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## Science can drive the sustainability of our precious soils, water and oceans

July 14, 2015 6:38am AEST

Soil and water are critical resources that need to be carefully studied and preserved. [View PDF](#) [CC BY NC](#)

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This article is part of our series on the *Science and Research Priorities* recently announced by the Federal Government. You can read the introduction to the series by Australia's Chief Scientist, Ian Chubb, [here](#).

**John Gunn**  
Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Institute of Marine Science

Australia's soil, water, vegetation and biodiversity, and our vast marine estate, are incredibly valuable national assets. They are fundamentally interconnected components of the continent's diverse, unique and in many instances fragile ecosystems.

As such, they need to be managed effectively. However, significant gaps

### Authors

**John Gunn**  
Chief Executive Officer at Australian Institute of Marine Science

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<http://theconversation.com/science-can-drive-the-sustainability-of-our-precious-soils-water-and-oceans-43641>

# The Importance of Soils

By KEITH SHORTALL • JUL 20, 2015

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Soil is more than dirt - It's the basis for healthy food production, supports our planet's biodiversity, and helps the earth combat and adapt to climate change.

Guests: **Ivan Fernandez** - Professor of Soil Science at University of Maine's School of Forest Resources, Climate Change Institute, and, School of Food and Agriculture.

**Andrew Carpenter** - Founder of the Belfast-based company Northern Tilt - a company that provides organic waste recycling technical services.

**Natalie Lounsbury** - Natalie has a masters in soil science from the University of Maryland and has worked with farmers to develop cover crop based strategies to reduce tillage in vegetable production. She is an Auburn native who is currently working on a podcast about soil health for farmers before going back to grad school.



*Listen to our conversation about the importance of soil.*



<http://news.mpbnet/post/importance-soils>

## Conservation parks are growing, so why are species still declining?

BY RO HILL, CSIRO; BARRY NEWELL, AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY; IAIN GORDON, JAMES HUTTON INSTITUTE; AND



MICHAEL DUNLOP, CSIRO

Ironically, meeting global targets to preserve a proportion of the world's forest could weaken motivation to protect the rest of it. Jami Dwyer/Wikimedia Commons

It's now five years since the **International Year of Biodiversity**, and nearly 15% of Earth's land surface is protected in parks and reserves. By 2020, we should reach the **agreed global target of 17%**. This is good news for species diversity, right?

Not really. **Biodiversity loss continues apace** despite these global agreements and conservation actions, and is unlikely to stop any time soon

[https://blogs.csiro.au/ecos/conservation-parks-are-growing-so-why-are-species-still-declining/?utm\\_source=Ecos+CSIRO&utm\\_campaign=11c5ac2a9d-ECOS+June+2015&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_3ee5fec188-11c5ac2a9d-22969205&ct=t\(ECOS+June+2015\)&mc\\_cid=11c5ac2a9d&mc\\_eid=381404c825](https://blogs.csiro.au/ecos/conservation-parks-are-growing-so-why-are-species-still-declining/?utm_source=Ecos+CSIRO&utm_campaign=11c5ac2a9d-ECOS+June+2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3ee5fec188-11c5ac2a9d-22969205&ct=t(ECOS+June+2015)&mc_cid=11c5ac2a9d&mc_eid=381404c825)

# Stop the dust: how we're avoiding Mad Max's Fury Road

Posted: 18 June 2015 | Author: [Adam Knight](#) | Filed under: [Land and Water](#) | Tags: [Dust](#), [Dustwatch](#), [soil](#)




Dust events, like this storm over paddocks on the outskirts of Adelaide, SA, affect many parts of our community.

*By Virginia Tressider*

The world often thinks of Australia as a desolate, dust-ridden landscape (that is, when they aren't freaking out about [our abundance of deadly creatures](#)). And the recent box office hit, *Mad Max: Fury Road*, certainly did a good job of reintroducing audiences to the landscape this wide brown land is famous for - one that is parched, brutal and above all else, dusty!  
<http://csironewsblog.com/2015/06/18/stop-the-dust-how-were-avoiding-mad-maxs-fury-road/>

# The dirt on soil data

MATTHEW CAWOOD

03 Jul, 2015 04:00 AM  A+ A-

 Comments 0



THE torrent of information that poured through last week's Soil, Big Data and the Future of Agriculture conference in Canberra was like the topic of the day: absorbingly interesting, but what does it all mean?

It's early days, but it seems that for agriculture, "big data" is going to flow through three channels.

One channel will route data collected on farms through professional service providers, who will add value to the data through analysis in return for a profit skimmed from the bits and bytes on their way through.

<http://www.stockandland.com.au/news/agriculture/cropping/general-news/the-dirt-on-soil-data/2736561.aspx>

## Europe and the Sustainable Development Goals – Brussels Workshop Highlights Need for Action

[Global Soil Week](#) > [News and Opinion](#) > [News](#) > [Europe and the Sustainable Development Goals – Brussels Workshop Highlights Need for Action](#)

In September of this year, UN Member States will agree on a set of [sustainable development goals](#) (SDGs). After that, it will be up to individual states to implement the goals, thereby initiating a transformation to more social, ecological and economic sustainability. The regions have a special role to play here, not least because the implementation of many SDGs transcends national borders. This is particularly true of the goal to protect natural resources, which in many cases can only be achieved if different countries in the same region coordinate their efforts. Many European countries have already developed and begun to implement sustainability strategies, and an overarching sustainability strategy already exists for EU

Follow the discussions of 600 participants from 80 countries!



**Global  
Soil Week**

Soil. The Substance  
of Transformation.

<http://globalsoilweek.org/areas-of-work/sustainable-development-goals/europe-sdgs-brussels>

# Bright Spark saves lives: finding order in the chaos of bushfires

Posted: May 5, 2015 | Author: [Carol Saab](#) | Filed under: [Environment](#), [Feature Articles](#), [News](#) | Tags: [bushfire](#), [bushfires](#), [fire science](#), [firefighting](#), [simulation](#), [software](#), [summer](#) | [Leave a comment](#)



Bushfires such as this one in Western Australia can be hard to predict.

[James Hilton](#), [CSIRO](#); [Andrew Sullivan](#), [CSIRO](#); [Mahesh Prakash](#), [CSIRO](#), and [Ryan Fraser](#), [CSIRO](#)

Bushfires are highly chaotic natural events, dangerous to people and homes in their path and even more dangerous to those brave enough to fight them.

Australia is all-too-familiar with tragedy caused by bushfire, with days such as Ash Wednesday and [Black Saturday](#) ingrained into public and personal memories. The costs in a bad bushfire season can run into billions of dollars, although nothing can truly account for the lives and communities affected by these events. <http://csironewsblog.com/category/feature-articles/>

## Barnaby Joyce's Shenhua Watermark coal mine battle is far from over

July 13, 2015

☆ Read later

State and federal governments must get this high-stakes decision right.

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The planned Shenhua Watermark coal mine is encircled by the Liverpool Plains in the state's north-west. Photo: Louise Kennerley

The planned Shenhua Watermark coal mine encircled by the Liverpool Plains in the state's north-west raises two important issues.

One question is whether mine opponent Barnaby Joyce can remain in federal cabinet while expressing views that undermine a decision of Environment Minister Greg Hunt to approve the plan with 18 conditions. Strictly speaking, he has breached cabinet solidarity and should

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/smh-editorial/barnaby-joyces-shenhua-watermark-coal-mine-battle-is-far-from-over-20150713-giawe9.html>



# Shenhua mine's water uncertainty means we should proceed with caution

July 24, 2015 1:34y AEST

The Liverpool Plains near Gosford in New South Wales where the Watermark coal mine would be built. The Conversation. CC BY-SA

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The controversial Shenhua Watermark coal mine in New South Wales recently cleared another hurdle along the way to being granted full approval to proceed. But there are major environmental risks which should still call the project into question.

The mine, approved under environmental law by minister Greg Hunt, has earned the ire of federal agriculture minister Barnaby Joyce. Minister Joyce stated that it was "ridiculous that you would have a major mine in the midst of Australia's best agricultural land."

### Author



**Matthew Curran**  
Lecturer in Hydrogeology, School of Environmental Engineering at MIT University

### Disclosure statement

Matthew Curran does not work for, consult, own shares in or hold a financial interest in any company or organization that would benefit.

<http://theconversation.com/shenhua-mines-water-uncertainty-means-we-should-proceed-with-caution-44988>

## Plain and simple, agriculture is at risk

MIKE FOLEY

16 Jul, 2015 04:00 AM

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“  
*But the greediest grab of all is pitched by the big Australian*  
”

IF YOU thought Shenhua's Watermark mine was the ultimate test of big coal's grip on government, you would be sadly mistaken - worse is yet to come.

Plans for massive mines that will dig into prime agricultural country across Australia are progressing, sparking strong community opposition.

Hillside has plans for a big copper mine for the Yorke Peninsula, KEPCO, a coal mine in the Bylong Valley.

Anglo American wants to build a mega pit at its Drayton mine on the

### LATEST

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<http://www.theland.com.au/news/agriculture/general/opinion/plain-and-simple-agriculture-is-at-risk/2737661.aspx>

## FactCheck: does coal-fired power cost \$79/kWh and wind power \$1502/kWh?

July 20, 2015 1:37pm AEST



Photo: Alan Jones speaking at a public event in Adelaide. Photo: ABC News/ABC News

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*80% of Australian energy comes from coal, coal-fired power, and it's about \$79 a kilowatt hour. Wind power is about \$1502 a kilowatt hour. That is unaffordable. If you take that power and feed it into the grid, then every person watching this program has electricity bills going through the roof. - Broadcaster Alan Jones, panel discussion on Q&A, ABC TV, July 20, 2015*

<http://theconversation.com/factcheck-does-coal-fired-power-cost-79-kwh-and-wind-power-1502-kwh-44956>



## 50% renewable energy would put Australia in line with leading nations

July 24, 2015 1:45pm AEST

California has realised that investing in renewables is a smart economic policy. [Tony Wood](#) explains why. [Comment](#) 10/79

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Opposition leader Bill Shorten told the Labor Party conference this morning that the party's policy should be for 50% of electricity to come from renewables by 2030.

This would bring Australia abreast with its international competitors such as California, with its [recently announced target](#) of 50% of electricity from renewables by 2030, and Germany, where the [Energiewende](#) ("energy transformation") will see the country commit to 40-45% non-nuclear green power by 2020 and 55-60% by 2025.

Author



**JOHN MADDEN**  
Professor of Strategic Management, Monash University, Victoria  
Graduate School of Management, Monash University

Disclosure statement

John Madden does not work for, consult, is a consultant to, or hold any other kind of relationship with any company or organization.

<http://theconversation.com/50-renewable-energy-would-put-australia-in-line-with-leading-nations-45152>



## Labor embraces renewables at the cost of good climate policy

July 25, 2015 9:30am AEST

LABOR'S NEW 50% RENEWABLES TARGET IS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. BUT WHAT ABOUT OTHER 'SMART POLICIES'? [Comment](#) 10/100

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At this weekend's ALP National Conference, Bill Shorten is likely to propose a target of 50% renewable electricity by 2030 as Labor's central climate change policy.

This proposal demonstrates in spades how poisonous climate change politics has trumped good policy. As with taxation, neither main party seems prepared to develop an effective and efficient climate change policy and make a case for it in a way the electorate will embrace.

Author



**Tony Wood**  
Chairman Director, Energy at  
Oxford Institute

Disclosure statement

Tony Wood works for Energy at Oxford Institute. Tony Wood does not work for, consult, is a consultant to, or hold any other kind of relationship with any company or organization.

<http://theconversation.com/labor-embraces-renewables-at-the-cost-of-good-climate-policy-45039>

## How much would Labor's 50% renewable energy policy cost Australian households?

July 20, 2015 5:02am AEST



Labor leader Bill Shorten says new renewable energy of the nation will be a good thing.

The Labor Opposition's proposed policy to increase Australia's renewable electricity generation to 50% by 2030 has drawn the expected [response](#) about rising electricity prices. How large will be the impact of such a policy on household budgets really be?

**Author**

 **Hugh Spiller**  
Fellow of Agriculture, Centre for Climate Economics & Policy at Australian National University

**Disclosure statement**

Hugh Spiller is a member of the Board of the Climate Institute.

**Partner**

 Australian National University  
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<http://theconversation.com/how-much-would-labors-50-renewable-energy-policy-cost-australian-households-44997>

# Wind turbines do not work

By [Graeme Weber](#) - posted Tuesday, 21 July 2015

Wind Turbines might well be visually non-aesthetic and cause discomfort to those living nearby, however the greatest reason they should not be built is because they do not work! The information presented below is taken from NEM (National Electricity Market) web site a government body overseeing the Eastern Australia energy system and a very interesting article 'Wind Farms in Eastern Australia – Recent Lessons' by Paul Miskelly (2012).

