low-carbon transport cultures of Chinese migrants living in Sydney. My current doctoral research focuses on the experiences of families living with children in apartments in Sydney, exploring how people negotiate sharing space and materials. I hope this research will provide insights into how apartments might be made an attractive long-term residential option for families.

A highlight of my time as a postgraduate student has been the opportunity to tutor several undergraduate subjects. I always enjoy facilitating discussions around issues relating to social or environmental justice and watching the way students start to re-think the world around them becoming more critical in their thoughts. Outside of my PhD life, I volunteer as a Community Educator with a local volunteer based organisation in Wollongong, SCARF (Strategic Community Assistance to Refugee Families), delivering co-presentations alongside community members from a refugee background. The aim of these presentations is to help change attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers through an increased understanding of the human experience. These teaching components of what I do are something I am really passionate about and I hope to continue educating, alongside doing research work into the future.