

NEWS

19 February 2026

QUT Engineering Building first real-world exemplar implementing a blueprint for IAQ standards

As we begin a new year, we recall the exciting launch of our P Block Project held at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) on 12 December 2025. This project is a world-first initiative, led by Thrive's Centre Director Distinguished Professor Lidia Morawska, to demonstrate that existing buildings can meet proposed indoor air quality (IAQ) standards. The three-year project will retrofit P Block, the 13-year-old Science and Engineering Building at Gardens Point, transforming it into a real-world model for IAQ excellence. It will monitor and validate air quality improvements aligned with proposed global standards designed to safeguard human health. The initiative was inaugurated by QUT's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Margaret Sheil AO, and Registrar, Ms Leanne Harvey, alongside key academic and industry partners.

[More from QUT Media](#) | [Hear more from D/Prof Lidia Morawska](#)

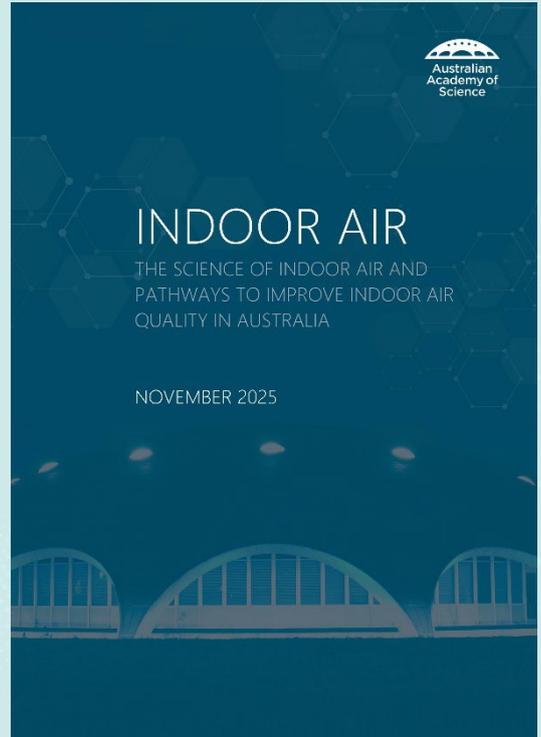


Launch of the Australian Academy of Science’s report on the science of indoor air quality

A report has been published by the Australian Academy of Science titled “Indoor air: the science of indoor air and pathways to improve indoor air quality in Australia”, which provides the latest scientific evidence on the issue and explores the policy pathways to improve indoor air quality in Australia. It includes a call for a phased approach to establish enforceable indoor air quality performance standards in public buildings, beginning with monitoring and workplace reporting standards.

The report was officially launched by the Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Rebecca White MP, at The Safer Air Project’s second annual conference “Safer shared air. Making the invisible visible” at Parliament House in Canberra on 5 November 2025.

Academy Fellow, world-leading expert on indoor air and winner of the 2025 Prime Minister’s Prize for Science, Distinguished Professor Lidia Morawska, is the lead expert for the Academy’s new report.



[More from the Academy](#) | [Download a copy of the Academy Report](#) | [More about the Safer Shared Air conference](#)

Award of a new ARC Discovery Project grant



(Pictured Prof Zoran Ristovski)

Members of our team (Associate Director of Research Training Prof Zoran Ristovski, Prof Kirsten Spann, Dr Robert Groth and Dr Sadegh Niazi) have been awarded an Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Grant for a project titled “Multiphase droplet chemistry shapes dynamic survival of airborne viruses”.

When viruses are exhaled, they travel in tiny droplets of respiratory fluid, complex microenvironments full of salts, proteins, and other substances that evolve depending on the surrounding air. These droplets do not merely carry viruses, they shape the virus’s survival. The researchers’ aim is to uncover the physicochemical dynamics of these droplets to better understand what helps viruses persist in indoor environments. This knowledge is key to designing smarter public health strategies to improve indoor air quality and control environmental conditions to reduce transmission risks. Congratulations to the team!

