

I am a Geographer ...



Dr Javier Leon

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My inspiration to study, and pursue a career in, Geography comes from a passion for travelling and also for understanding how and why phenomena change across different places. My university Geography studies include a BA in Humanities, majoring in Geography from Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru; an MSc on coastal Geography from Canterbury University, NZ (the work won the George Jobberns Prize for most outstanding research submitted by a Masters candidate in Geography); and a PhD on “Torres Strait reefs and carbonate production: a geospatial approach” at the University of Wollongong, Australia. For the latter, I was awarded the Toni O’Neill Prize for innovative work in the spatial sciences.

In my work at the University of the Sunshine Coast I divide my time teaching Geography to undergraduate students and undertaking research. My research focusses mostly on coastal environments, predominantly sandy beaches and coral reefs, and tries to answer questions related to the links between morphology, ecology and management. I currently work with many geographers, from remote sensing scientists (Prof. Stuart Phinn), to human geographers (Dr Tristan Pearce) and geomorphologists (Dr Daniel Harris).

I develop and apply many geospatial techniques in my work. Recently, I have been using images acquired with drones to create very-high-resolution images and 3D models of landforms and vegetation. Geographers are trained, particularly, to understand phenomena across spatial and temporal scales. This skill is of great value when addressing the great environmental and social challenges we are facing as a society. The holistic and integrative nature of our discipline is also a great asset for multidisciplinary work, which is the only way to tackle these big challenges.