Foreword

In a collaboration between RMIT and the University of New South Wales, the Citizen Science Project mobilised a league of enthusiastic citizen scientists to assist scientists from Australia’s leading universities.

This project, administered by RMIT University in collaboration with University of New South Wales, is one of the successful grants announced in 2017 under the Citizen Science Grants Round 1. The project started in May 2017 and completed in February 2021.

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Cover Image: Mary Myla Andamon.
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About the Project

The number of extreme hot days is predicted to increase significantly over the next few decades in all Australian cities with detrimental impacts on public health, mortality rates, energy demand and economy.

The urban heat island effect is an extensively documented climate phenomenon, and is prevalent in many Australian cities. Cities of concrete and stone, and roads paved with asphalt create heat islands that can be significantly hotter than temperatures in the surrounding suburban and rural areas.

Urban heat island effects create real problems for cities and for the people who live and work in them.

- They make life uncomfortable;
- Can lead to health problems such as heat stroke;
- Exaggerate airborne pollution by preventing pollution dispersing;
- Increase the energy use and air conditioning costs needed to keep our buildings cool inside;
- and intensify global warming.

Project aim

This project aimed to engage local councils and residents across Australia in the research process thereby increasing scientific literacy and understanding of scientific methods in urban climate research. The project also aimed to educate citizens about the factors influencing outdoor microclimate and assisted them in understanding, mitigating and adapting to extreme heat and local climate change. Through working with a number of citizens from five states and two territories, the project aimed to collect urban microclimate data across large temporal and spatial scales and also create public value with community participation in scientific research.
RMIT University
Sustainable Building Innovation Lab

SBi Lab focuses on the development of building systems, design methods, regulations and policies, and the effect of human behaviour on the performance of buildings and the surrounding environment.

Priya is the Director of the Sustainable Building Innovation Lab (SBi Lab). She is a building scientist with extensive experience in energy and indoor environmental quality of buildings, urban climatology and urban thermal balance.

Professor Priya Rajagopalan

Myla practiced as an architect. She is Senior Lecturer in Construction Management at the School of Property, Construction and Project Management, RMIT University. She teaches in the areas of construction, planning and design and building physics and specialises in thermal comfort, indoor environmental quality and urban climatology research.

Dr Mary Myla Andamon

UNSW Built Environment
High Performance Architecture

The High Performance Architecture Research Cluster aims to deliver research innovation in design, planning and management of high performance buildings and cities.

Mat Santamouris is the Anita Lawrence Professor of High Performance Architecture in the University of New South Wales in Australia. He is a past professor at the University of Athens, Greece and visiting Professor at the Cyprus Institute, Metropolitan University of London, Tokyo Polytechnic University, Bolzano University, Brunel University and National University of Singapore. Past President of the National Center of Renewable and Energy Savings of Greece.

Professor Mat Santamouris

Riccardo by training is a building engineer and he received a Ph.D. in Building Systems Engineering from Politecnico di Milano, Italy, in 2011. He joined UNSW Built Environment in February 2017. He is Senior Lecturer in the High Performance Architecture research cluster.

Dr Riccardo Paolini
Dr Ruwini Edirisinghe

Ruwini specialises in digital innovation (BIM), information and communication technologies (ICT) and smart technologies in building and construction field.

Dr Shamila Haddad

Shamila is an architect by training and holds a PhD in Architectural Sciences from the University of New South Wales (Australia). Her research expertise and interest relate to Building Performance, Environmentally Sustainable Design, Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ), Indoor Air Quality (IAQ), Thermal Comfort, Healthy, Effective and Innovative Learning Environments, Post Occupancy Evaluation of School Buildings, and Urban Heat Island mitigation technologies.

Andrew Carre

Andrew is Lecturer in the School of Property, Construction and Project Management. He teaches in the construction management and project management undergraduate and postgraduate programs.
Citizen Science

The term “citizen science” broadly describes public engagement in scientific research in collaboration with professional scientists. The citizens are volunteers who participate in data gathering to assist with a large scale research. This interaction of scientists with citizens allows for public education and engagement in science and research to increase the awareness of problems that affect communities. It also provides assistance for the researchers to collect more data and meaningful observations than they could on their own.

Citizen science has the ability to provide public with practical and real-life opportunities to learn and implement the scientific method to solve problems facing their communities. Studies have shown the positive impact of citizen science on the public’s scientific literacy.

Method

The project aim of engaging communities to measure heat island effect in Australia was achieved through:

• Development of low-cost sensors and measurement instrumentation that are easy to handle by citizen scientists.
• Development of training materials and measurement protocols and their deployment in public workshops.
• Engagement of 1200 citizen scientists from 21 local councils across Australia to aid in data collection process.
• Dissemination of data to the citizen scientists and to the general public via an open source database.

Project Outputs

1. Measurement kits used by citizen scientists in 55 outdoor microclimate field experiments conducted in January to March 2019 and November 2020 to February 2021.
2. Low-cost sensors and mobile app for citizen scientists to collect data through self directed experiments
3. Development of Citizen Science Urban Microclimate Project website which is the repository of collected data and where tools for analysis are available for citizen scientists. Webpage: citizenscienceproject.org.au
5. A UHI Mitigation Tool.
Resources
For Citizens

Resources were developed for citizens participating in the project, including instructional videos, tools, and guides.
Urban Heat Islands: An Introduction
Field Measurement: Instructions
A mobile application (app) was developed to record temperature-humidity data continuously for few days. Citizens can use the app by connecting to the sensor and perform microclimate experiments in locations of their choice. The location can range from their own backyard, in a park or on a concrete surface in their garden. The sensors are protected by a solar radiation shield.

Download the app for iPhones and Android phones here: citizenscienceproject.org.au/mobile-app
Sensor Data

The wide-scale and longitudinal microclimate data collected from citizen scientists’ sensor and app recordings are collated on the project website. The data is displayed as time series temperature-humidity graphs and is available at: citizenscienceproject.org.au/mobile-app/local-climate. Participants can compare the data that they’ve collected with participants from other areas in the country, as well as with several of the reference stations set up by the project team and the Bureau of Meteorology. The data can be further tuned with various filters. The information provides insights about the microclimate around participants’ neighbourhoods.

Four reference weather stations were installed in Victoria and NSW to record the local weather data. The weather stations record air temperature, relative humidity, wind speed, wind direction, air pressure, rain and hail amounts at five minutes interval. Citizen scientists can select these stations for comparing their data, while doing experiments using the sensor and mobile app.
A thermal comfort tool is developed using Universal Thermal Climate Index (UTCI). The UTCI is a thermal comfort indicator which can assess outdoor thermal conditions and provide good predictions of thermal sensation votes depending on outdoor meteorological conditions.

Citizens can calculate the UTCI of any location using the actual values of air temperature (Ta), mean radiant temperature (MRT), wind speed (va) and relative humidity (%RH). MRT can be estimated using the values of air temperature, globe temperature and wind speed using the Excel tool available at: citizenscienceproject.org.au/resources-for-citizens/thermal-comfort-tool.

**UTCI Calculator**

Using the air temperature, wind speed, MRT, relative humidity as inputs in the Excel UTCI - Tool Ver2 calculator, the calculated UTCI equivalent temperatures can be expressed in terms of thermal stress using the stress categories as shown on accompanying table:

**UTCI Tool**

The UTCI - Tool Ver2 Excel tool is available for download: citizenscienceproject.org.au/resources-for-citizens/thermal-comfort-tool.
Mitigation Tool

The Urban Heat Island Mitigation Tool provides visualisation of the mitigation strategies.

Citizens/councils can use the tool to identify the mitigation measures that can be applied to selected areas. This can be in the form of shading, introducing greenery, water bodies, wind break, etc.

