



Endangered earth: The secret battle to save our soils

We can't bury our heads in the sand any longer. More than a third of Earth's top layer is at risk. Is there hope for our planet's most precious endangered species?



(Image: Auscape/Getty)

FIND the places where farms give way to the California wilderness and you're sure to encounter an endangered species. It is not aggressive, but it is omnivorous, devouring anything that happens to fall dead within its reach. And like most rare beasts, the extinction of [Abruptic durixeralfs](#) would have cascading impacts on the ecosystem around it.

Don't be misled by the name. This is neither animal nor plant nor microbe, but a subgroup of soils. Its members nonetheless slot into a classification system every bit as elaborate as that we use to categorise life forms. In the US alone, more than 20,000 soils have been catalogued. Many are facing extinction.

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22830423-300-endangered-earth-the-secret-battle-to-save-our-soils/>

Coalition committee tries to balance climate science briefings by inviting denialists from thinktank

Graham Readfearn

Climate scientists have been briefing Australian politicians this week. But one session did not go to plan



📷 Dennis Jensen and Craig Kelly during question time. Photograph: Dean Lewins/AAP

Australian MPs and senators have been attending briefings in Canberra this week by some of our country's world-leading climate scientists.

The timing to bring our elected representatives up to speed is apt, given the UN climate change talks in Paris are less than six weeks away.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/planet-oz/2015/oct/23/coalition-committee-tries-to-balance-climate-science-briefings-by-inviting-denialists-from-think-tank>

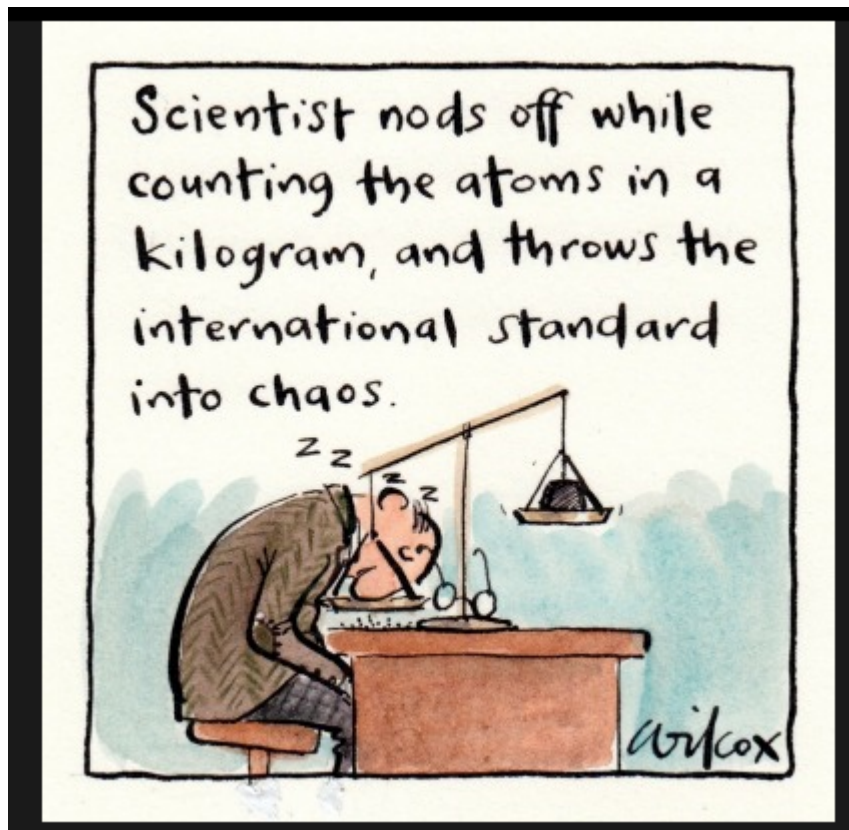
State Government Warned About Company Hoping To Mine Near Major Sydney Water Supply



By [Thom Mitchell](#) on October 26, 2015 [Environment](#)

A billionaire Indian industrialist charged with corruption is seeking to mine coal within 10 kilometres of a dam that supplies Sydney's drinking water. Thom Mitchell reports.