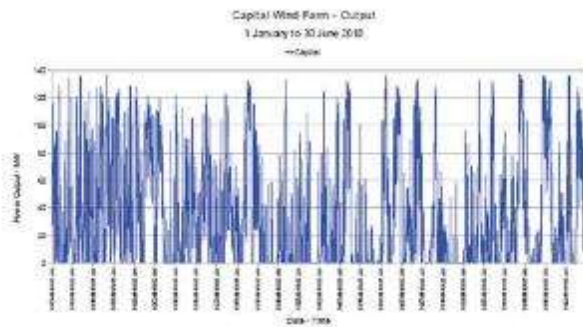


Figure 1. Capital wind farm (5-minute average data) output 1 January - 30 June 2010

**Graeme Weber** is a retired geologist.

<http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=17528>

07 JUL 2015 | REPORT

## A Clash of Green and Brown: Germany Struggles to End Coal

*A recent battle over imposing a "climate fee" on coal-fired power plants highlights Germany's continuing paradox: Even as the nation aspires to be a renewable energy leader, it is exploiting its vast reserves of dirty brown coal.*

BY CHRISTIAN SCHWÄGERL

The hole in the landscape that opens up in front of the group of visitors is so vast and deep that some of them simply stare, mouths agape. "This mine



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christian Schwägerl is a Berlin-based journalist who writes for GEO magazine, the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, and other media

outlets. He is the author of the book *The Anthropocene – The Human Era and How it Shapes Our Planet*, which was published in English in 2014. Previously for *Yale Environment 360*, Schwägerl reported on efforts in Europe to tackle nitrogen pollution.

**MORE BY THIS AUTHOR**

[http://e360.yale.edu/feature/a\\_clash\\_of\\_green\\_and\\_brown\\_germany\\_struggles\\_to\\_end\\_coal/2891/](http://e360.yale.edu/feature/a_clash_of_green_and_brown_germany_struggles_to_end_coal/2891/)

# Engaging the disengaged with science

Posted: 11 March 2015 | Author: [Adam Knight](#) | Filed under: [Education](#), [Feature Articles](#), [News](#) | Tags: [science communications](#) | [6 Comments](#)



Not all science demonstrations will appeal to all people. Image: Melanie Davies/Flickr, CC BY-NC-ND

By [Craig Cormick](#), [CSIRO](#) and [Suzette Searle](#), [Australian National University](#)

Just as we don't all have the same tastes or preferences for football codes or teams - or even genres of music or flavours of ice cream - so too we don't all have the same tastes or preferences when it comes to science.

<http://csironewsblog.com/category/feature-articles/>

## Conserving our natural capital

ROSS GITTINS

21 Jul 2015 04:00 AM

Comments 18

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“  
The scientists propose government action to encourage sustainable farming practices  
”

YOU get the feeling Tony Abbott doesn't lie awake at night worrying about what our economic activity is doing to our natural environment.

In which case, those of us who do care about ecological sustainability - including many Coalition voters and, in all probability, Abbott's successor - whether Liberal or Labor - will have a lot of catching up to do.

This looks like being true of our excessive contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions. But it also applies to the more mundane problems of maintaining and restoring our degraded land-water systems.

### RELATED

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Hunt's 'credible' carbon targets

Ag White Paper finally here

<http://www.stockandland.com.au/news/agriculture/agribusiness/general-news/conserving-our-natural-capital/2738185.aspx>



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## Valuing our planet

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Wednesday 16 July 2015 8:15 PM

Everything has its price. But what about the value of our environment? Can you attach a monetary value on landscape, biodiversity or clean air? Some say we should value nature in a market sense, as we do for most other things. A very passionate panel of experts looks at what kind of price tag we can put on our planet. They touch on seed democracy, urbanisation, land management ... and why we have to still all the bees.



MONDAY TO THURSDAY 8PM  
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Presented by Paul Barclay

WALDO GUN AND SHOULD YOU PUT A PRICE TAG ON THE WORLD'S LANDSCAPE? (RN) CC BY 3.0

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bigideas/valuing-our-planet/6342048>

## Who owns your farm data?

MATTHEW CAWOOD

08 Jul, 2015 04:00 AM

Comments 1



WHO owns farm data in the age of Big Data? The US Farm Bureau Federation's two-year quest to answer that question has some lessons for Australia.

Mary Kay Thatcher, the lobby organisation's Senior Director of Congressional Affairs, told the Soil and Big Data conference that the Farm Bureau started getting concerned a couple of years ago, when farmers started calling in to query opaque prescription agriculture contracts.

<http://www.stockandland.com.au/news/agriculture/general/news/who-owns-your-farm-data/2736563.aspx>

# Labor's renewables target just part of the bigger transition we need

OPINION

By [John Connor](#)

Updated Wed at 3:26pm Wed 22 Jul 2015, 3:26pm



**Photo:** [It makes little sense to have half of our power generation renewables if the other half is dominated by coal. \(Reuters: David Gray\)](#)

*Labor's proposal to make 50 per cent of Australia's energy renewable by 2030 is significant, but it needs to be seen as part of economic modernisation as well as climate outcomes, writes John Connor.*

Global investments in renewable energy last year outpaced investments in fossil fuel generation. Yet in Australia, the political football that is our multibillion-dollar energy sector languishes in a morass of policy uncertainty.

[John Connor](#) is the CEO of The Climate Institute.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-07-22/connor-labors-renewables-target/6639968>

## It's been a week of political daring (with some exceptions)

OPINION

By ABC's [Barrie Cassidy](#)

Posted about 7 hours ago Fri 24 Jul 2015, 6:58am



**Photo:** [COAG did little more than agree to keep both the increase in the GST and the increase in the Medicare levy on the table. But by recent standards, that's progress. \(AAP: Stefan Postles\)](#)

*Refreshingly, and belatedly, this has been a week of policy initiatives and political leadership. Tax, climate change and asylum policy all got a workout, but inevitably there were some still sticking to old scripts, writes Barrie Cassidy.*

Refreshingly, and belatedly, this has been a week of policy initiatives and political daring.

The NSW Premier, [Mike Baird, was the first to step up saying he was "sick of politics in this country"](#) - "the point scoring, fear, smear, who wins the daily news cycle". And with that he proposed to raise the GST from 10 per cent to 15 per cent as a way of sustainably covering the increasing costs of health and education.

**Barrie Cassidy** is the presenter of the ABC program *Insiders*.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-07-24/cassidy-a-week-of-political-daring/6644498>

# Busting the myths around the Murray-Darling Basin Plan

*Juliet Le Feuvre ABC Environment 17 Jul 2015*





The Murray River at Loxton.

Much is said and written about the Murray-Darling Basin Plan that is simply wrong. Sorting myth from reality is half the challenge of understanding the river system.

NO ONE SETS out to ruin a river system. Yet decisions made about water use over the last century have had the cumulative effect of bringing the mighty Murray River to the brink of ecological collapse. Turning this decline around requires decisive action to give the river — and its communities — any chance of returning to health. Prime Minister John Howard made this crucial realisation in 2006 when he and then Water Minister Malcolm Turnbull set in train the course of events that lead to the development of the

*Juliet Le Feuvre is Healthy Rivers Campaign Manager at Environment Victoria.*

<http://www.abc.net.au/environment/articles/2015/07/17/4275501.htm>

# Agriculture's biggest issue

Posted By: Louise Preece on 30/05/2015 4:00:00 AM | Comments (2)

🖨️ A+ A-

🗨️ Comments 2



WHAT is the biggest issue facing agriculture at the moment? Is it drought?

If you were the government and listening to Australia's peak farm bodies, drought would certainly be right up there with the big agricultural problems.

There's no doubt that drought is impacting many producers at the moment, but it must also be said the membership of peak farm bodies is rapidly declining.

So are the peak farm bodies truly representative of the issues that Australian farmers face? The answer to this question might well be no.

<http://www.stockandland.com.au/blogs/a-matter-of-opinion/agricultures-biggest-issue/2733526.aspx>

The screenshot shows the ABC Radio National website interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for Home, Programs, Guide, Subjects, Features, RNIV, Podcasts, Broadcasts, and About, along with a search bar. Below the navigation, the program title 'Ockham's Razor' is displayed, followed by links for Program Home, Past Programs, Features, Subscribe, About Us, and Contact Us. The main content area features the article 'Against mass extinction' with a 'Listen now' button and a 'Download audio' button. The article text discusses the idea of mass extinction being caused by humans, mentioning Elizabeth Kolbert's book 'The Sixth Extinction' and Peter Ward's views. A red graphic with the text 'THE SIXTH EXTINCTION AN UNNATURAL HISTORY' is also visible. On the right side, there is a portrait of Gordon T-98 and the text 'Presented by Robyn Williams'.

