

ASAP | RUA 2026 Conference
Whakawātea: Clearing the Way for Adaptation
20–21 August 2026 | Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington
Conference Programme
Thursday 20 August 2026

8:00	Registration Desk Opens
8:30 – 9:00	OPENING Mihi Whakatau
9:00 – 9:10	WELCOME Welcome to the Conference • MC - Kiritapu Allan
9:10 – 9:20	Address from ASAP RUA Co-Convenor • Sarah Bogle – ASAP RUA Co-Convenor
9:20 – 10:05	KEYNOTE How Bad Is It? Big Picture, Systems and Current State An honest assessment of where we stand – the science, the systems and the stakes for Aotearoa and the world. • Anahera Nin – Co-Founder, Kōmaru • Prof. James Renwick – Professor of Physical Geography, Victoria University
10:05 – 10:15	Ice Breaker
10:15 – 11:15	CROSS-PARTY PANEL Each Party's Vision for Adaptation, Collaboration and Priorities Representatives from across the political spectrum share their vision for climate adaptation, followed by open Q&A. • Facilitator - Kay Harrison – Former Climate Change Ambassador • Hon. Simon Watts – Minister of Climate Change, National • Hon. Deborah Russell – Spokesperson for Climate Change, Labour • Dr Kayla Kingdon-Bebb – Opportunity Party • Chlöe Swarbrick – Co-Leader of the Green Party • Hon. Shane Jones – Minister, Deputy Leader of the NZ First Party • Simon Court – Spokesperson for ACT Party
11:15 – 11:30	Te Ata Morning Tea
11:30 – 12:00	KEYNOTE (online) International Perspective: Why Climate Adaptation Isn't Scaling A global lens on the barriers preventing adaptation action from matching the pace of change – and what Aotearoa can learn. This session will explore the complex interplay between weakening institutions, declining public trust, funding/financing realities and what this means for adaptation. • Facilitator – James Hughes • Shalini Vajjhala – Executive Director, PRE Collective
12:00 – 12:45	PANEL How Will We Pay for Adaptation? As climate risks intensify, adaptation will require major investment across communities, infrastructure, businesses and the natural environment. This panel will explore who should pay and how costs should be shared, examining the roles of government, local authorities, infrastructure providers, insurers, investors and property owners. Panellists will discuss funding mechanisms, affordability, equity, and sustainable financing models to support adaptation in New Zealand. • Facilitator - Kris Faafoi – Chief Executive, Insurance Council of New Zealand • Shamubeel Eaqub – Chief Economist, Simplicity • Dr David Hall – Co-Founder & Executive Director, Toha Network • Rachel Sanson – Independent Director
12:45 – 13:15	KEYNOTE (online) What Can We Learn from an International Perspective? Climate adaptation intelligence in an age of urgency: from science to decisions that matter” Johanna will unpack climate adaptation, earth observations and decision-making. She will challenge us to think about ‘wild cards’ and the assumptions we are making about the future, and whether we suffer at times from a failure of imagination in what we think is going to happen and is possible. • Facilitator – Isla Hepburn • Assoc. Prof. Johanna Nalau – Adaptation Scientist, Griffith University, Australia

Thursday 20 August 2026

13:15 – 14:00	Tina Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	PANEL AND WORKSHOP: Adaptation in Practice: Early Reflections from the Front Line What does real-world adaptation look like on the ground? Honest reflections from those leading the way. This session will involve an introductory panel discussion followed by a facilitated workshop - exploring insights, challenges, barriers. • Facilitator – Tom FitzGerald - <i>Water Technology</i> • Katy Simon – <i>Adaptation Programme Lead, Far North District Council</i> • Roana Bennett – <i>Community Adaptation Coordinator, Maketu</i> • Sarah Pahlen – <i>Senior Adaptation Advisor, Christchurch City Council</i> • Jamuna Rotstein – <i>Climate Change Adaptation Lead, Wellington City Council</i>
15:15 – 15:30	Ti Ahiahi Afternoon Tea
15:30 – 16:30	WORKSHOP: Waka Hourua in Practice Exploring the dual-hull waka as a model for navigating complex, interconnected systems and what it means for adaptation. • Lara Taylor – <i>Kaiwhakahaere – Director, E Oho!</i> • Dr Shari Gallop – <i>Senior Associate – Climate Resilience, Beca</i> • Dr Akuhata Bailey-Winiata – <i>Climate Adaptation Scientist</i>
16:30 – 17:15	CLOSING SESSION The Great Adaptation Debate A lively, structured debate to close the day – challenging assumptions and sharpening thinking on Aotearoa's adaptation path.
17:30 – 18:30	NETWORKING FUNCTION Kindly sponsored by Tonkin + Taylor Join fellow delegates, speakers and sponsors for drinks and networking. Location: Icon Room, Te Papa

Friday 21 August 2026

8:00	Registration Desk Opens
8:45 - 9:00	Welcome Back
9:00 – 9:30	KEYNOTE Eco-Anxiety: Carrying the Psycho-Social Load of Adaptation The mental health dimension of climate adaptation – how professionals, communities and rangatahi are experiencing and managing the weight of ongoing change. • Gerhard Reese - VUW Associate Professor of Climate Change
9:30 – 10:45	WORKSHOP: Adaptation planning - Hear about the latest Climate Change Response Amendment Bill requirements for adaptation plans - Introduction to New Zealand's second national adaptation plan Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport • Emma Corbett – Manager, Adaptation Priorities • Maxine Day – Principal advisor, Adaptation Systems • Joseph Hagg – Principal advisor, Adaptation Priorities
10:45 - 11:00	Ti Ata Morning Tea
11:00 – 12:00	WORKSHOP: Natural Hazards Commission Workshop Climate change and natural hazards affect the same people, places, and decisions, but they are often managed separately. This workshop will challenge participants to think about who is responsible for managing risk, where those responsibilities should sit, and how we can take a more integrated approach to building resilient communities. • Dr Wendy Saunders – Principal Advisor Risk Reduction • Livvy Harris – Senior Advisor Risk Reduction
12:00 – 13:15	WORKSHOP: Accelerating Adaptation to Climate Change: Closing the Planning-Implementation Gap Why does adaptation so often stall between planning and doing – and what can we change? A practical, solutions-focused workshop. • Bridget Lange – Knowledge Broker • Nick Cradock-Henry – Principal Scientist, Society & Infrastructure, Earth Sciences New Zealand
13:15 – 14:00	Tina Working Lunch An opportunity to tackle common adaptation challenges in smaller groups
14:00 – 14:30	CONFERENCE CLOSE Where to From Here – ASAP RUA Closing reflections, key takeaways and the road ahead for the Aotearoa adaptation community.