



Hi All,

Calling any photographers or wannabe photographs for the 'Stewards of the Soil' Photography Competition. If you are interested follow the link <http://www.farmerhealth.org.au/2015-photo-competition-stewards-of-the-soil>

The link to the 'Whales under the northern lights' is not an Opinion piece but I included it at the end of this missive just because it is really cool.

Cheers

brian

## 2015 Photography Competition

"Soil is a non-renewable resource; its preservation is essential for food security and our sustainable future... Healthy soils are the basis for healthy food production... Soils are the foundation for vegetation which is cultivated or managed for feed, fibre, fuel and medicinal products... Soils store and filter water, improving our resilience to floods and droughts."

International Year of Soil – [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)



2015  
International  
Year of Soils

In recognition of 2015 as 'International Year of Soil' the National Centre for Farmer Health is inviting you to share our vision of the relationship between Australian farming and the soil it occurs in, under and on.



"The Future is in My Hands."

Image by Janine Waters.

2012 Finalist – 'Future Farmers' – Open Category

This year's theme is:

**'STEWARDS OF THE SOIL'**



## France has a great plan for its soil – and it’s not just about wine

October 5, 2015 10.51pm AEDT

Vineyard by Yellowj via Shutterstock.com

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French wine lovers have always taken their soil very seriously. But now the country’s government has introduced fresh reasons for the rest of the world to pay attention to their *terroir*.

As industrial emissions of greenhouse gases continue to increase and concerns about climate change grow, scientists and policy wonks are searching for potential solutions. Could part of the answer lie in the soil beneath our feet? French agriculture minister Stéphane Le Foll [thinks so](#).

Soil stores [vast amounts of carbon](#), far more than all the carbon in the

Author



John Quinton

Professor of Soil Science,  
Lancaster University

Disclosure statement

John Quinton is Executive Editor of the Journal SOIL (<http://www.soil-journal.net>).

<http://theconversation.com/france-has-a-great-plan-for-its-soil-and-its-not-just-about-wine-47335>

## Crop WUE improvement a soil health triumph

By Catherine Norwood

New maps detailing the water use efficiency (WUE) of wheat crops across Australia reflect the comprehensive practice changes that have taken place in the grains industry, and which have helped growers maintain production despite declining growing-season rainfall.

The data demonstrates that health of cropping zone soil is improving as a result of conservation farming methods which are restoring soil organic matter and structure ensuring more plant available water is present.

Between 1982 and 2012 more than half of Australia's wheat-growing regions have improved their WUE by at least 50 per cent. Many areas have achieved even more than this.



Conservation farming techniques are gradually restoring soil carbon levels and improving soil structure which is increasing soil water holding capacity. Photo: Patrick Francis

<http://www.moffittsfarm.com.au/category/soil-health/>

## Soil: it's time to appreciate the value of the asset underfoot

11 September 2015

**Megan Backhouse**



The UN wanted to raise awareness about the importance of soil for human life. *Photo: Tricia Hogbin*

I spent last weekend lifting carpet. It was in multiple layers, tightly secured and reaching to every corner. This filthy cut pile was occasionally pierced by a tree root; sometimes thistles were growing over the top. For this phenomenally sturdy floor covering wasn't in the house but in the garden.

Covered in soil and pine bark mulch, it was completely hidden. Laid by the previous owner as a weed suppressant, it had been there for years. After the back-breaking job of pulling it out (only half so far) what I found below was dead dust over dry, compacted earth.

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/soil-its-time-to-appreciate-the-value-of-the-asset-underfoot-20150904-gjfc16#ixzz3oPlrylL5>

## Enough talk over fire prevention



*We keep winding up in the same place when each catastrophic fire season comes around*

UNLIKE drought, which creeps through the boundary fence and quietly eats away at each individual's business and the social well being of towns out of the government's sight, a firestorm razes all in its path, making it impossible to ignore.

Media attention attracts politicians like moths to a flame to express empathy and explain all the government is doing to fight the fires.

Yet, we're still reactively focused instead of being proactive.

Research is underway at the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Co-operative Research Centre to understand the effect of fuel reduction fires on soils and vegetation

<http://www.stockjournal.com.au/blogs/a-matter-of-opinion/enough-talk-over-fire-prevention/2739452.aspx>

## How to save the planet, and humanity, in 17 steps

September 24, 2015

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### EDITORIAL



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon: "We can be the first generation that ends global poverty, and the last generation to prevent the worst impacts of global warming, before it is too late". *Photo: Francois Lenoir*

This weekend UN member states are to ratify a new set of 17 universal development goals which aim for no less than an end to poverty, hunger and want; peace, health, justice and dignity for all; and the lasting protection of the planet and its resources by 2030.