AIRAH Indoor Air Quality 2026 Conference



The Australian Institute of Refrigeration, Air-conditioning and Heating (AIRAH) is holding their 2026 Indoor Air Quality Conference in Cairns, Queensland on 31 August – 4 September. Building on the success of IAQ25, this flagship event will unite leaders, researchers and practitioners from across industries to share insights and practical solutions that improve indoor environments and occupant wellbeing. Save the date and don't miss your chance to be part of Australia's national conversation on indoor air quality at IAQ26 in tropical north Queensland. [More information, abstract submission and registration](#)

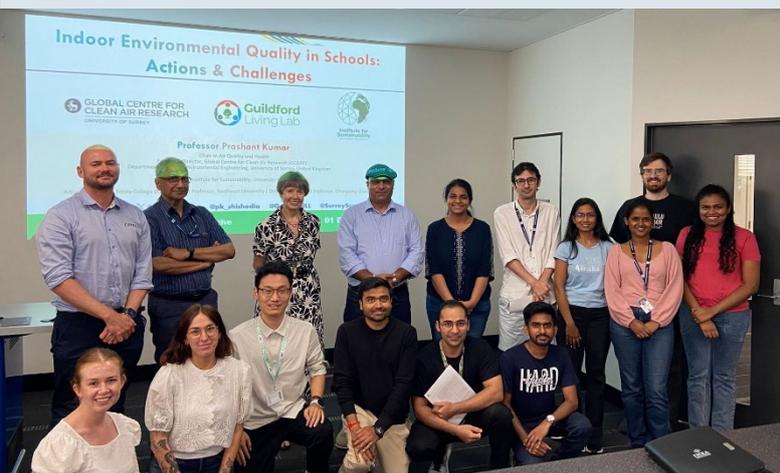
Visit to QUT by Professor Prashant Kumar of the University of Surrey

Professor Prashant Kumar visited the Thrive team at QUT in Brisbane from 27 November to 2 December 2025, meeting with several students and presenting a talk titled "Indoor environmental quality in schools: actions and challenges".

Professor Kumar is Chair in Air Quality and Health, founding Director of the Global Centre for Clean Air Research (GCARE), founding Co-Director of the Institute for Sustainability, founder of Guildford Living Lab, and Trustee of Zero Carbon Guildford at the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom. A partner of Thrive, he is also Adjunct Professor at Trinity College Dublin, Guest Professor at Southeast University, and Distinguished Guest Professor at Chongqing University.

A highly cited cross-field researcher, Professor Kumar has published over 500 journal articles, with ~34,000 citations and over 450 policy citations. His work spans the interfaces of clean air, urban overheating, and human and environmental health in urban settings. His multidisciplinary research includes air-pollution monitoring and modelling, low-cost sensing, citizen-science engagement and nature-based solutions for climate-change mitigation. He develops innovative technological and passive solutions, with tools and guidance for both developed and developing regions. He currently leads major UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) initiatives, including the RECLAIM Network Plus (outdoor greening for urban climate adaptation), GREENIN Micro Network Plus (indoor greening for climate resilience), and GP4Streets (DIY street-scale climate-adaptation solutions), all applying holistic, systems-based approaches to heat, health and climate stresses. [More information](#)

1. L–R, top row: unknown, Dr Rohan Jayaratne, D/Prof Lidia Morawska, Prof Prashant Kumar, Ms Udita Gupta, Mr Ashkan Jahandari, Ms Dilani Madhubhashini, Dr Henry Oswin (back), Ms Kavindi Yaggaha Hewage, Ms Savinda Heshani. L–R, bottom row: unknown, unknown, Mr Hongzhi Zhang, unknown, Mr Mohammad Sarmadi, Mr Punsara Don. 2. L–R: Mr Mohammad Sarmadi, Mr Hongzhi Zhang, Prof Prashant Kumar, Mr Punsara Don, Ms Dilani Madhubhashini



Indoor Air 2026 keynote speaker: D/Prof Lidia Morawska

D/Prof Lidia Morawska will be keynote speaker at the upcoming Indoor Air 2026 Conference in Singapore on 14–18 June 2026. Indoor Air is the premier global conference of the International Society of Indoor Air Quality and Climate (ISIAQ) for scientific research into indoor air quality.

The conference theme, "Enhancing wellbeing in existential challenges – deepening understanding, building resilience", reflects the growing urgency of this mission. As we face climate change, resource scarcity, and increasing environmental pressures, optimising indoor air quality is no longer optional – it is essential. Smart cities and sustainable buildings demand innovative approaches that balance human health, comfort and environmental stewardship. By deepening our understanding of exposure pathways, microbiomes, and chemical interactions, we can develop smarter, resource-efficient strategies to create healthier spaces.



[More information and registration](#) | [Read more about D/Prof Lidia Morawska](#)

Poor classroom air quality endangers students and educators in Australia

Classroom air quality in Australia is a growing concern. Studies indicate that many classrooms have inadequate ventilation and exceed recommended levels of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other toxic substances.