Wollongong Coal's plan to expand its underground mine in Sydney's drinking water catchment is under attack from Lock the Gate, with the group spotlighting allegations of corruption, human rights abuses, compliance breaches, and what it says is the company's poor financial performance. <https://newmatilda.com/2015/10/26/corrupt-indian-coal-mining-company-wants-license-to-dig-near-major-sydney-water-supply/>



<http://www.smh.com.au/photogallery/federal-politics/cartoons/cathy-wilcox-20090909-fhd6.html>

Opinion
and Policy

Assessment and Evaluation of Soil Ecosystem Services

Nicholas B. Comerford,* Alan J. Franzluebbers, Mary E. Stromberger,
Lawrence Morris, Daniel Markewitz, and Rebecca Moore

Soil ecosystem services are diverse, valuable, and underappreciated. They are classified as provisioning, regulating, supporting, and cultural services. This paper is the product of a Soil Science Society of America task force convened to define and value ecosystem services derived from soil for the benefit of scientists, elected officials, and practitioners with the hope that a better understanding of soil ecosystem services will result in informed decisions in the use of soils. Soil provides medicines, building materials, and nutrients. Soil controls nutrient and water cycles. Soil is capable of degrading wastes and detoxifying compounds. Soil is a habitat for diverse microorganisms and fauna, which in turn supports valuable ecosystem services. Soil also supports recreational activities and is part of our cultural heritage evident in legend, religion, song, and art. The value of soil's ecosystem services exceeds that of other parts of an ecosystem, yet the scope and value of soil-derived ecosystem services remains poorly understood. Three of the greatest challenges that remain are to develop (i) a better understanding and documentation of soil biodiversity, (ii) more comprehensive economic valuation of soil services, and (iii) an understanding of how to manage soil to maximize its benefits to humankind.

<http://nalcd.nal.usda.gov/download/57856/PDF>

OPINION 21 October 2015

Canada sees reason – time for others to follow

SO FAREWELL then Stephen Harper, the now ex-prime minister of Canada. Under his 10-year premiership a country that once enjoyed a deserved reputation as a scientific and environmental leader became something of a pariah. It [tore up its climate pledges](#), cut science spending and notoriously tried to [silence scientists](#) employed by the federal government. Journalists wanting to talk to them faced a Byzantine and sometimes Kafkaesque system of vetting before being granted access.

In 2013, a survey of more than 4000 federal scientists found that 90 per cent felt they were not allowed to speak freely to the media, and 24 per cent said they had been directly asked to exclude or alter information. In a modern democracy, that's a disgrace.

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22830443-000-canada-sees-reason-time-for-others-to-follow/>



Australian education fails one in four young people – but not the wealthy ones

October 26, 2015 8.52am AEDT

How do we create an education system that works for all? www.shutterstock.com

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How do you know if an education system works well for all learners, not just those who are most likely to succeed?

Education is an important mechanism through which opportunity and success are determined.

Yet the opportunities offered by Australia's education system are far from fairly and evenly distributed, according to new analysis from a report we've [published today](#).

<http://theconversation.com/australian-education-fails-one-in-four-young-people-but-not-the-wealthy-ones-49663>

Author



Stephen Lamb

Research Chair in Education and Director of the Centre for International Research on Education Systems, Victoria University

Disclosure statement

Stephen Lamb does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive

'Tory U-turn on fracking regulations will leave safeguards totally inadequate'

Government seeks to lift a ban on shale gas drilling in drinking water protection zones, key wildlife sites and under national parks. Without these strong rules, fracking should not be allowed in this country



📍 Grindsbrook Clough near Edale, Peak District Derbyshire. The government had previously agreed an outright ban on fracking in national parks, sites of special scientific interest and areas of outstanding natural beauty. Photograph: Julie Mowbray/Alamy

On Tuesday, in a committee room in the House of Commons, the government will try to sneak through fracking regulations that are totally inadequate, completing their U-turn.

In January, under pressure from the public and MPs, ministers caved in and agreed to a special Labour amendment to the Infrastructure Bill. This seemed

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/oct/26/tory-u-turn-on-fracking-regulations-will-leave-safeguards-totally-inadequate>

2015 Photography Competition – Stewards of the Soil



“The Future is in My Hands.”

Image by Janine Waters.

2012 Finalist – ‘Future Farmers’ – Open Category

2015 Photography Competition
Closing Date Extended!!

“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



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 your vision of the relationship between Australian farming and the soil it occurs in, under and on.

This year's theme is:

'STEWARDS OF THE SOIL'

We are looking for images that portray the myriad of colours and textures of a soil profile; the incredible produce grown in that soil; farmers working the land and/or working to restore degraded soils; or images that portray efforts at maintaining the soil's life and sustainability.

