



"Our environment is our future"

## RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM SERIES



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**Friday**

**Oct. 14, 2011**

**3:30 - 4:30**

**LECTURE THEATRE**

**7 - 158**

### **GREED, SELFISHNESS, IMMORALITY AND IGNORANCE — THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF ENVIRONMENTAL APOCALYPSE?**

People's environmental inaction is often attributed to problems of individual motivation (greed, selfishness, or laziness), conscience (valuing wealth and consumption over the environment) or ignorance. I will review the results from three studies investigating people's values and conservation behaviour. The findings suggest that the majority of people care about the environment, understand the logic of conservation, and are motivated to achieve environmental goals when they understand the impact of their behaviour on the environment. The evidence, however, further suggests that people's willingness to sacrifice for collective environmental goals is limited by the behaviour of others around them. If the majority of people surrounding the individual are not conserving, even the most committed environmentalists are unlikely to sustain or undertake costly conservation behaviours. Consequently, collective approaches to conservation are likely to be more effective than efforts directed solely at changing individuals' values, beliefs, knowledge, or behaviour.