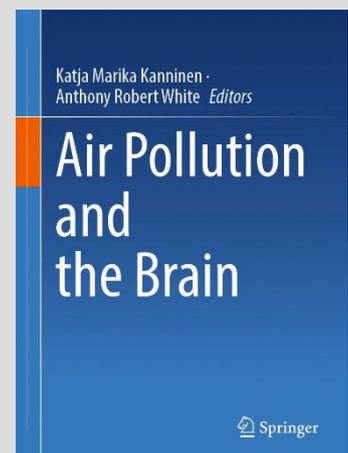


Governments, state and federal, are overseeing a situation in which classrooms have become dangerous vectors responsible for likely poor health outcomes for teachers, students and their families. We at Thrive are calling for governments to improve the

“terrible” ventilation. [Read the full article](#)

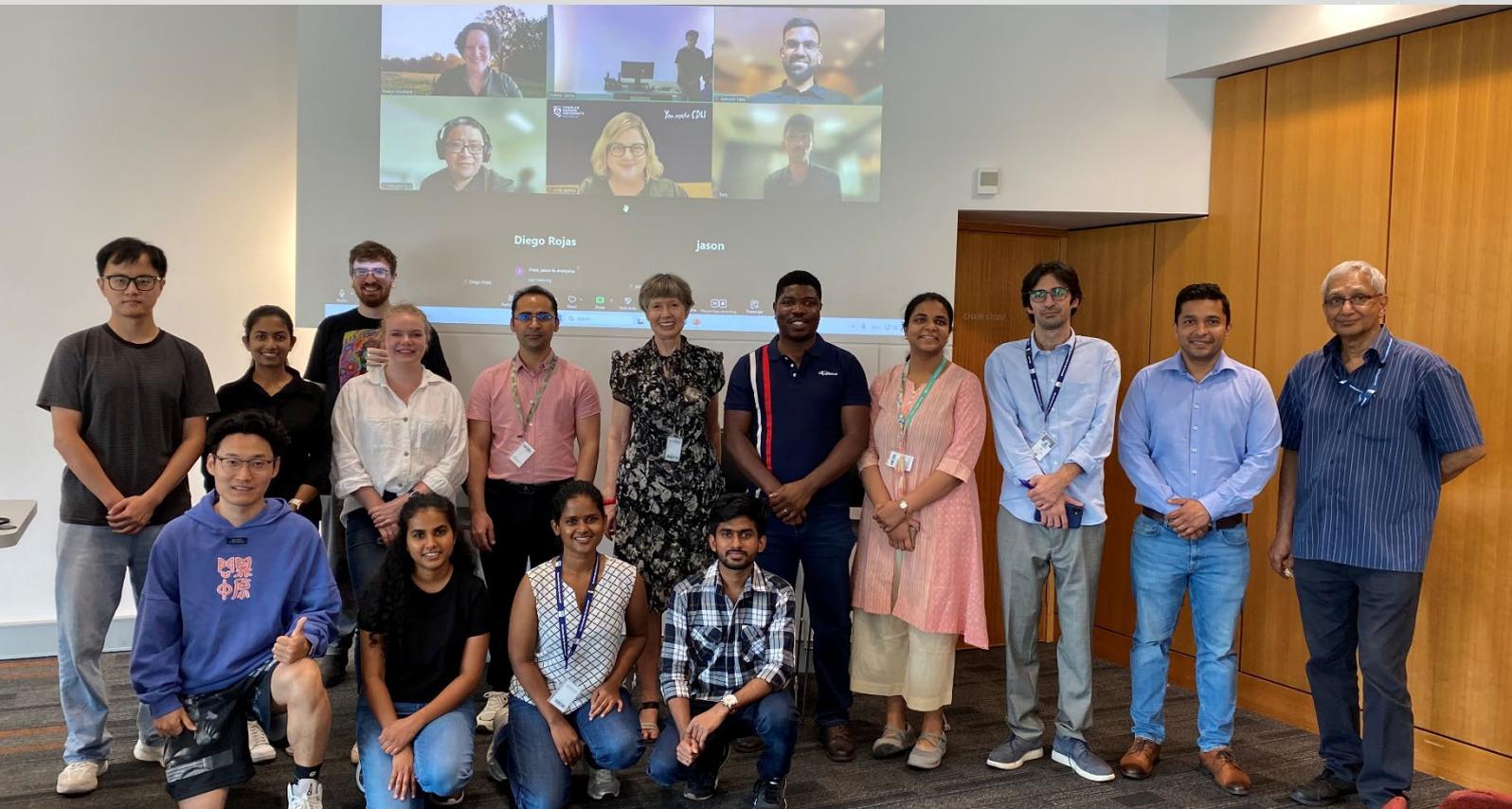
Air pollution and the brain

D/Prof Lidia Morawska and Prof Amanda Kennedy from the Thrive team have contributed a chapter titled “Clearing the air: Navigating regulatory frameworks for indoor air quality control” to a recently published book “Air Pollution and the Brain”. The chapter explores how law and policy can better protect people from the often-overlooked health risks of indoor air pollution. While poor indoor air quality is increasingly recognised as a major public health issue, regulatory responses remain fragmented and inconsistent. This complex landscape is unpacked, highlighting novel approaches from several jurisdictions that are experimenting with various regulatory and non-regulatory initiatives. They argue that stronger IAQ governance requires integrated, evidence-informed and cross-sectoral approaches. [Download a copy](#)



Higher degree research progress meeting

A PhD student progress meeting held at QUT on 23 October 2025 allowed students to deliver presentations outlining the current status of their research projects. Supervisors and peers asked them some challenging questions, and gave students valuable feedback.



On zoom (L-R, T-B): A/Prof Robyn Schofield, Mr Salman Khan, Dr Hamesh Patel, Dr Xiangdong Li, Prof Lindy Burton, Mr Tony George, Mr Diego Rojas and Prof Jason Monty. In the room (L-R, T-B): Dr Henry Oswin, Mr Bingnan Zhao, Ms Dilani Madhubashini, Ms Justine Hupkes, Mr Mohammad Sarmadi, D/Prof Lidia Morawska, Dr Enoch Adotey, Ms Udita Gupta, Mr Ashkan Jahandari, Mr Rafat Alam, Dr Rohan Jayaratne, Mr Hongzhi Zhang, Ms Samitha Wijewantha, Ms Kavindi Yaggaha Hewage, Mr Punsara Dharaka.

Failure to regulate indoor air quality exacerbates health inequities

What further evidence do governments need? D/Prof Lidia Morawska spoke at The Safer Air Project's second annual conference "Safer shared air: Making the invisible visible" held at Parliament House in Canberra in November 2025. The recordings from Session 2, including the presentation from D/Prof Lidia Morawska and Anna-Maria Arabia OAM (Chief Executive, The Australian Academy of Science) are now available.