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/smh-editorial/how-to-save-the-planet-and-humanity-in-17-steps-20150922-gjs9it.html>



## Big Ideas

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# Tim Flannery: atmosphere of hope

[Listen now](#) | [Download audio](#)

Thursday 24 September 2015 8:05PM [\(view full episode\)](#)

While the urgent need to reduce carbon emissions remains, nonetheless, Tim Flannery is upbeat and optimistic about the future and in his new book *atmosphere of hope* he charts a way forward for action on climate change. Flannery offers his assessment of the current situation and explores and evaluates a range of third way technologies such as carbon capture in the Antarctic, seaweed farming, the use of low carbon building materials and whether geo-engineering is a viable option.



IMAGE: TIM FLANNERY DISCUSSES HIS NEW BOOK ATMOSPHERE OF HOPE (ALEXANDER GERST / ESA/ GETTY IMAGES)

Highlights of the inaugural Mick Dark lecture for the future - *When mice turn on giants: how communities are defeating climate change*. Presented by Varuna: the writers house in partnership with the Blue Mountains conservation society. Wentworth Falls school of arts, 19th September 2015



**Monday to Thursday 8pm**  
**Repeated: Tuesday to Friday 3am**  
**Presented by Paul Barclay**

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bigideas/atmosphere-of-hope/6795698>

# Fifth IYS2015 article in a series: Precision fertilizing using drones and scanners



October 5, 2015 By: [Marianne Heselmans](#)

Image: [via Flickr](#) [by: Dominic Hartnett]

[Expert opinion](#)

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To contribute to the objectives of the IYS 2015, the F&BKP commissioned ImpactReporters to publish seven background articles on themes related to international soil and land use and enhancing food security. The fifth article 'Precision fertilizing using drones and scanners' has been written in Dutch by Marianne Heselmans of ImpactReporters and was published on [the Kennislink website on September 18, 2015](#). Please find below a translation of the article in English.

## Precision fertilizing using drones and scanners

The first drones are already flying over potato, wheat and soya crops. By combining drone-recorded imaging with soil scans, growers are able to target their fertilizing much more precisely than before. This method has great environmental advantages as some plots of soil <http://knowledge4food.net/fifth-iys2015-article-in-a-series-precision-fertilizing-using-drones-and-scanners/>





Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



©FAO/Olivier Asselin

## Soil is a non-renewable resource

Its preservation is essential for food security and our sustainable future



2015  
International  
Year of Soils

Soil is a finite resource, meaning its loss and degradation is not recoverable within a human lifespan. As a core component of land resources, agricultural development and ecological sustainability, it is the basis for food, fuel and fibre production and for many critical

### KEY CHALLENGES

Soil degradation is caused by unsustainable land uses and management practices, and climate extremes that result from various social, economic and governance drivers. Today, 33 percent of land is moderately to highly degraded due to the erosion, salinization, compaction, acidification and chemical pollution of soils. The current rate of soil degradation threatens the capacity of future generations to meet their most basic needs. Current demographic trends and projected growth in global population (to exceed 9 billion by 2050) are estimated to result in a 60

<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4373e.pdf>



# The oceans are becoming too hot for coral, and sooner than we expected

October 9, 2015 5:59pm AEDT

Soon the oceans will be too warm to support thriving coral reefs. USFWS - Pacific Region/Flickr, CC BY

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This week, scientists [registered their concern](#) that super-warm conditions are building to a point where corals are severely threatened across the tropical Indian, Pacific and Atlantic oceans. They did so after seeing corals lose colour across the three major ocean basins – a sign of a truly momentous global change.

Author



**Ove Hoegh-Guldberg**  
Director, Global Change Institute  
The University of Queensland

Disclosure statement

<http://theconversation.com/the-oceans-are-becoming-too-hot-for-coral-and-sooner-than-we-expected-48832>

## It seems Canberra is suddenly full of visionaries

OPINION

By [Mungo MacCallum](#)

Updated about 2 hours ago Tue 13 Oct 2015, 10:47am



**Photo:** One of the most important challenges for the Turnbull Government is to break away from the demands of instant gratification from the media cycle. (AAP: Lukas Coch)

*Ever since Malcolm Turnbull became PM we have seen politicians prepared to plan for the long term. And it's not just the Libs - Labor and even the Nationals are now setting out policies for the future, writes Mungo MacCallum.*

As we all expected it would be, the verdict was swift and unequivocal.

According to Newspoll, some [62 per cent of voters thought the replacement of Tony Abbott with Malcolm Turnbull was a good thing](#). Even among Coalition supporters, said by the Abbott clique to be on his side, the vote was 56 to 36. There was simply no margin for error.

The result may not have brought instant euphoria - when respondents were asked about the next election, the figures are still lineball - but it cannot be denied that there is an overwhelming sense of relief. At long last politics can settle down to something like what we believe is normal.

For the six years of the Abbott regime, both in opposition and in government, it was all about threats and crises: we were constantly warned that we were about to become broke and destitute, that we would be murdered in our beds. Now the screaming is about to abate.

[Mungo MacCallum](#) is a political journalist and commentator.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-10-13/maccallum-it-seems-canberra-is-suddenly-full-of-visionaries/6849004>

## **Opinion: Agriculture's Green Revolution 2.0 focused on soil**

By Guest Author

By Donald R. Marvin

With the global population expected to hit 9.5 billion by 2050, feeding a hungry world is once again inching upward on a jam-packed list of world crises.

The biggest threat to global food security is not climate change, drought or shortage of farmland. It is the alarmingly poor quality of our agricultural soils.

A May 2015 study led by scientists at the University of California was published in the journal Science. It argues that poor soils will be the greatest single threat to global food security during the next century.

The United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization designated 2015 as the International Year of Soils. It has initiated more than 100 education and advocacy programs about soil health worldwide. Even Pope Francis, in his June 2015 Encyclical on the environment, decried the "sickness" of the world's soils.

It's time for all farmers worldwide to embrace new practices that reduce soil erosion and revitalize soils depleted by poor farming practices and decades of chemical inputs. To meet the food production challenges ahead, we need a Green Revolution 2.0 that revitalizes the precious land on which crops are grown.

Donald R. Marvin is President and CEO of Inocucor Technologies, Inc., an agriculture biotechnology company based in Montreal, Quebec.

<http://www.agri-pulse.com/Opinion-Agricultures-Green-Revolution-soil-09212015.asp>

## Second IYS2015 article in a series: Nutritions for depleted African soils



June 1, 2015 By: [Hans van de Veen](#)

Image: CIMMYT

[Expert opinion](#)

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To contribute to the objectives of the IYS 2015, the F&BKP commissioned ImpactReporters to publish seven background articles on themes related to international soil and land use and enhancing food security. The second article 'Nutritions for depleted African soils' has been written in Dutch by Hans van de Veen of ImpactReporters and was published on the [Kennislink](#) website on May 22, 2015. Please find below a translation of the article in English.

### Nutritions for depleted African soils

Nowhere is soil fertility deteriorating as rapidly as in Africa, posing a direct threat to local food supplies. The looming catastrophe is attracting increasing attention but the way in which African farmers can best revitalise their land has become the subject of fierce debate. The Netherlands Fertile Grounds Initiative is arguing for a coordinated strategy to manage nutrient flows. 'Transport compost and manure from the cities to rural areas.'

<http://knowledge4food.net/second-iys2015-article-in-a-series-nutritions-for-depleted-african-soils/>



## The oceans are changing too fast for marine life to keep up

October 13, 2015 11.04am AEDT

Tuna and other top predators could run out of food in warming seas. Tuna image from [www.shutterstock.com](http://www.shutterstock.com)

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Some of the ocean's top predators, such as tuna and sharks, are likely to feel the effects of rising carbon dioxide levels more heavily compared other marine species.

That's just one of the results of a [study](#) published today in Proceedings of the National Academy of Science.

Author



**Ivan Nagelkerken**  
Associate Professor, Marine  
Biology, University of Adelaide

Disclosure statement

<http://theconversation.com/the-oceans-are-changing-too-fast-for-marine-life-to-keep-up-48977>

## Opinion: Farmers who look after soils are the doctors of the future

By Eosta founding director Volkert Engelsman



“Please look after our planet. Cultivate it, pass it on responsibly, so we may do the same. Please look after the soil.” This was the urgent plea on behalf of the Youth Food Movement and the world’s children, of 20-year-old Nyakallo Makgoba at the closing ceremony of the Celebrating Soil! Celebrating Life! conference in Amsterdam, on June 29.

With the presentation of the Save Our Soils Amsterdam Declaration, the youth urged delegates including ministers, royalty and business leaders to act to stop to soil erosion and degradation.

As an organic fruit & vegetable company we had the honor of organizing and hosting this important conference, backed by the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). The conference was the main 2015 event of the Save Our Soils campaign that we started a few years ago. I hope we got some people worried. With 24 billion tons of soil worth €1.5 trillion lost per year, these numbers are no mere statistics – without fertile soil, global food security goals are hopeless.

<http://www.freshfruitportal.com/news/2015/09/14/opinion-farmers-who-look-after-soils-are-the-doctors-of-the-future/>

# Time to examine the fossil fuel industry's relationship with Queensland's government

## Graham Readfearn

New report from The Australia Institute sheds light on the high level of access and lack of accountability afforded to the fossil fuel lobby in Queensland



📍 Queensland's Abbot Point coal terminal, where mining companies are seeking approvals for an expansion to facilitate coal exports from mines planned for the state's Galilee Basin. Photograph: Tom Jefferson/Tom Jefferson / Greenpeace

On 11 February 2013, David Edwards, then the most senior civil servant in Queensland's Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, used \$500 of taxpayer money to buy a "framed and personally signed tennis racquet" for a rich Indian industrialist.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/planet-oz/2015/oct/09/time-to-examine-the-fossil-fuel-industrys-relationship-with-queenslands-government>





## As drought looms again, Australians are ready to embrace recycled water

October 12, 2015 6.28am AEDT

New surveys show Australians don't mind if the water coming from their tap is recycled. Top image from [www.shutterstock.com](http://www.shutterstock.com)

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Concerns about drought and water supply are once more building in eastern Australia. [Recent reports](#) from Victoria show the state government is considering switching on the so-far-unused desalination plant to supply Melbourne. While Melbourne doesn't currently need extra water, this might free up other water allocated to the city to be diverted to regional communities in the north of the state where water shortages are looming.