The Mitigation Tool is available at: citizenscienceproject.org.au/mitigation-tool

Photo Credit: Mary Myla Andamon.
Development Alternatives

- Baseline
- Wind Break
- Shading
- Water
- Cool Materials
- All Interventions

UHI Mitigation Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Precinct Temperature</td>
<td>39.02°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min. Localised Temperature</td>
<td>19.85°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max. Localised Temperature</td>
<td>42.96°C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Max. Air Temperature Reduction

- Max. Average Precinct Temperature Reduction: 0.00°C
- Max. Localised Temperature Reduction: 0.00°C

Potential air temperature reduction of chosen development alternative.

Location Inspector

Air Temperature

Click a tile from the temperature overlay to see the specific temperature value.
Completed Experiments

More than 1,100 citizens participated in the 55 events conducted across Australia, contributing to 6,000 data points. Measurement locations were selected in each area depending on heat vulnerability characteristics such as demography, urban geometry, surface materials, presence of vegetation and exposure conditions. These measurements assisted citizens to have a thorough understanding of the parameters influencing the temperature, humidity, wind speed and surface temperature of an area. For example, the participation in this study helped citizens to understand how various materials behave in heat, such as, how hot artificial grass surfaces can become compared to natural grass surfaces; how hot rubber surfaces in children’s playgrounds can become on a hot day etc. In addition, the interactions with citizens provided scientists with valuable insights into how lay people would respond to scientific experiments. The measured data at each precinct is presented as local climate maps as shown in the next pages.
Below are the results and some images of citizen scientists performing experiments at ACT locations.

**Tuggeranong Community Centre**
8 February 2019

### URBAN HEAT ISLAND PROFILE
**Date:** 8 February 2019, **Time:** 1:00-3:00pm

**Tuggeranong Community Centre** |
245 Cowlishaw Street, Greenway ACT 2900

Reference meteorological (BoM) station: Tuggeranong, Station ID 070339 (air temperature at 2:00pm - 28.3°C)

The map illustrates the urban heat island (UHI) profile of the precinct. The colour represents UHI intensity, calculated by subtracting the air temperature of the reference meteorological station from the air temperature measured by the citizens at each location (black dot in the map) on the day and time specified above.
Canberra College Woden Campus
9 February 2019
Launceston Street, Phillip, ACT

URBAN HEAT ISLAND PROFILE
Date: 9 February 2019, Time: 1:00-3:00pm

Performing Arts Centre | Canberra College, Woden Campus, Phillip ACT 2606
Reference meteorological (8m) station: Canberra Airport ID 094928 [air temperature at 2:00pm - 23.4°C]

The map illustrates the urban heat island (UHI) profile of the precinct. The colour represents UHI intensity, calculated by subtracting the air temperature of the reference meteorological station from the air temperature measured by the citizens at each location (black dot in the map) on the day and time specified above.
New South Wales

Below are the results and some images of citizen scientists performing experiments at NSW locations.

**Blacktown Leisure Centre Stanhope**

16 February 2019
Stanhope Pkwy & Sentry Dr, Stanhope Gardens NSW 2768

Local climate map
Date: 16 February 2019. Time: 2:00-3:00pm

Blacktown Leisure Centre Stanhope | Stanhope Pkwy & Sentry Drive, Stanhope Gardens NSW 2768
Reference meteorological (BoM) station: Horsley Park, Station ID 067118 [air temperature at 2:30pm - 27.8°C]

The map illustrates the local climate in the precinct. The colour scale displays the differences in dry bulb air temperature between the reference point (start of the measurements) and the other points of data collection. The temperature from the reference BoM station provides the boundary conditions at the time of the measurements.
Canterbury - Bankstown - Wiley Park
1 March 2019
Canterbury Road, Wiley Park NSW 2195
Local climate map
Date: 27 February 2019, Time: 12:00 - 1:00 pm

The map illustrates the local climate in the precinct. The colour scale displays the differences in dry-bulb air temperature between the reference point (start of the measurements) and the other points of data collection. The temperature from the reference BOM station provides the boundary conditions at the time of the measurements.
Below are the results and some images of citizen scientists performing experiments at NT locations.

**Darwin Waterfront**
22 February 2021
Kitchener Drive, Darwin City NT 0800
Darwin Waterfront
23 February 2021
Kitchener Drive, Darwin City NT 0800
Below are the results and some images of citizen scientists performing experiments at Queensland locations.

**Brisbane Square Library**
11 March 2019
Brisbane City QLD 4000

**Local climate map**
Date: 11 March 2019, Time: 2:00-4:00pm

Brisbane Square Library, Brisbane City QLD 4000
Reference meteorological (BoM) station: Brisbane, Station ID 040913 [air temperature at 3:00pm - 29.3°C]

The map illustrates the local climate in the precinct. The colour scale displays the differences in dry-bulb air temperature between the reference point (start of the measurements) and the other points of data collection. The temperature from the reference BoM station provides the boundary conditions at the time of the measurements.
Brisbane - Eight Mile Plains
10 March 2019
Kaosiung Park, Eight Mile Plains QLD 4113
Below are the results and some images of citizen scientists performing experiments at South Australian locations.

**Unley Swimming Centre**
16 February 2019
Ethel Street, Forestville, SA 5035
The Joinery
17 February 2019
111 Franklin Street, Adelaide SA 5000

URBAN HEAT ISLAND PROFILE
Date: 17 February 2019, Time: 2:00 PM

Map illustrates the urban heat island (UHI) profile of the precinct. The colour represents UHI intensity, calculated by subtracting the air temperature of the reference meteorological station from the air temperature measured by the citizens at each location (black dot in the map) on the day and time specified above.

Photo by Alice Duffield on Unsplash
Adelaide City Library
18 February 2019
77 - 91 Rundle Mall, Adelaide SA 5000

URBAN HEAT ISLAND PROFILE
Date: 18 February 2019, Time: 2:30-4:30pm

The map illustrates the urban heat island (UHI) profile of the precinct. The colour represents UHI intensity, calculated by subtracting the air temperature of the reference meteorological station from the air temperature measured by the citizen at each location (black dot in the map) on the day and time specified above.
Below are the results and some images of citizen scientists performing experiments at Western Australian locations.

**Environment House**
26 February 2019
125 King William Street, Bayswater WA 6053
Council Civic Centre
27 February 2019
Broun Avenue, Morley WA 6062

URBAN HEAT ISLAND PROFILE
Date: 27 February 2019, Time: 1:00 - 3:00pm

Council Civic Centre Broun Avenue, Morley WA 6062
Reference meteorological (BmM) station: Perth Airport ID 094610 [air temperature at 3:00pm - 33°C]
The map illustrates the urban heat island (UHI) profile of the precinct. The colour represents UHI intensity, calculated by subtracting the air temperature of the reference meteorological station from the air temperature measured by the citizens at each location (black dot in the map) on the day and time specified above.
Below are the results and some images of citizen scientists performing experiments at Victorian locations.

**Melbourne - Melbourne Cricket Ground (Gate 2)**
21 January 2019
Brunton Avenue, Richmond VIC 3002

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**URBAN HEAT ISLAND PROFILE**
Date: 21 January 2019, Time: 1:00 - 3:00pm

**MCG - Outside Gate 2**
Brunton Avenue, Richmond VIC 3002
Reference meteorological (BoM) station: Olympic park ID 099538 [air temperature at 3:00pm - 24.8°C]

The map illustrates the urban heat island (UHI) profile of the precinct. The colour represents UHI intensity, calculated by subtracting the air temperature of the reference meteorological station from the air temperature measured by the citizens at each location (black dot in the map) on the day and time specified above.
Moreland - Trinity Regional College
4 February 2019
33 Saxon Street, Brunswick VIC 3056