The photography competition follows on from the success of the National Centre for Farmer Health's previous competitions in 2010 and 2012. Help celebrate Australian farming and the International Year of Soil.

SNAPSHOT of the COMPETITION

- Entries close ~~Sunday 25th October 2015~~ **EXTENDED – Friday 30th October 2015**
- Categories: Open, Secondary School Student, and Primary School Student
- Cash prizes for winning and runner-up entries, including a People's Choice award
- Judged by renowned photographers Jill Frawley, Ewen Bell and Robert Drummond
- Finalists and a selection of entries will be included in a travelling Photography Exhibition (venues to be announced)

- Winners will be announced at Federation Square in Melbourne on International Soil Day, Saturday 5th December 2015

Santos takeover battle: What does this mean for SA's giant?

OPINION

By [Ticky Fullerton](#)

Updated Fri at 4:23pm Fri 23 Oct 2015, 4:23pm



Photo: I'm still yet to meet the genius that picked the oil price fall, but that doesn't help Santos now.
(Photo: www.abc.net.au/news)

Santos has the energy, as the company logo says, but the question now is whether its board has what it takes to fend off the power (and money) of the Kingdoms, writes Ticky Fullerton.

No one saw this one coming over the hill: [the cool \\$7 billion bid lobbed in at oil giant Santos by a group which frankly almost no one in Australia would have heard about until yesterday.](#)

The bid was firmly knocked back by the Santos board as low ball. In Adelaide, where Santos has its headquarters, this takeover battle is the talk of the town and it's only just beginning.

Santos is the last big company in South Australia. Gone are Fauldings, News Corp, Southcorp and the car companies. What everyone wants to know is, will Santos be next? And if so, what does that mean for the head office and jobs?

Ticky Fullerton presents [The Business](#) on ABC and ABC News 24.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-10-23/fullerton-santos-takeover-battle/6880324>

Are fossil fuel companies using IEA reports to talk up demand?

International Energy Agency projections have consistently failed to track the huge growth of renewables - yet many fossil fuel companies present their figures as fact



IEA say their reports are not predictions of the future, but rather a guide. Photograph: John Giles/PA

International Energy Agency (IEA) projections that show the world will continue its heavy reliance on fossil fuels deep into this century are uncertain and being used to mislead governments and shareholders, according to a new report.

The fossil fuel industry commonly cites modelling by the IEA, an intergovernmental organisation considered to be an authoritative source of information on energy, which finds demand for their products increasing until at least 2040.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/oct/23/are-fossil-fuel-companies-using-iea-reports-to-talk-up-demand>



<http://www.smh.com.au/photogallery/federal-politics/cartoons/cathy-wilcox-20090909-fhd6.html>

To feed growing cities we need to stop urban sprawl eating up our food supply

October 26, 2015 1:29pm AEDT



New season asparagus from farmland on Melbourne's city fringe. Matthew Carey

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If you've eaten any of the new season's asparagus recently, it probably came from Koo Wee Rup, a small town 60 kilometres to the south east of Melbourne. Koo Wee Rup produces [over 90% of Australia's asparagus](#). The region has perfect conditions for asparagus growing, and [its ancient peaty soils have a reputation](#) for producing some of the best asparagus in the world.

<http://theconversation.com/to-feed-growing-cities-we-need-to-stop-urban-sprawl-eating-up-our-food-supply-49651>

The demographics that will change our world and our politics

OPINION

By [Peter Curson](#)

Posted Thu at 8:52am Thu 22 Oct 2015, 8:52am

Authors



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Disclosure statement

Rachel Carey is a Research Fellow on the Foodprint Melbourne project, which is funded by the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation. Project partners include the City of Melbourne and the peak bodies representing the local government areas in Melbourne's city fringe foodbowl. She is also a Research Fellow at Monash University on the project 'Regulating Food Labels: The case of free range food products in Australia', which is funded by the Australian Research Council.

Jen Sheridan is a researcher on the Foodprint Melbourne project, which receives funding from and partners with the organisations listed above.



[Photo: Mega cites are appearing across the world and people are leaving rural areas as never before. \(Nigel Killeen/ Getty Images\)](#)

Falling fertility, increasing life expectancy, accelerated ageing and huge population movements: these are the trends in demographics that will change our world as we know it and challenge our politics, writes Peter Curson.