Author



**Stuart Khan**

Associate Professor in  
Environmental Engineering,  
UNSW Australia

Disclosure statement

Stuart Khan receives funding from

<http://theconversation.com/as-drought-looms-again-australians-are-ready-to-embrace-recycled-water-48805>

# Third IYS2015 article in a series: Too much fertilizer, too many brambles



August 5, 2015 By: [Marianne Heselmans](#)

Image: [APF/National Geographic](#)

[Expert opinion](#)

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To contribute to the objectives of the IYS 2015, the F&BKP commissioned ImpactReporters to publish seven background articles on themes related to international soil and land use and enhancing food security. The third article ' Too much fertilizer, too many brambles ' has been written in Dutch by Marianne Heselmans of ImpactReporters and was published on the [Kennislink website](#) on July 1, 2015. Please find below a translation of the article in English.

## Too much fertilizer, too many brambles

Brambles, nettles, clogged ponds and degraded corals. Excessive levels of nitrogen in the soil due to artificial fertilizers are degrading natural habitats all over the world. Using less artificial fertilizer and eating less meat will help alleviate the problem – although the effects won't be seen any time soon.

<http://knowledge4food.net/third-iys2015-article-in-a-series-too-much-fertilizer-too-many-brambles/>



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# Turnbull and Climate: Where's he headed?

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Monday 12 October 2015 4:45PM [\(view full episode\)](#)

Malcolm Turnbull is toeing the party line on climate.

But while the new PM's assurances have assuaged the party room, what about public expectations of a more progressive approach to the issue?

Many wonder as the 2016 election approaches, whether the PM will change his stance on climate.

Some warn that he should return to the views he espoused before he took on the top job or pay the price at the ballot box.



IMAGE: PRIME MINISTER, MALCOLM TURNBULL: WILL HE MAKE A TURNAROUND ON CLIMATE? (ABC.NET.AU)



**Monday 4pm**

**Presented by** [Amanda Vanstone](#)

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[Turnbull and Climate: Where's he](#)

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/counterpoint/turnbull-and-climate3a-where27s-he-headed3f/6844560>

# Drum interview: Climate change isn't going to wait for Australia

OPINION

By Amy Sherden

Posted 7 Oct 2015, 9:54am



**VIDEO:** Lord Deben tells *The Drum* Australia is going to the Paris talks with one of the least ambitious emission reduction targets. (*The Drum*)

**The UK's head climate advisor has slammed Australia's efforts to reduce green house gas emissions, labelling targets "sad" and a "disgrace".**

John Gummer, Lord Deben, the chairman of the UK's Committee on Climate Change, has warned that Australia currently looks like it's on the outside of the international community on climate change.

"Everyone else is willing to help but for goodness sake, you've already done less than other people," he told ABC's *The Drum*.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-10-07/sherden-drum-interview-climate-change-isnt-going-to-wait/6833048>



## India chooses electricity and economics over emissions goals

October 9, 2015 4:25pm AEDT

India's main aim is to get electricity to more of the population - using renewables where possible. Jorge Royan/Wikimedia Commons, CC BY

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India's [formal climate pledge to the United Nations](#) ahead of this year's [Paris summit](#) highlights the crossroads at which the country's electricity sector finds itself.

On one hand, there is a very strong push to deliver more energy from renewable resources, as demonstrated by India's pledge to source 40% of electricity from non-fossil sources by 2030.

<http://theconversation.com/india-chooses-electricity-and-economics-over-emissions-goals-48666>

Author



**Craig Froome**  
Global Change Institute – Clean Energy Program Manager, The University of Queensland

Disclosure statement

# It could be lights out for solar power under this government

Terry Macalister



Ten times as many of the jobs lost at Redcar are at risk under the government's plans to cut solar power subsidies by 87% - and it may be schools that suffer most



Solar panels on the roof of a school in Liverpool. Subsidies for nuclear and gas power stations are increasing but falling for wind and solar power. Photograph: Alamy

Ministers rightly wring their hands over the 2,200 jobs being lost at the 98-year-old [Redcar steelworks hit by low-cost Chinese competition](#). But they seem deaf to warnings of 27,000 jobs being potentially lost in a brand-new industry now facing crisis due to their own clumsy cuts.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/oct/08/it-could-be-lights-out-for-solar-power-under-this-government>



*Passiflora edulis*, or passionfruit. (Credit: Ze'ev Barkan/Flickr)

## INVASIVE PLANTS CAN ROAM THE WORLD VIA EBAY

**ETH ZURICH** → Original Study

Posted by [Peter Rüeegg-ETH Zurich](#) on October 5, 2015

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Goldenrod, Himalayan balsam, and Chinese windmill palm are all native to continents other than Europe, but arrived in Switzerland as garden or ornamental plants. At some point they “escaped” into the wild, where they now threaten the native flora.