URBAN HEAT ISLAND PROFILE
Date: 4 February 2019, Time: 1:00-2:00pm

Trinity Regional College | 33 Saxon Street, Brunswick VIC 3056
Reference meteorological (BoM) station: Essendon Airport ID 0058866 [air temperature at 2:00pm - 22°C]

The map illustrates the urban heat island (UHI) profile of the precinct. The colour represents UHI intensity, calculated by subtracting the air temperature of the reference meteorological station from the air temperature measured by the citizens at each location (black dot in the map) on the day and time specified above.
Urban Heat Island Profile

Date: 23 February 2019, Time: 1:09 - 3:00pm

The map illustrates the urban heat island (UHI) profile of the precinct. The colour represents UHI intensity, calculated by subtracting the air temperature of the reference meteorological station from the air temperature measured by the citizens at each location (black dot in the map) on the day and time specified above.
Port Phillip - Neighbourhood Centre
24 February 2019
Liardet Street, Port Melbourne VIC 3183

URBAN HEAT ISLAND PROFILE
Date: 24 February 2019, Time: 1:30-3:30pm

Neighbourhood Centre, Liardet Street, Port Melbourne VIC 3183
Reference meteorological (BoM) station: Olympic Park ID 096936 (air temperature at 2:30pm - 31.1°C)

The map illustrates the urban heat island (UHI) profile of the precinct. The colour represents UHI intensity, calculated by subtracting the air temperature of the reference meteorological station from the air temperature measured by the citizen at each location (black dot in the map) on the day and time specified above.
Yarra - Mark Street Hall
30 January 2019
1 Mark Street, Fitzroy North VIC 3068

URBAN HEAT ISLAND PROFILE
Date: 30 January 2019, Time: 1:00 - 3:00pm

Mark Street Hall | 1, Mark Street, Fitzroy North, VIC 3068
Reference meteorological (BoM) station: Olympic Park ID 096936 [air temperature at 2:00pm - 3:00pm]

The map illustrates the urban heat island (UHI) profile of the precinct. The colour represents UHI intensity, calculated by subtracting the air temperature of the reference meteorological station from the air temperature measured by the citizen at each location (black dot in the map) on the day and time specified above.
Yarra - Fitzroy Learning Network Inc.
31 January 2019
198 Napier Street, Fitzroy VIC 3065

URBAN HEAT ISLAND PROFILE
Date: 31 January 2019, Time: 1:00 - 3:00pm

Citizen Science
Urban Microclimate Project

Fitzroy Learning Network Inc. | 198, Napier Street, Fitzroy VIC 3065
Reference meteorological (BOM) station: Olympic Park ID 069366 (air temperature at 2:00pm - 20.1°C)

The map illustrates the urban heat island (UHI) profile of the precinct. The colour represents UHI intensity, calculated by subtracting the air temperature of the reference meteorological station from the air temperature measured by the citizens at each location (black dot in the map) on the day and time specified above.
Conclusion and the Way Forward

Citizen science has the potential to provide extensive and useful data required to understand, mitigate and adapt to extreme heat, and create a more scientifically literate society who can make informed choices. This approach will help to transfer knowledge about the climate mitigation technologies to the participating citizens and promote their active participation in the implementation of mitigation techniques in their homes and neighbourhood. In addition, local governments can identify areas having adverse effects due to lack of vegetation and inappropriate surface materials and can allocate resources for mitigation actions.

A key challenge is the collection of usable microclimate data by citizens who are laypersons. In addition to making the measurements engaging for the citizens to form an appreciation of the data, ensuring scientific rigour, accuracy and validity of the data collected is also important.

This can be addressed by designing the activities carefully and employing strategies for improving the data quality such as developing a standardised protocol and instrumentation to ensure consistency in the measurement across the sites in various states.

citizenscienceproject.org.au