



Postdoctoral Research Fellow

Position Details

Position Title:	Postdoctoral Research Fellow, ARC Training Centre for the Transformation of Australia's Biosolids Resource
Position Number:	NEW
College/Portfolio:	College of Design and Social Context
School/Group:	School of Global, Urban and Social Studies
Campus Location:	Based at the city campus, but may be required to work at other Partner Industry locations
Classification:	Academic Level B
Employment Type:	Fixed Term – 3 years
Time Fraction:	0.5 FTE

RMIT University

RMIT is a leading multi-sector university of technology, design and enterprise with more than 91,000 students and 11,000 staff globally. We offer postgraduate, undergraduate, vocational education and online programs to provide students with a variety of work-relevant pathways.

Our purpose is to offer life-changing experiences for our students, and to help shape the world with research, innovation, teaching and industry engagement. With strong industry connections forged over 130 years, collaboration with industry remains integral to RMIT's leadership in education, applied and innovative research, and to the development of highly skilled, globally-focused graduates.

With three campuses in Melbourne (Central Business District, Brunswick and Bundoora), two in Vietnam (Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City) and a centre in Barcelona, Spain, RMIT is a truly global university. RMIT also offers programs through partners in Singapore, Hong Kong, mainland China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Belgium, Germany, Austria and The Netherlands, and enjoys research and industry partnerships on every continent.

We are also committed to redefining our relationship in working with and supporting Aboriginal self-determination. Our goal is to achieve lasting transformation by maturing our values, culture, policy and structures in a way that embeds reconciliation in everything we do. We are changing our ways of knowing, working and being to support sustainable reconciliation and activate a relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff, students and community. Our three campuses in Melbourne (City, Brunswick and Bundoora campuses) are located on the unceded lands of the people of the Woi Wurrung and Boon Wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nation

We're proud to share with you:

- The launch of our second [Reconciliation Plan for Dhumbah Goorowa– a “commitment to share” - an important step in our reconciliation journey.](#)
- RMIT University is an **Athena SWAN** member with Bronze Award accreditation and the College of Science, Engineering and Health is central to driving improvements in gender equality, diversity and inclusion, particularly in the Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEM) disciplines.
- RMIT was placed **10th in the 2019 Randstad Employer Brand Research Awards**, up five spots from 2018.
- We were named as an **Employer of Choice for Gender Equality** by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency three years in a row!
- We achieved **Gold Employer status for LGBTIQ** inclusion in the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) in 2018, 2019 and 2020.
- We were recognised as a **top five employer in 2018 for workplace accessibility** by the Australian Network on Disability, and awarded with **Disability Confident Recruiter Accreditation** in 2020.
- In 2020, RMIT University has become the first Australian institution to receive the **HR Excellence in Research Award**, recognized by the European Commission.

RMIT Standings in university rankings

We are ranked **#1 in the world** for our efforts to reduce inequality in the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings 2020.

RMIT has a deep commitment to innovation, research and teaching, we are a 5-Star university under the QS Stars international evaluation system and are **223rd globally in QS World University Rankings 2021** (moved up 15 places compared to 238th last year), being also 18th in the world among universities less than 50 years old (2014 QS Top 50 Under 50 index). Additionally:

- In the 2020 QS World University Rankings by Subject, RMIT was positioned 11th in the world (highest ranked in Australia) in Art and Design, 22nd in the world (fourth highest in Australia) in Architecture and the Built Environment, and 37th in Media and Communications. We are also among the world's top 100 universities in Engineering (Civil and Structural; Electrical and Electronic; and Mechanical, Mechanical, Aeronautical and Manufacturing); Accounting and Finance; and Business and Management Studies).
- In the 2020 QS Rankings by Subject, RMIT was ranked 11th in the world and number one in the Asia Pacific for Art and Design, and 26th in Architecture and the Built Environment. RMIT is also among the world's top 100 universities in Engineering (Civil and Structural; Electrical and Electronic; and Computer Science and Information Systems); Accounting and Finance; Business and Management Studies; and Communication and Media Studies. The 2018 Shanghai Ranking's Global Ranking of Academic Subjects highlighted RMIT's strength in Engineering and Technology in particular.
- In the specialised rankings, RMIT is ranked 77th in the QS Graduate Employability Rankings 2020 and 82nd in the inaugural Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings 2019.
- RMIT has moved up 51 places in the 2021 Times Higher Education World University Rankings, strengthening its reputation as a leading global university. The University has leapt more than 150 places since 2015 and is now ranked in the **top 301-350 band**.
- RMIT continued its strong performance in the 2020 CWTS Leiden Ranking, which ranks the world's top research-intensive universities, moving up 21 places to be ranked **293rd globally** on proportion of international publications, and **ranking 225th** on proportion of top 5% publications, up 120 places from 2019.