<http://www.futurity.org/invasive-plants-ebay-1018652-2/>

## China's ETS will boost Turnbull's chances of shifting Coalition policy

OPINION

By [Warwick Smith](#)

Posted 28 Sep 2015, 4:19pm Mon 28 Sep 2015, 4:19pm



**Photo:** [A woman rides her bicycle past a coal power station in Beijing. \(David Gray, file photo: Reuters\)](#)

*It would be a mistake to write off the new Prime Minister's climate change policy ambitions at this early stage. With global momentum building, the situation could look very different after the next election, writes Warwick Smith.*

China's announcement that it will implement [a nationwide emissions trading scheme in 2017](#) is globally significant, but it also shifts the power balance in Australia's climate policy chess game.

For Turnbull, and others in the Federal Government who take the threat of climate change seriously, this is not about convincing the climate naysayers in the Coalition of the merits of more meaningful action; it's about working towards checkmate where all of their reasons against action are undermined and they have no more publicly defensible arguments.

*[Warwick Smith](#) is a research economist at the University of Melbourne. He blogs at [reconstructingeconomics.com](#) and tweets [@RecoEco](#).*

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-09-28/smith-china-ets-climate-change/6810774>

## Volkswagen scandal: How did the world's most boring car company come up with this?

OPINION

By [Dominic Knight](#)

Updated 24 Sep 2015, 9:16am Thu 24 Sep 2015, 9:16am





**Photo:** A man erects a Kombi van-shaped tent at a music festival. ([AFP: Fabrice Coffrini](#))

*The Beetle was the official car of flower power, the Kombi remains a favourite of hippies, but Volkswagen has now become known for an environmental scandal that would make cigarette company executives doff their hats, writes Dominic Knight.*

Of all the companies to get busted perpetrating massive environmental fraud, I would have thought Volkswagen the least likely. Even those skinny jeans-wearing eco-hipsters at Tesla might have seemed more willing to capitulate to the huge pressure to produce innovative green vehicles than Volkswagen, the world's most boringly consistent car company.

How on earth has a company dull enough to name its two most popular models after the world's two most bourgeois sports managed to concoct a scheme so dodgy that even cigarette company executives must be doffing their tar-encrusted hats?

*[Dominic Knight](#) is the NSW/ACT Evenings presenter on ABC Local Radio.*

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-09-23/knight-scandal-hits-the-worlds-most-boring-car-company/6799136>

# Cars, aviation, steel ... the stranded assets risk spreads far beyond fossil fuel firms

Andrew Simms

VW is paying the price of revelations that 'clean diesel' is as much a lie as 'clean coal' - in a low-carbon economy 100s of energy intensive industries will have to reinvent themselves or become similarly exposed



What could be the cost of potentially stranded assets in the manufacture of diesel vehicles? Photograph: Gustau Nacarino/Reuters

Imagine you invested heavily in glam rock silver spandex clothing just as punk music happened. You'd suddenly be left with a lot of shiny stuff you couldn't shift. It would be a 'stranded asset' - the victim of an unanticipated devaluation due to shifting fashion (though you might argue it was always a liability).

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/oct/08/cars-aviation-steel-stranded-assets-risk-spreads-far-beyond-fossil-fuel-firms>

# Emissions scandal: how the drive for diesel ran out of gas

Diesel, with its lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, was a policy priority but NO<sub>x</sub> failed to fall despite the 'stringent' regulations



📷 The O2 Arena in London seen through smog last year. Photograph: Dan Kitwood/Getty Images

From backroom deals between European leaders to the burying of the bad news of [23,000 premature UK deaths](#) on the day Jeremy Corbyn was elected Labour leader, the scandal that has engulfed the diesel car is a startling tale.

It is a story of good intentions being relentlessly undermined and has a nasty twist in the tail: even the real rationale for Europe's drive for diesel - to curb global warming - has run into the wall.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/sep/30/emissions-scandal-how-the-drive-for-diesel-ran-out-of-gas>



## When the Indian Ocean and El Niño join forces, things can get hot and dry

October 12, 2015 12.45pm AEDT

When the Indian Ocean combines with El Niño dry conditions come to Australia. Drought images from [www.shutterstock.com](http://www.shutterstock.com)

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[El Niño](#) has always been a key player in Australia's climate. And as temperatures in the tropical Pacific Ocean show, the current El Niño event is the [most significant since 1997](#).

For many countries in the western equatorial Pacific, most notably our neighbours in [Papua New Guinea](#), El Niño has brought significant drought. On the other side of the ocean, floods and landslides have caused [disaster in Peru](#).

Now we're also seeing the start of a [global coral bleaching event](#) — only the third that has ever been recorded.