[Read more from Croaky Health Media](#) | [Watch the recording](#)



(Pictured Plum Stone, The Safer Air Project)



Team member spotlight

Ms Uditia Gupta, Thrive PhD student, Queensland University of Technology

I spent most of my early life in Delhi, India, admiring the rapid civil development around me. To satisfy my curiosity, I found myself drawn to civil engineering. While studying, core areas such as environmental and transport engineering piqued my interest. This led me to choose the topic of my master's thesis at the intersection of these subjects.

In my master's thesis, I aimed to determine the extent to which demand management strategies, such as work-from-home and switching to electric vehicles, have a significant influence on ambient particle concentrations. I was shocked to learn that employing these strategies to their full extent only reduced particle concentrations by less than 5%. This made me realise the extent of the impacts of human activities on the environment. To further enhance my understanding of the science behind air pollution, I joined a research lab where I used dispersion modelling to assess emissions from a petroleum refinery in a coastal area.

While I was working on this project, I came across the new research centre, Thrive, being developed in Australia at that time, whose research goals motivated me to shift my research from how humans cause air pollution to its solutions for humans. In other words, from the cause of air pollution to the control of air pollution. Here at Thrive, I work on practical and scientific approaches to achieving safe air quality levels in occupied spaces. In my spare time, I like to read fiction books and try new restaurants around the city. My most recent read is *The House in the Cerulean Sea* by Travis John Klune.



New publications



Morawska, L., and Greed, S. [Q&A Meditations from an air quality master](#). *Nature Reviews Chemistry*, 9: 803-804.

Morawska, L. [Aerosol scientists: drivers of change to clean the air and improve public health](#). *Aerosol Science & Technology*, 60(2): 89-91, 2025.

Coulburn, L., Miller, W., Susilawati, C. and Neumeister-Kemp, H.G. [Field practitioners' perspectives of challenges and practices that hinder effective mould assessment and remediation in Australian residential buildings](#). *Building and Environment*, 290: 114132, 2026.

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