We are currently experiencing the greatest demographic upheaval our world has ever seen and over the next few decades our world is going to look very different.

Currently the world is experiencing rapid population growth even though fertility continues to fall in many countries. Life expectancy continues to increase, ageing of the population is happening at an unprecedented rate as a result of lower fertility and longer life expectancy, more people than ever before are on the move, cities are growing like never before with increasing social differentiation, and the health transition from a regime of infectious disease to one of chronic diseases is well under way.

[Peter Curson](#) is Honorary Professor in Population & Security at the University of Sydney, and Emeritus Professor of Population and Medical Geography at Macquarie University.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-10-22/curson-the-demographics-that-will-change-our-world/6875200>



Current management is not enough to halt pollution on the Great Barrier Reef

October 26, 2015 6:12am AEDT

Nutrient runoff is one of the major contributors to crown-of-thorns outbreaks. Crown-of-thorns image from www.shutterstock.com

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When the most recent [report card](#) for the Great Barrier Reef was released last year, it painted a depressing picture of the reef's condition.

The condition of the reef, measured by coral, seagrasses and water quality, remains poor. Reductions in nutrients and sediment from rivers flowing into the reef is well less than the [targeted reductions](#). Particularly noticeable is the small reduction in dissolved inorganic nitrogen (17% compared with a target of 50%), the nutrient closely [linked](#) with crown-of-thorn starfish infestations.

Authors



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Emeritus Professor Water Science, Monash University



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Disclosure statement

<http://theconversation.com/current-management-is-not-enough-to-halt-pollution-on-the-great-barrier-reef-49055>

China deal means meltdown time for pro-nuclear 'greens'

Pro-nuclear environmentalists have finally admitted Hinkley C is a white elephant that must be scrapped, but with a Chinese deal now imminent the damage to the UK's low-carbon future has already been done, argues Jonathon Porritt on the Ecologist



📍 Jonathon Porritt talks to protesters at the gates of Hinkley Nuclear power station, at a march against the building of Hinkley C power station. Banner in Chinese says: 'oppose nuclear'. Photograph: Adrian Arbib/Alamy

I wonder what our [pro-nuclear greenies](#) will be thinking this week as they listen to President Xi Jinping and George Osborne bombastically declaring 'a new nuclear dawn for the UK'.

I hope they'll be feeling as ashamed as they should be.

It may be just a little harsh to blame the meltdown in UK energy policy on a handful of well-meaning but monumentally misguided environmentalists, who

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/oct/19/china-deal-means-meltdown-time-for-pro-nuclear-greens>

[EDUCATION](#)



Inequality Still Undermines Australia's Education System. The Good News Is We Know How To Fix It

By [Ben Eltham](#) on 27 October 2015 [Education](#)

A new report confirms the dismal truth: Australia's education system has too many students and not enough funding. If Malcolm Turnbull wants to change that there's a plan ready to go, writes Ben Eltham.

When it comes to the opportunities that top-class education can provide, you can't get a better example than Malcolm Turnbull.

<https://newmatilda.com/2015/10/27/inequality-still-undermines-australias-education-system-the-good-news-is-we-know-how-to-fix-it/>

A MATTER OF OPINION

Drowning in water politics

Posted By: Andrew Norris on 26/10/2015 2:30:00 AM | Comments (0)

🖨️ A+ A-

🗨️ Comments 0



WHETHER the Commonwealth Environment Water Holder is in the Agriculture Minister's or the the Environment Minister's portfolio is not much more than political posturing.

This is because the powers of the Commonwealth Environment Water Holder are bound by the Water Act.

How the Act is implemented, including its strong environment focus, is seeing the current buybacks (despite the cap) pushing up water prices to a point where it's more profitable for those with water entitlements to speculate than grow food.

<http://www.stockjournal.com.au/blogs/a-matter-of-opinion/drowning-in-water-politics/2746431.aspx>



One way to reduce emissions is increase the amount of non-fossil fuel sources of energy. Wind turbine image from www.shutterstock.com

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Before all nations come together in Paris to seal a new deal on climate change, two questions remain: are countries' emissions reduction targets fair, and are they sufficiently ambitious?

Today we have released a [new interactive website](#) that allows you to calculate the answers to those questions, based on a [new paper](#) published in Nature Climate Change.

Country pledges

<http://theconversation.com/choose-your-own-climate-adventure-a-new-website-lets-you-build-a-global-deal-49732>

Get under McLaren Vale's skin by digging its soil on a new tour

26 October 2015 9:56am
BRAD CROUCHEscape

Authors



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Disclosure statement



The beautiful vines of McLaren Vale, South Australia.

TO GET under the skin of a wine region you need to get under its soil. Getting down and dirty in McLaren Vale starts by crossing the Onkaparinga River.

The renowned wine region on Adelaide's southern doorstep is an easy 40-minute drive from the CBD down the Southern Expressway, and as you cross the Onkaparinga Valley Bridge dividing urban from rural, there is a subconscious urge to exhale and relax the shoulders as the city falls behind and country life beckons. <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/travel/australia/get-under-mclaren-vaes-skin-by-digging-its-soil-on-a-new-tour/story-fnjiv0ya-1227582276536>

Lessons learned from the soil and water

Posted: Tuesday, 20 October 2015 1:35 pm | Updated: 10:23 pm, Tue Oct 20, 2015.

By **RICHARD COOK** Guest columnist

Colleagues from area Soil and Water Districts and I had the opportunity to host and join the National Conservation in Action Tour last month. Like minded producers, vendors, conservationists, elected officials and lobbyists from 20 states, two Canadian Provinces and Washington, D.C., headed out in motor coach from Bloomington. Descending on the lush, diverse expanse of southeast Minnesota we visited some state of the art agricultural practices balancing conservation, profitability and sustainability; the key elements of modern farming.

http://www.southernminn.com/faribault_daily_news/opinion/article_21e13c40-9ae2-5cb4-a8ed-15b27e320923.html



Health Check: what should you do if you're bitten by a spider?

October 26, 2015 4.11pm AEDT

Spiders such as this funnel-web (*Hadronyche infensa*) will only bite if threatened. Author provided

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This article is about spider bites in Australia, but doesn't constitute medical advice. Always see a medical professional if you believe you've been bitten or stung by a venomous animal.

I work with spiders for a living, and I've never been bitten by one

Author



Maggie Hardy

Postdoctoral Researcher
The University of Queensland

<http://theconversation.com/health-check-what-should-you-do-if-youre-bitten-by-a-spider-49232>



<http://www.smh.com.au/photogallery/federal-politics/cartoons/alan-moir-20150921-gjrcxr.html>



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

INVASIVE PLANTS CAN ROAM THE WORLD VIA EBAY

ETH ZURICH → Original Study

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

 You are free to share this article under the [Attribution 4.0 International](#) license.

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/>

Will the Paris Climate Talks be too little and too late?

By [Fred Pearce](#) - posted Wednesday, 14 October 2015

It's Paris or bust. Climate diplomats are preparing for a United Nations climate conference in the French capital in December that scientists say is probably the last realistic chance for the world to prevent global warming going beyond 2 degrees Celsius. Some kind of a deal will probably be done. But will it be one more diplomatic fudge or a real triumph for the climate?

In the run-up to Paris, governments have been asked to deliver pledges to cut emissions of the greenhouse gases known to cause climate change. The pledges, covering the period between 2020, when the agreement should enter into force, and 2030, are known as [Intended Nationally Determined Contributions](#), or INDCs in the U.N. jargon.

Fred Pearce is a freelance author and journalist based in the UK. He is environment consultant for *New Scientist* magazine and author of the recent books *When The Rivers Run Dry* and *With Speed and Violence*. His latest book is *Confessions of an Eco-Sinner: Tracking Down the Sources of My Stuff* (Beacon Press, 2008). Pearce has also written for [Yale e360](#) on world population trends and green innovation in China.

<http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=17749>



2

Do these raptors spread fire in the Australian savanna?

BOB GOSFORD | OCT 13, 2015 10:15PM | [EMAIL](#) | [PRINT](#)

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Use of fire as a tool is normally considered to be restricted to humans, and hence to have played an extremely important role not only in human societal change but also in the large-scale modification of landscapes across the world. But what if animals other than humans exhibit pyrophilic behavior?



Black Kite, *Milvus migrans*

Innovation key to food security

DANIEL KRUITHOFF - MANAGING DIRECTOR MONSANTO AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

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

 Comments 6 



OPINION: AUSTRALIAN Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has put innovation at the heart of the government's efforts to improve the country's global competitiveness.

The government's renewed focus on the pivotal role innovation plays in helping us overcome complex challenges is welcome.