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/ockhamsrazor/humans-not-responsible-for-mass-extinction/6550630>

# Why renewable 'biomass' is not as good for the climate as we'd hoped

*William H. Schlesinger ABC Environment 23 Jul 2015*

Burning biomass to generate electricity is officially listed as being 'carbon neutral'. But claims that it helps prevent climate change are not as straight-forward as they seem.

WHILST I HAVE BEEN living in New England for the past seven years, a new industry has popped up in Maine and the southeastern US — the wood pellet industry.

It has revitalised the sluggish demand for forest products in these regions. Biomass-powered utility plants in Europe are asking for the delivery of more than 5 million tonnes of wood pellets annually, which are burned to generate electricity. In the urge to fulfill its commitment to reducing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions to the atmosphere, the European Union counts all biomass-energy as carbon-neutral. Australia would like to do the same.

## BACKGROUND BRIEFING EXPLORES FORESTS



[Click through for the full investigation](#)

**William H. Schlesinger** is dean emeritus of the Nicholas School of the Environment, Duke University, North Carolina, USA.


<http://www.abc.net.au/environment/articles/2015/07/23/4276529.htm>

# Climate for change: Chinese plans augur well for Paris deal

July 1, 2015

☆ Read later

It is highly unlikely that a disastrous split between developed and developing nations will derail this UN climate change conference.

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## EDITORIAL



With other nations showing the way this time, Australia can be caught out with a weak contribution: Tony Abbott and Chinese President Xi Jinping . *Photo: Rob Griffith*

Largely out of self-interest but also with a self-declared "sense of responsibility to fully engage in global governance", pollution-choked China is transforming from a significant problem for climate change to becoming part of the solution.

That is good news for Australians but difficult news for the Abbott government, which faces enormous pressure from voters and our trading partners to do more to tackle climate change.

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/smh-editorial/climate-for-change-chinese-plans-augur-well-for-paris-deal-20150701-gi29pb.html>

# Mining debate rages on

Posted By: **Miranda Kenny** on 19/07/2015 4:00:00 AM | Comments (0)

🖨️ A+ A-

🗨️ Comments 0



MINING remains a highly contentious issue for producers across South Australia, and those further afield.

The federal government's decision to back the controversial Shenhua Watermark coal mine on the fertile Liverpool Plains, NSW, last week provoked widespread condemnation from many, most especially as the announcement came only days after the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper was released.

<http://www.stockandland.com.au/blogs/a-matter-of-opinion/mining-debate-rages-on/2738007.aspx>

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## Precious petals

Download audio | Show transcript

Sunday 7 June 2015 7:45:04

Australia needs two types of science in order to flourish, argues Len Fisher from the University of Bristol.

The first must be concerned with using the knowledge scientists and engineers already possess to provide solutions to problems and create new products. The other type of science equally important is concerned with seeking entirely new forms of knowledge.

Prioritising the former over the latter through 'targeted research', he says, risks entirely missing the point of scientific enquiry.

**Len Fisher**  
Presented by Robyn Williams

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/ockhamsrazor/len-fisher-precious-petals-targeted-research/6518060>

# Our native forest regulations need to move with the times

Janet Rice ABC Environment 20 Jul 2015



The RFAs governing forestry activities have failed to protect both the industry and the environment, says Rice. *Credit: ABC Environment*

The rules governing our native forests, RFAs, were drawn up nearly 20 years ago. They need to be thoroughly reviewed and updated to reflect the changes in the forestry industry that have occurred in the last two decades.

BIT BY BIT, Tony Abbott is dismantling everything scientists are telling us we need to do to protect our environment and combat climate change. A large chunk of this destructive agenda is aimed squarely at our native forests.

*Senator Janet Rice is the Australian Greens spokesperson for forests*

<http://www.abc.net.au/environment/articles/2015/07/20/4276518.htm>

## Fracking subsidies would be better spent elsewhere



Anti-fracking protesters in Preston. 'A team at Cornell University has shown that the greenhouse gas emissions of shale gas are higher than coal burning.' Photograph: Paul Ellis/AFP/Getty Images

You quote the chief of the task force on shale gas, Lord Smith of Finsbury, as saying, "If someone demonstrated that developing this industry (fracking) in the UK would mean a substantial raising of greenhouse gas emissions, that would be a showstopper" (['Too soon to decide' whether fracking is good for UK, 15 July](#)). In fact, many scientific papers have demonstrated the "substantial raising of

**Dr Robin Russell-Jones**

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jul/23/fracking-subsidies-would-be-better-spent-elsewhere>



# Logging in 21st century is a high-tech operation

Nick Roberts ABC Environment 21 Jul 2015



Nick Roberts and Dean Kearney from Forestry Corporation NSW in the Bruxner Park Forest near Coffs Harbour. *Credit: Gregg Borschmann (Background Briefing)*

Gone are the bad old days of two blokes, a chainsaw and a rough map. Logging in the 21st century is safer, more accurate and more reliable than ever before.