### Authors



**Andrew B. Watkins**  
Manager of Climate Prediction Services, Australian Bureau of Meteorology



**David Jones**  
Scientist, Australian Bureau of Meteorology



**Karl Braganza**  
Manager, Climate Monitoring Section, Australian Bureau of Meteorology

<http://theconversation.com/when-the-indian-ocean-and-el-nino-join-forces-things-can-get-hot-and-dry-48969>

# Sow before you reap

The need for boots on the ground and sustained public investment for agricultural entrepreneurship



September 14, 2015 By: [Melle Leenstra](#)

Image: [Melle Leenstra](#)

[Expert opinion](#)

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## Dutch development policy from aid to trade

In 2010, Dutch policy for development cooperation was [urged](#) by experts to focus on agriculture as one of the areas where the Netherlands has an international comparative advantage. At the time, this prompted the minister in charge of development to make food security one of the [spearhead themes](#) for Dutch development cooperation to focus on. Since then this focus has been maintained.

<http://knowledge4food.net/sow-before-you-reap/>

## Will Kiribati be the new Atlantis?

By [Peter McCloy](#) - posted Wednesday, 7 October 2015

Kiribati is promoted as a dramatic example of how rising sea levels due to climate change will cause the disappearance of the islands of the Pacific. It's a claim not necessarily supported by science and practical observation.

Three pillars at the ancient marketplace of Pozzuoli, near Naples, led to much speculation among geologists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The activities of marine mollusks on these marble columns seemed to indicate that they had been submerged, then rose again, all within a period of a few thousand years. It was believed by many that this indicated rises and falls in the sea level.

Now we know what actually happened. The area subsided below sea level in Roman times, was uplifted around 700-800AD, subsided again from around 1500 until 1583, when it rose again, then subsided, then rose again. Between 1969 and 1973 the land rose by about 1.7 metres, subsided slightly over the next decade until between 1982 and 1994 it rose some 2 metres.

**Peter McCloy** is an author and speaker, now retired, who lives on five acres of rock in an ecologically sensible home in the bush. He is working on a 20,000-year plan to develop his property, and occasionally puts pen to paper, especially when sufficiently aroused by politicians. He is a foundation member of the Climate Sceptics. <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=17733>



Tom Fairman, Author provided

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Southeastern Australia has had its first taste of summer, with some unseasonably warm weather [breaking temperature records for early October](#). It follows on from a September that was [hotter and drier than usual](#) for much of Australia.

One of the reasons for this [may be the El Niño Southern Oscillation \(ENSO\)](#) - the weather phenomenon driven by periodically changing patterns of ocean currents in the Pacific Ocean. Southern Australia's

<http://theconversation.com/all-fired-up-southern-australia-is-looking-towards-a-dry-spring-and-a-hot-summer-48654>

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# There is no single solution to the tragedy of escaped fires

October 9, 2015 6.26am AEDT

Firefighters mop up after bushfires in Victoria. AAP Image/Julian Smith

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Prescribed burning is a highly contentious topic, particularly this week after an [escaped burn](#) near Lancefield in Victoria. The burn jumped its containment under high winds, resulting in the reported loss of two homes and several other buildings. The government has announced an [independent investigation](#) of the incident, due to report in a couple of weeks.

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Disclosure statement

<http://theconversation.com/there-is-no-single-solution-to-the-tragedy-of-escaped-fires-48828>

## Damn the dams

By [Harriet Smith](#) - posted Friday, 2 October 2015

Cast your mind back to 2007 to the wretched years of drought and desolation. When the head of the Climate Commission told us all categorically that, "the rain that falls isn't actually going to fill our dams and our river systems." Dire warnings from an eminent scientist and respected climate guru.

The reason, we were told, was climate change; now commonly referred to as climate variability. Biblical tales of drought, fire and famine was all the future held unless we could stop burning fossil fuels to run our cities, and maintain a high standard of living.

**Harriet Smith** is doing a Masters in Economics

<http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=17726>

## Call in the Green Army! Threat of 'green lawfare' takes down ... wait ... only two projects?

JOSH TAYLOR | AUG 19, 2015 1:11PM | [EMAIL](#) | [PRINT](#)

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Is "green lawfare" really destroying our economy and way of life? Er ...



The government's rush to pass a law to prevent environmental groups from challenging mining projects in the court seems to be centred around just one case — Adani's Carmichael Mine — and is despite the fact that there is no evidence that mining companies are under attack by "green lawfare".

Attorney-General George Brandis announced yesterday the government would amend the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) to remove a provision that allows third parties to launch court action relating to the act's environmental impact approval process.

<http://www.crikey.com.au/2015/08/19/call-in-the-green-army-threat-of-green-lawfare-takes-down-wait-only-two-projects/>



## A MATTER OF OPINION

### A murky water debate

Posted By: Colin Bettles on 26/09/2015 3:30:00 AM | Comments (12)

🖨️ A+ A-

🗨️ Comments 12



SOUTH Australian federal Labor politicians who decried Malcolm Turnbull's shift of [Water into the Agriculture portfolio](#) portfolio this week could have applied their energies far better than attacking a ministerial change that's also been strongly backed by farmers.

Instead of raising hysterical political fears about Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce's water management credentials, to try and scare people into thinking it's a bad environmental move, they could have booked an urgent appointment to speak with their severely misguided State Agriculture Minister Leon Bignell.

<http://www.stockjournal.com.au/blogs/a-matter-of-opinion/a-murky-water-debate/2743990.aspx>

# You don't know the half of it: temperature adjustments and the Australian Bureau of Meteorology

By [Jennifer Marohasy](#) - posted Monday, 28 September 2015

For the true believer, it is too awful to even consider that the Australian Bureau of Meteorology could be exaggerating global warming by adjusting figures. This doesn't mean though, that it's not true. In fact, under Prime Minister Tony Abbott, a panel of eminent statisticians was formed to investigate these claims detailed in The Australian newspaper in August and September 2014. The panel did acknowledge in its first report that the Bureau homogenized the temperature data: that it adjusted figures. The same report also concluded that it was unclear whether these adjustments resulted in an overall increase or decrease in the warming trend. No conclusions could be drawn because the panel did not work through a single example of homogenization, not even for Rutherglen. Rutherglen is of course in north eastern Victoria, an agricultural research station with a continuous minimum temperature record unaffected by equipment changes or documented site-moves, but where the Bureau nevertheless adjusted the temperatures. This had the effect of turning a temperature time series without a statistically significant trend, into global warming of almost 2 degrees per Century.

**Jennifer Marohasy** is a senior fellow with the Institute for Public Affairs

<http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=17710>

## Australia has excessive protections for its kangaroos

By [Brendan O'Reilly](#) - posted Monday, 21 September 2015

A couple of years ago on the TV show QI, the panel was asked by host, Stephen Fry, "*Which Australian animal is the most dangerous?*" Based on the decade to 2010 (when 254 deaths were identified as animal related) the biggest individual culprits turned out to be domesticated animals (horses, cattle and dogs) accounting for 127 deaths. Amongst wild animals, the biggest killers were not what you might think (snakes, crocodiles, or sharks). The biggest killer in Australia among wild animals was in fact the kangaroo (due to road accidents), accounting for 18 deaths, as well as untold injuries and tens of millions of dollars in damage to vehicles.

Australians generally are reluctant to admit that, as well as being their iconic native animal, the cute-looking kangaroo (through sheer force of numbers) is also a major pest. This is because of its contribution to road accidents, and damage to fences, crops and pastures. About 70 per cent of Australians live in capital cities along the coast and simply don't see the damage kangaroos cause (mostly in inland rural areas) or the extent of their numbers, which is only evident at night.

**Brendan O'Reilly** is a retired commonwealth public servant with a background in economics and accounting. He is currently pursuing private business interests.  
<http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=17690>

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Tuesday, October 13, 2015

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# What Malcolm needs to do now on climate change

JOHN CONNOR | SEP 18, 2015 12:53PM | [EMAIL](#) | [PRINT](#)

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With a PM who believes in climate change, it's time for Australia to finally cut our carbon emissions, writes **John Connor**, CEO of The Climate Institute.


There's an old Arab proverb that it is easier to get into a hole than to get out of it. When it comes to climate, clean energy and carbon policy in Australia, it is clear we are in a deep hole.

Investment in renewables has crashed by some 88% in Australia, precisely at the time when global clean energy investments have overtaken fossil fuel investments. And it is a matter of fact that since the removal of laws that capped and priced carbon, emissions from the electricity sector have rebounded to levels not seen since Malcolm Turnbull last led the Liberal Party.

<http://www.crikey.com.au/2015/09/18/what-malcolm-needs-to-do-now-on-climate-change/>

# Crop protection's big spend

ANDREW MARSHALL

13 Oct, 2015 02:30 AM  A+ A-

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IN just 15 years global spending on crop protection chemical products has almost doubled in value to be worth more than \$86 billion a year.

While that's a whopping amount of money, the big spending is for good reason.

In the cotton sector investing in crop protection products adds about 53 per cent to the crop's eventual yield capacity, while for rice it adds about 40pc to the global crop's potential.

<http://www.stockjournal.com.au/news/agriculture/cropping/general-news/crop-protections-big-spend/2745545.aspx>

# Rundle: the right are finally abandoning their nutty sceptic stance

GUY RUNDLE | SEP 03, 2015 12:50PM | EMAIL | PRINT

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Conservatives are finally departing their “climate sceptic” policies, because you can’t hold out against science forever.



Though it has taken a long time to do so, the climate change debate is slowly turning against the climate change denialists on the right. Denialist is an ugly word in many ways — your correspondent preferred “irrationalists”, but it never took off — but there is no other word for them. They divided easily into several groups: first, the purely corrupt, duchessed by the Heartland Institute and other fronts, undistinguished scientists in late career who wanted fees, first-class flights to conferences, and maybe a bit of attention. Some of these people — gahhh, men, they were practically all men — should have been

<http://www.crikey.com.au/2015/09/03/rundle-the-right-are-finally-abandoning-their-nutty-sceptic-stance/>



## Public perception and energy policy

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Sunday 20 September 2015 7:45AM [\(view full episode\)](#)

How do we fill the gaps in our knowledge? We create stories, informed by our own feelings and worldviews.

Sounds harmless enough—but what if the gap is in our knowledge of an issue as important as climate change?

Ketan Joshi explores the dangers of mythmaking and navigating by feel.



IMAGE: ENERGY POLICY AND THE RENEWABLE ENERGY SECTOR IS AN AREA WHERE WE CAN ENCOUNTER GAPS IN OUR KNOWLEDGE (DENIS-CARL ROBIDOUX/FLICKR - CC BY-NC 2.0)



Sundays 7:45am  
Presented by Robyn Williams

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/ockhamsrazor/ketan-joshi-public-perception-energy-policy/6786050>

# Fossil fuels: Why Seattle is calling on the Gates Foundation to divest

Bill and Melinda Gates could send a message to politicians and the public that it's possible to imagine a future free of fossil fuels and signal to others to follow



Protesters in kayaks demonstrate against Shell's Arctic oil plans and the presence of their drilling rig in Seattle bay. Photograph: David Ryder/Getty Images

Seattle has found itself at a crossroads of the fight against fossil fuel extraction. Heading right through our waterfront are coal trains from Wyoming, oil trains from North Dakota, and Shell's Arctic drilling fleet. It is quite the juxtaposition. Progressive [Seattle](#), with its climate hugging politicians, tied to the fossil fuel extraction it claims to oppose.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/sep/29/why-seattle-is-calling-on-bill-melinda-gates-foundation-divest>

## If we want a low-carbon future to happen, we should look to Silicon Valley

[Solitaire Townsend](#)

The internet has monumentally changed our world in just 40 years. If we harness the vision and belief of those innovators a low-carbon revolution is possible too



The Ivanpah solar plant in the Mojave Desert, California uses computer-controlled mirrors to focus sunlight on to boilers, to produce steam to power turbines providing power to over 140,000 homes. Photograph: Ethan Miller/Getty Images

Do you really believe? I'm not asking if you 'believe' in climate change – thankfully that question has been delegated to the world of trolls. I mean, do you believe we can build a low-carbon economy in which 9 billion people thrive? That's a much harder question for many of us. But until we all answer with a resounding 'yes!' we won't move far or fast enough.

• *This article is part of the [Guardian's Keep it in the Ground campaign](#). You can receive the latest updates on the campaign by selecting "Follow series" in the Guardian app*

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/oct/12/if-we-want-a-low-carbon-future-to-happen-we-should-look-to-silicon-valley>

## Antarctic ice is melting so fast the whole continent may be at risk by 2100

New research predicts a doubling of surface melting of the ice shelves by 2050, risking their collapse by the end of the century, say scientists





Collapse of Antarctic ice shelves could lead to dramatic sea level rise.  
Photograph: blickwinkel/Alamy

Tuesday 13 October 2015 02.32 AEDT Last modified on Tuesday 13 October 2015  
02.36 AEDT

Antarctic ice is melting so fast that the stability of the whole continent could be at risk by 2100, scientists have warned.

Widespread collapse of Antarctic ice shelves – floating extensions of land ice projecting into the sea – could pave the way for dramatic rises in sea level.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/oct/12/antarctic-ice-melting-so-fast-whole-continent-may-be-at-risk-by-2100>

## Coalition's fight for coal defies reality

BERNARD KEANE | AUG 06, 2015 1:13PM | [EMAIL](#) | [PRINT](#)

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The government's approval for the Carmichael coal project was flawed under its own rules. Greg Hunt's response is to change the rules — but it still won't save this unviable mine.



One of the problems the government keeps finding is that reality defies its crony capitalist approach to policymaking. The government tried to deregulate financial planning and advice at the same time as evidence of a series of remarkable scandals began emerging about the big banks. The review established to provide a pretext for dumping the Renewable Energy Target found that the RET would lead to lower electricity prices. Malcolm Turnbull's own department published a report showing that an ISP notice scheme virtually imposed by the government on ISPs at the behest of the copyright

<http://www.crikey.com.au/2015/08/06/coalitions-fight-for-coal-defies-reality/>



## The light rail genie is out of the bottle, but how many cities will get their wish?

October 8, 2015 6:23am AEDT

The Gold Coast has already had a slice of light rail funding – and many cities want to follow suit. AAP Image/Dave Hunt

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The [federal government's rekindled enthusiasm for public transport](#) has sent state and local governments across the country scurrying back to their light rail plans – even those that many of us thought would [never see the light of day](#).

It now looks as if the two most effective mechanisms for rail spending

Author



**Peter Newman**

Professor of Sustainability, Curtin University

Disclosure statement

<http://theconversation.com/the-light-rail-genie-is-out-of-the-bottle-but-how-many-cities-will-get-their-wish-48669>

## ◀ Humpback whales swim beneath northern lights in Norway - video



Norwegian camera operator Harald Albrigtsen captures the moment when humpback whales swim beneath the northern lights. Also known as the aurora borealis, the phenomenon is caused by electrically charged particles from the sun colliding with the Earth's atmosphere

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/video/2015/oct/09/humpback-whales-swim-northern-lights-norway-video>



**“The saddest aspect of life right now is that science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom.”**

— [Isaac Asimov](#)