For more information, visit www.rmit.edu.au/about

College of Design and Social Context

The College of Design and Social Context encompasses RMIT University's renowned art, architecture, design, built environment, communication, and social science disciplines. The college has 24,500 students and over 1,000 staff located in 8 schools.

The College's academic programs are generally market leaders and in high demand. Based on a strong foundation of practise led, industry partnered teaching and research, we aim to deliver skilled graduates with a deep sense of purpose, and high impact research and innovation.

For more information see www.rmit.edu.au/dsc

School of Global, Urban and Social Studies (GUSS)

Located in the heart of Melbourne on RMIT's City Campus, the School of Global, Urban and Social Studies is one of RMIT's largest schools. The School's vision is to contribute to a just and sustainable world, and to deliver education, training and research in four areas of focus:

- Criminology, legal and justice studies
- Global studies, languages, translating and interpreting
- Social work, youth work and social policy
- Sustainability and urban planning

We provide academic programs in Higher Education in these four main areas. We are a strongly research active school with research centres of national and international reputation, including the Centre for Urban Research, where this position will be based

With outstanding industry links, strong pathways and excellent research records, most of the School's academic programs are leaders in the market and in high demand. We aim to ensure every student has a transformative experience to prepare them for life and work in the growing professional areas of the future.

For more information, see <http://www.rmit.edu.au/socialhumanities>

ARC Training Centre for the Transformation of Australia's Biosolids Resource

This Centre brings together Australia's leading biosolids researchers and key industry and government stakeholders to advance the management, transformation and reuse of biosolids. The focus is: (i) capability and knowledge building, (ii) research development, extension and training, and (iii) sustainable strategic partnerships. The expected outcomes of the Centre are to develop a group of new, highly-trained industry-ready researchers as well as advanced solutions in three major themes: (i) improved technologies, (ii) enhanced products, and (iii) sustainability. This will provide significant benefits in the economic value of new applications and market opportunities as well as deliver cost-savings – all in an environmentally friendly manner.

To transform Australia's biosolids resources, the vision and overarching goal of the ARC Training Centre for the Transformation of Australia's Biosolids Resource is to advance fundamental and translational biosolids research, including social research, resulting in both the high-quality interdisciplinary training of new, industry-ready researchers, and novel applications and new market opportunities for the Australian biosolids industry.

The specific aims of the Centre are:

1. **Capacity and knowledge building:** to build new knowledge and train the next generation of researchers/ practitioners capable of resolving multi-disciplinary issues associated with managing and reusing biosolids.
2. **Integrated research and development:** to implement a fully integrated, interdisciplinary five-year program of research, which will develop a range of cost-effective, sustainable, socially and environmentally viable solutions for biosolids management and reuse.

3. **Sustainable strategic partnerships:** to engage with key industry, government, and stakeholders to resolve emerging issues related to biosolids management and reuse.

This Centre brings together 13 of Australia's leading biosolids researchers from 4 universities and 21 key industry and government stakeholders across Australia to advance the management, transformation and reuse of biosolids in agriculture. The vision of the Centre will be delivered through the following three themes:

1. **Improving technologies** In this theme, we will be looking at improving existing wastewater treatment processes/technologies and current beneficial routes as well as investigating new alternative technologies to reduce biosolids volume and transform them into high-value products. Existing processes such as anaerobic digesters and advance treatment methods such as drying, thermal hydrolysis, pyrolysis, gasification and hydrothermal liquefaction will be studied in depth for benchmarking to realise their techno-commercial potential in different scenarios (i.e. urban versus regional water utilities).
2. **Enhancing product applications:** In this theme, we will investigate the transformation of biosolids into novel carbon based fertiliser/growing media/advance materials for its use in commercial farming systems (such as horticulture, agriculture and greenhouses) and non-farming systems (such as construction, energy, animal feed) to develop sustainable water treatment and farming systems by closing carbon and nutrient cycles. We will also do social research into the social dimensions of biosolids generation and use.
3. **Ensuring sustainability:** This theme will consider a number of topics that are central to the successful implementation of improved management of biosolids or related products relevant to water and agriculture industries and environmental protection agencies (EPAs). These include facilitating an understanding of biosolids and tackling odour to improve community acceptance, developing national guidelines, developing a framework for evidence-based risk assessment of biosolids and its related products, and measuring public perception of the social and environmental benefits of biosolids transformation.