While timber has been harvested from production forests in NSW for generations, new technology that delivers precision mapping and enables mobile access to real-time data means today's forestry operations bear little resemblance to those of even 20 years ago.

*Nick Roberts is chief executive of Forestry Corporation NSW.*

<http://www.abc.net.au/environment/articles/2015/07/21/4276506.htm>

20 JUL 2015: ANALYSIS

## Alien Islands: Why Killing Rats Is Essential to Save Key Wildlife

Alien rats introduced by ships are decimating populations of birds and other wildlife on islands from the sub-Antarctic to California. Effective programs to eradicate the rats are underway but are encountering opposition from animal activists and some green groups.

BY TED WILLIAMS

Earlier this year a major victory appears to have been won in the ongoing battle to resurrect island ecosystems and, in the process, save otherwise doomed species. It was achieved not by manipulating habitat or introducing native species, but by killing aliens – rats.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ted Williams, an avid hunter and angler, writes strictly about fish and wildlife conservation. He is a longtime contributor to *Audubon* magazine and is conservation editor for *Fly Rod & Reel* magazine. Previously for *es&e*, he reported on illegal wildlife trade on the Internet and global progress in shark conservation efforts.

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## Tony Abbott's fight against solar and wind power in Australia

Recent verbal and policy assaults on wind energy by the Australian prime minister undermine the potential of the country's renewable energy industry, reports *The Age*



Woolnorth wind farm as seen from Marrawah, Tasmania, Australia. Photograph: Heath Holden/Alamy

In the not too distant past Tony Abbott hopped on his bike and set off for a ride around Rottnest Island. His path took him right under the West Australian island's sole wind turbine, and according to the prime minister this helped him form the view that windfarms were visually awful, noisy and potentially a health risk.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jul/22/tony-abbotts-fight-against-solar-and-wind-power-in-australia>

## Wes King: Foolish to cut U.S. soil, water conservation programs



In this 2013 file photo, Auburn farmer Dave Moose plants cereal rye seed on his farm acreage as a winter cover crop. File/The State Journal-Register

Posted 29 June 2015 at 10:06 PM

Food is foundational. Eating is so much more than an isolated act of consumption. Eating connects and unites us all.

Yet eating – and food and farming, for that matter – are dependent on something that is even more foundational: clean water and healthy, productive soil.

<http://www.sj-r.com/article/20150629/OPINION/150629497>

# Reinvigorating soil performance

05 Jul, 2015 04:00 AM A+ A-

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“ We got out to come and look and learn from the rundown ”

Jim Hamilton

PROACTIVE testing for nematodes could eliminate losses of up to \$40 a tonne and set in place a return to soil health for the Hamilton family’s Moora district cropping operation in Western Australia.

Run by Neville and Lyn Hamilton, in conjunction with son Jim, the enterprise includes almost 3000 hectares of predominantly wheat, canola and lupin grown under a two cereal-one break regime across a blend of owned, leased and share farmed country.

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13 JUN 2015 10:00 AM

## Beyond the Perfect Drought: California's Real Water Crisis

The record breaking drought in California is not chiefly the result of low precipitation. Three factors – rising temperatures, groundwater depletion, and a shrinking Colorado River – mean the most populous U.S. state will face decades of water shortages and must adapt.

BY GLEN MACDONALD

The current drought afflicting California is indeed historic, but not because of the low precipitation totals. In fact, in terms of overall precipitation and spring snowpack, the past three years are not record-breakers, according to weather data for the past century. Similarly, paleoclimate studies show that the current drought is not exceptional given the natural variations in



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Glen MacDonald is the John Muir Memorial Chair in Geography and a Distinguished Professor at the University of California, Los Angeles. His research focuses on climatic and environmental change and its impacts on ecosystems and humans.



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# Australians fear being climate change 'lifters' while others are 'leaners'

Yvo de Boer, who headed the UN framework convention on climate change, says 'we must respect that each shoulder is not able to shoulder the same amount'



De Boer, who now heads up the Global Green Growth Institute, says developing countries will 'leapfrog' richer nations when it comes to the use of renewable energy. Photograph: Keld Navntoft/AFP/Getty Images

Thursday 23 July 2015 17.24 AESTLast modified on Thursday 23 July 2015 17.27 AEST

Australians' biggest fear in tackling climate change is that they are doing the "lifting" while other countries do the "leaning", the former head of the [United Nations](#) agency tasked with leading the global response to climate change has said.

**Shalailah Medhora** is a political reporter for Guardian Australia.

<http://www.theguardian.com/profile/shalailah-medhora>

## Fred Kirschenmann: Soil – from Dirt to Lifeline (TED video)

Posted November 6, 2014 by *Stefan Boone* & filed under *Soil Biology, Soil Composition, Soil Conservation, Soil Erosion & Contamination, Soil Rehabilitation, Structure.*



Fred Kirschenmann has been involved in sustainable agriculture and food issues for most of his life. He currently serves as both a Distinguished Fellow at the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University, and as President of the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture in Pocantico Hills, New York. He also still provides management oversight of his family's 2,600 acre organic farm in south central North Dakota. He was recently named as one of the first ten James Beard Foundation Leadership Awards which recognizes visionaries in creating more healthful, more sustainable, and safer food systems. He is the author of a book of essays which track the development of his thought over the past 30 years; *Cultivating an Ecological Conscience: Essays by a Farmer Philosopher*, published by the University of Kentucky Press.

<http://permaculturenews.org/2014/11/06/fred-kirschenmann-soil-dirt-lifeline-ted-video/>



## The march of the king crabs: a warning from Antarctica

July 21, 2019 8:12AM AEST

by Writers of the Western Antarctic Peninsula, Kathryn Smith, Author provided

**Email** *Changing wildlife: this article is part of a series looking at how key species such as bees, insects and fish respond to environmental change, and what this means for the rest of the planet.*

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Hundreds of metres below the surface of the freezing ocean surrounding Antarctica, the seafloor is teeming with life. The animals living there have no idea that an army is on the brink of invading their tranquil environment.

### Author



**Kathryn Smith**  
Postdoctoral Research Scientist  
at Florida Institute of Technology

### Disclosure statement

Kathryn Smith currently works on a project funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF).

<http://theconversation.com/the-march-of-the-king-crabs-a-warning-from-antarctica-43062>

#### IYS Australian Soil of the Month – July

Ferri-Sodic Mesotrophic Yellow Chromosol

During the 2015 International Year of Soils, each month we ask a soil researcher to select his or her favourite soil. Tim Oyethe is the current Federal President of Soil Science Australia and Past President of the Western Australian Branch. Tim is a long serving soil surveyor in Western Australia and is passionate about all soils, and we couldn't resist his enthusiasm to write about another soil – one that many would perhaps consider Western Australia's most common soil (aside from the Pale Deep Sand introduced by Noel Schoenebeck for last month's featured soil).

#### If you had to choose a special Australian soil type what would it be?

Ok, so Tim has already had a go at illustrating his favourite soil (a Calcareous Loam for the month of February) so why is he getting second 'bite at the pie' to introduce and discuss another soil, this time for the month of July? Oddly the answer to this is because this particular soil is in fact Tim's least favourite soil, yet it is considered to be one of most common and iconic soils for the Sandroper State (and considerably easier to dig and observe during the winter months – i.e. about now). It is commonly referred to in Western Australia as a 'gravelly duplex' although it can also have a raft of different names depending on the proportion and / or agglomeration of the gravel content and depth to clay and local farmer knowledge.



<http://www.soilscienceaustralia.com.au/iys-projects>

# Healthy soil

## TOPICS

Published: 1 July 2015 9:30 am On: [Opinion](#)

**DINESH PANDAY**

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I ask kids where their food comes from, and they say the supermarket. We have lost that feeling which connects us directly to the soil. Other than farming and gardening the soil gets little love. We walk on it, but we don't really want to see it in the house or on our shoes. However, soil is the foundation for food, animal feed, fuel and natural fiber production, the supply of clean water, nutrient cycling and a range of ecosystem functions. That's why the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has declared 2015 the official International Year of Soil to increase awareness and understanding of the importance of healthy soil for food, security and



essential ecosystem functions.

<http://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/healthy-soil-2/>



**“War and pestilence might kill large numbers of people, but in most cases the population recovers. But lose the soil and everything else goes with it.”** *George Monbiot, published in the Guardian 25th March 2015*