

2025-26 HIVE Summer Internship Project

The Climate Is Talking — Are We?

Primary Academic Supervisor

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Project Background

Climate change poses not only an environmental crisis but also a social and psychological challenge: many young people recognise its urgency yet feel uncertain how to translate their concern into meaningful action. This uncertainty can contribute to eco-anxiety – a sense of impending doom. While this is a natural response to a real threat, it can contribute to poorer wellbeing and mental health.

My colleagues and I have surveyed diverse groups of young people in the UK, the US, the Caribbean, India, the Philippines and Australia. With study, careers, social lives and family on their mind, young people are juggling a lot. Yet climate change often remains a key concern that is casting a dark shadow over their future plans, prompting them to change their future outlook. For example, a significant proportion of young people question whether they should ever have children because of climate change.

Research shows that engaging in dialogues about climate, i.e. sharing worries, solutions, and commitments, can strengthen social norms around environmental stewardship and spur collective action towards a better, more sustainable future. And this, in turn, can support a sense of purpose, agency and improve wellbeing. Yet despite this potential, many people report they don't know how to start these conversations or doubt their impact.

This project will use visual storytelling through animation or film to combine emotional engagement with concrete guidance to help people start conversations about (their feelings around) climate change. There is evidence that this works! Visual storytelling interventions in public health (e.g., tobacco prevention, mental health stigma reduction) have shown that short, compelling narratives can shift attitudes, build skills, and prompt behaviour change. By embedding climate-conversation tips within a cohesive story arc, the aim is that viewers will absorb both the “why” (importance of dialogue) and the “how” (conversation starters, cues).

Project Description, Expected Outputs, Possible Stretch Goals

This internship will explore how visualisation can be used to inspire hope, agency, and collective action among young people in the context of climate change. The project will focus on creating a short, impactful visualisation, such as an animation, short film that communicates the message:

“Talking about climate change is the most powerful thing you can do.”

Rather than emphasising fear or despair, the work will centre on positive narratives, the power of community, and the role of conversation in driving change. The aim is to produce a piece that can spark dialogue, encourage peer-to-peer engagement, and help audiences imagine a more sustainable and connected future.

The core deliverables are:

1. Concept development and storyboarding

Conduct desk-based research to understand the concept of eco-anxiety, and explore the lived experiences of young people, based on research and teaching conducted by the supervisors.

Define a clear narrative arc centred on hope, agency, and the power of climate conversations.

Produce a storyboard or animatic that maps visuals, pacing, and key messages.

2. Create a prototype and technical implementation

Create a working visualisation (e.g., short animation, film, or interactive scene) optimised for at least one HIVE display format (dome, headset, or tiled display).

Integrate sound, imagery, and/or interactivity in a way that enhances emotional impact.

3. Final output

Deliver a completed, showcase-ready visualisation that can be presented in the HIVE environment.

Ensure the piece is adaptable for online sharing or community presentations.

4. Documentation

Provide a short written reflection or process log, including creative decisions, technical setup, and lessons learned.

An achievement that would elevate the project from strong to exceptional (i.e. stretch goals):

5. Create a multi-format, immersive experience

Expand the final output into an installation that works across several HIVE technologies and/or includes interactivity.

Links to background reading and any relevant recent work in the field

Husain-Naviatti, A. (2025). The power of human narrative: Inspiring action on climate change. *Environmental Science and Policy*, 163: 103954.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2024.103954>

The power of climate storytelling.

<https://climatecommunications.earth/whitepaper-articles/the-power-of-climate-storytelling/>

Markowitz, D.M. & Bailenson, J.N. (2021). Virtual reality and the psychology of climate change. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 42: 60-65.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2021.03.009>

Meijers, M. et al. (2025). Let's talk about climate change: How immersive media experiences stimulate climate conversations. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 104:102610.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2025.102610>

Betro, S. (2024). From eco-anxiety to eco-hope: surviving the climate change threat. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 15: 1429571.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2024.1429571>

What type of visualisation will the student develop or produce?

The student is expected to produce a short animated film or motion graphics piece optimised for HIVE's dome or 3D display systems. The film will have a narrative arc built around the power of connection and conversation to inspire hope, agency, and collective action. It is expected that this will incorporate voiceovers and/or soundscapes, as well as potentially first-person accounts.

As a stretch goal, the visualisation could extend to a multi-display, interactive installation.

How will the visualisation contribute to your research outcomes?

The visualisation has excellent potential as research tool that directly advances work on climate anxiety. The supervisor is currently working with international collaborators and young co-researchers to develop support tools for young people navigating life in the climate crisis. The visualisation can serve as a controlled, repeatable intervention in experimental or mixed-methods studies. The visualisation may also be showcased at schools, youth festivals, or science comms events.

If the project is successful, where would you consider publishing the results?

This project sits at the intersection of environmental psychology, youth mental health, science communication, and digital media/visualisation research. That opens up several strong publishing pathways. The internship project itself would lend itself well to a design/communication methods paper in a science communication or visualisation journal such as *Environmental Communication* (Q1; IF=4.3). Future evaluations of its impact are publishable in a range of Q1 journals such as the *Journal of Applied Youth Studies*, *Frontiers in Psychology – Environmental Psychology*, *Global Environmental Change*.

Draft Project Timeline:

Week 1

Nov 10 - Full day HIVE induction

Nov 11 - Area and Project Induction with Primary supervisor

Develop project plan with HIVE and academic team

Literature and relevant project review

PROJECT BACKGROUND: Conduct desktop research to explore themes of climate change, wellbeing, eco anxiety, and collective action; Discuss initial ideas with supervisors; Consider scoping and feasibility in discussion with HIVE staff.

Week 2

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT: Identify target audience insights (young people's values, preferred media styles); Develop 2–3 concept directions (storylines, visual styles, formats); Present concepts for feedback and select one to develop further

Week 3

NARRATIVE DEVELOPMENT: Draft narrative arc, key messages, and (emotional) tone; Create a storyboard or animatic to map visuals, pacing, and transitions; Identify opportunities for interactivity (if VR/AR or multi screen is chosen); Review and refine with supervisor and technical mentors

Week 4

ASSET CREATION: • [If needed] training in relevant software/tools (e.g., animation, video editing, VR design); Begin creating or sourcing visual assets (illustrations, footage, sound; Scripting and recording voiceovers or interviews (potentially with young people)

Week 5

PROTOTYPE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERIM EVALUATION: Build working version of the visualisation (partial scenes or interactive elements); Test on HIVE equipment to check scale, resolution, and immersion; Gather early feedback from supervisor and target audience representatives

Week 6

REFINE & EXPAND: Refine visuals, transitions, and sound design – gather additional assets if needed; Add missing scenes or interactive features

Week 7

AUDIENCE TESTING: Invite a small group of young people or colleagues to experience the prototype; Collect feedback on emotional impact, clarity, and engagement; Identify areas for improvement with supervisor

Week 8

REFINE & FINALISE: Implement feedback from audience testing; Fine-tune pacing, visual design, audio balance, and interactivity [if implemented]; Prepare final assets for high quality rendering or installation; Test visualisation in HIVE environment & troubleshoot technical issues

Week 9

Focus on report writing and presentation preparation

INTEGRATION & REFLECTION: Further testing in HIVE environment; Prepare supporting materials (title cards, credits, project description); Reflect on process, challenges, and lessons learned; Report writing and presentation preparation

Week 10

Focus on report writing and presentation preparation

30th Jan Final Presentation Showcase Day and final report due

SHOWCASE & TEAM REFLECTION: • Discuss opportunities for future development or adaptation research and translation

Student Experience and Supervision:

How often will you meet with the student over the 10-week period?

Project initiation (weeks 1-3): 2x week

Once per week (weeks 4-10)

Your work desk location and the location of student desk

400.328

Student desk space to be confirmed with School of Population Health
admin

Student Attributes:

Please indicate any preference for student's academic discipline or field of study

Screen studies, film, animation

What competencies are required to start this project

Intermediate - 2D image and/or video software (e.g. Adobe Suite, Sony Vegas)

Intermediate - Storytelling and narrative design

Intermediate - Storyboard script writing

Do you have any other student attributes you think are important to the project?

A flair for interdisciplinarity, an interest in environmental and social issues, good verbal and written communication skills, general research literacy, project and time management. The student should also be self-motivated and fairly independent, i.e. able to work within a mentorship setting (rather than under direct, strongly guided supervision).