Position Summary

The **Postdoctoral Research Fellow** will conduct research to better understand and synthesise the social dimensions of biosolids generation and use in agriculture and other sectors. This research will improve understanding of the challenges and opportunities and provide a conceptual framework of potential barriers and enablers. The project is part of a suite of work on social dimensions within the Centre, it will complement the other projects in the Biosolids Training Centre, strengthening understanding and synergies across them.

Academically, this project will be led by senior social scientists working within Science and Technology Studies and human geography. It will take a theoretically informed and creative approach to explore questions around recycled water and biosolids use, including public perceptions of and cultural attitudes towards sewerage and odour management, place-based studies of attitudes, practices and needs of land holders, and the emergence of circular economy thinking in the water sector and related value chains. It will help develop a deeper understanding of potential biosolids users and their priorities and context in order to generate the strategic and empirical knowledge necessary to help the Centre's research be genuinely impactful.

The project will be conducted in four work packages incorporating literature reviews, broad scale empirical research with potential and existing end-users and other stakeholders, focused research on two value chains, and synthesis and knowledge translation.

This particular postdoctoral role will contribute to all work packages and the wider Centre, but focus on the broad scale qualitative research with potential and existing end-users and other stakeholders, including members of the relevant innovation ecosystems (e.g. agricultural advisors, regulators).

The successful applicant will be part of the interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Research within the School of Global, Urban and Social Studies at RMIT University, Melbourne. They will be supervised by senior

social scientists Profs Lauren Rickards (RMIT) and Matthew Kearnes (UNSW) and be part of a strong community of leading scholars on critical urban issues such as food security, resource use, water management, value chains and climate change.

Training

The Centre will provide an unparalleled opportunity for Early Career Researchers to obtain world-class university-industry integrated research training with invaluable industry exposure. The training program is designed to be highly innovative with four major integrated components of the skills and capacity building:

1. Research training
2. Industry placements
3. Annual symposium
4. Industrial training

Reporting Line

Reports to: Project Chief Investigators

Organisational Accountabilities

RMIT University is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of its staff. RMIT and its staff must comply with a range of statutory requirements, including equal opportunity, occupational health and safety, privacy and trade practice. RMIT also expects staff to comply with its policy and procedures, which relate to statutory requirements and our ways of working.

Appointees are accountable for completing training on these matters and ensuring their knowledge and the knowledge of their staff is up to date.

Key Accountabilities

1. Conduct research/scholarly activities around the social dimensions of biosolids independently and as a member of a team including: publishing high quality research outputs; presenting at conferences and research forums; contributing to external research funding submissions; participating in supervision of higher degree by research candidates.
2. Undertake 10% teaching and/or supervision at undergraduate levels as required.
3. Undertake administration related to the position.

Key Selection Criteria

1. Evidence of research output including publications, conference contributions and/or technical reports, specifically in the area of social dimensions of water and resource management
2. Experience and skills in qualitative applied social science research in a relevant topic area.
3. Ability to generate alternative funding projects through effective liaison with industry and government.
4. Ability to work autonomously whilst displaying a strong commitment to work in a team environment, including the demonstrated ability to confidently and effectively work with colleagues, project team leaders, and industry partners.
5. Demonstrated ability to meet deadlines and effectively manage varying workloads and respond to changing priorities as required.
6. Demonstrated high level written and verbal communication skills.

Desirable Criteria

Expertise in human geography, sociology and/or Science and Technology Studies (STS); knowledge of Australian and international networks and initiatives around wastewater management, biosolids production and reuse, agriculture and/or other land use and environmental challenges; experience and skills in working with scientists and/or engineers.

Qualifications

Mandatory: PhD in a relevant Social Science field

Appointment to this position is subject to passing a Working with Children check

Endorsed:	Signature:	Approved:	Signature:
	Name:		Name:
	Title:		Title:
	Date:		Date: