

# What's it like to be a member of the Centre for Marine Socioecology (CMS)?

By Ana Catarina Serra Goncalves

After relocating from across the globe to Hobart to start my PhD, I also became a CMS member. Joining this network of talented and friendly individuals soon became one of the most important aspects of my life as a PhD student.

PhD life is a rollercoaster, it is filled of ups and downs. Therefore, as a PhD student to be able to have a fulfilling and enriching experience, it is important to be part of a lab and/or community that makes you feel included and that encourages the development of your skills by promoting a wide range of opportunities.

I used to feel like I was in a constant battle with myself trying to learn and to do as much as possible alone. Asking others for help felt like a sign of weakness to me. But, it is impossible to know everything. It is crucial to share our scientific knowledge and skills with other collaborators and colleagues. CMS played (and plays) an important role in making me not only feel included, but also to show that **interdisciplinary work is the key** to succeed as a researcher. *Two heads are always better than one.*

Below I list some of the experiences that I was able to be a part of as a CMS member.

## Opportunities & Developing skills

- ***Future Seas Project.*** I was lucky to be a part of ***Future Seas***, an interdisciplinary collaboration between CMS and over 100 researchers from multiple backgrounds and from different career stages (e.g., psychologists, public health and education experts, philosophers, ecologists, oceanographers, climate modelers, economists, social scientists, engineers, information and communications technology researchers, and social scientists, as well as governance, law and policy experts). Working with people from different backgrounds was an extremely enriching experience personally and professionally.
- ***CMS summer school for Interdisciplinary skills for equitable climate adaptation.*** This short course was one of the most insightful summer schools that I attended as an early research career. I was presented with new and crucial concepts such as adaptive capacity, and considering climate change adaptation and impacts with the lens of equity, trade-offs and conflict.
- ***CMS Twitter co-administrator.*** This role allows me to improve my communication skills, keeps me updated on new research and most importantly allows me to empower other researchers. One of the outcomes of this role was the successful organization of the recent CMS Twitter Conference.

## The community & people

- ***Inclusivity and Diversity.*** It is crucial to be able to work in an open-minded community. Workplaces that also advocate for inclusivity and diversity increase staff productivity and well-being. As a CMS member I was able to be a part of an Intersectionality Workshop “Walking in the Shoes of Others” and was able to attend the "Core Cultural Competency Program course from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies".
- ***Success and Failures.*** To be able to be around scientists that can freely discuss their science, not only accomplishments but also failures. Learning from mistakes is crucial to become a better scientist. If you haven't failed yet in academia, it is because you haven't pushed yourself enough. Not everything is full of roses, but if we support each other along the way, we will succeed.
- ***Regular students and staff meet-ups.*** As a PhD student it is important to feel included. And *CMS is the scientific community I needed to grow as a PhD student.*



**In summary**, joining CMS showed me that asking for help wasn't a weakness, and that it is in reality a strength that not only makes you a better researcher, but also helps you to thrive in your PhD experience. I highly recommend joining our community.

More information about the CMS Summer School Interdisciplinary skills for equitable climate adaptation:

<https://marinesocioecology.org/projects/cms-summer-school-2020/>

More information about the Future Seas Project:

<https://futureseas2030.org/>

More information about the CMS:

<https://marinesocioecology.org/>