And I can think of no more complex challenge than sustainably producing enough food to meet rapidly rising global demand.

It is hard to not be alarmed by the looming collision of a rapidly growing population and a changing, more volatile climate.

<http://www.theland.com.au/news/agriculture/general/opinion/innovation-key-to-food-security/2744571.aspx>

📷 World Solar Challenge: Australian electric car race charges ahead - in pictures

Teams of energy-efficiency enthusiasts are racing homespun solar-powered vehicles over 3,000km from Darwin to Adelaide. Each car is allowed a maximum of 6 sq m of solar panels. The cars are also allowed a nominal 5kW hours of stored energy but all other energy must come either from the sun or from the kinetic energy of the vehicle. The challenge, first run in 1987, goes from 18-25 October



<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/gallery/2015/oct/22/world-solar-challenge-australian-electric-car-race-charges-ahead-in-pictures>

Flawed Carbon Accounting Drives Boom in Burning U.S. Forests in E.U. Power Plants

By

[Andrew C. Revkin](#)

22 October 2015 9:13 am October 22, 2015 9:13 am 123 Comments



European demand for wood to burn in power plants is increasing exports from forests in the southeastern United States like these near Jacksonville, Fla. Credit Andrew C. Revkin

Updated (see postscript) | Forestry, done in the right place the right way and for the right reasons, can be an important source of materials, jobs and wildlife habitat.

But are forests an appropriate fuel source for power plants? *

<http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/10/22/flawed-carbon-accounting-drives-boom-in-burning-u-s-forests-in-e-u-power-plants/?module=BlogPost-Title&version=Blog>

Main&contentCollection=forests&action=Click&pgtype=Blogs®ion=Body

If They Want To Call It A Solar ‘Challenge’ Race, They Should Run It At Night



By [Geoff Russell](#) on October 27, 2015 [Featured](#)

The World Solar Challenge ambled across Central Australia last week. Geoff Russell definitely wasn't holding his breath waiting for it to finish.


Last Friday, I wandered around Victoria Square in Adelaide watching the people watching the solar powered cars of the *World Solar Challenge*. Some were still arriving from Darwin; escorted by real cars with flashing lights before and after.

At 38 years of age, this event is much older than many of the crew crammed into anorexic cockpits or following in support vehicles. It began in 1987, about two years before Professor Martin Green of UNSW predicted that solar would replace coal in "[10 to 15 years](#)".

<https://newmatilda.com/2015/10/27/if-they-want-to-call-it-a-solar-challenge-race-they-should-run-it-at-night/>




Good riddance to flawed university fee plan: now for smarter reforms

October 1, 2015

 Read later

The original package was poorly thought through, produced without enough consultation, presented as a *fait accompli* and, above all, was full of risks.

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EDITORIAL

Consultation, common sense and certainty are the three Cs of university funding reform. The Abbott government's surprise fee deregulation proposal in the 2014 budget contained none of them. Some elements emerged through subsequent backdowns and negotiation, but no one really expected the core changes to begin as planned next January.

Now the Turnbull government has wisely bowed to reality and deferred the reforms. More accurately, the government has returned to the drawing board.

That's good news for everyone.

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/smh-editorial/good-riddance-to-flawed-university-fee-plan-now-for-smarter-reforms-20151001-gjyq1b.html>



South Australia's nuclear future

▶ Listen now ▶ Download audio

Sunday 18 October 2015 7:45AM [\(view full episode\)](#)

In 1995, South Australians were dazzled by the prospect of becoming the 'Saudi Arabia of the South' because of the state's large uranium deposits and the prospect of a global nuclear power renaissance. Twenty years on, national anti-nuclear campaigner, Dr Jim Green looks at how the nuclear renaissance is going, how the number of power reactors has declined and how Australia's uranium industry today accounts for just 0.2% of national export revenue.



IMAGE: MINERS ARE AT WORK SEARCHING FOR URANIUM IN THE MOUNTAINS NORTH OF ADELAIDE (1ST JULY 1947). (HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES)

The talk coincides with the start of the royal commission into the nuclear fuel cycle in Adelaide.



Sundays 7:45am
Presented by Robyn Williams

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/ockhamsrazor/jim-green/6857914>

Five hundred miles of trees — so far

The Stanley Soil Management Association has stood the test of time and continues the work it was set up in 1984 to do



By [Lorraine Stevenson](#)

Reporter

Published: 20 October 2015



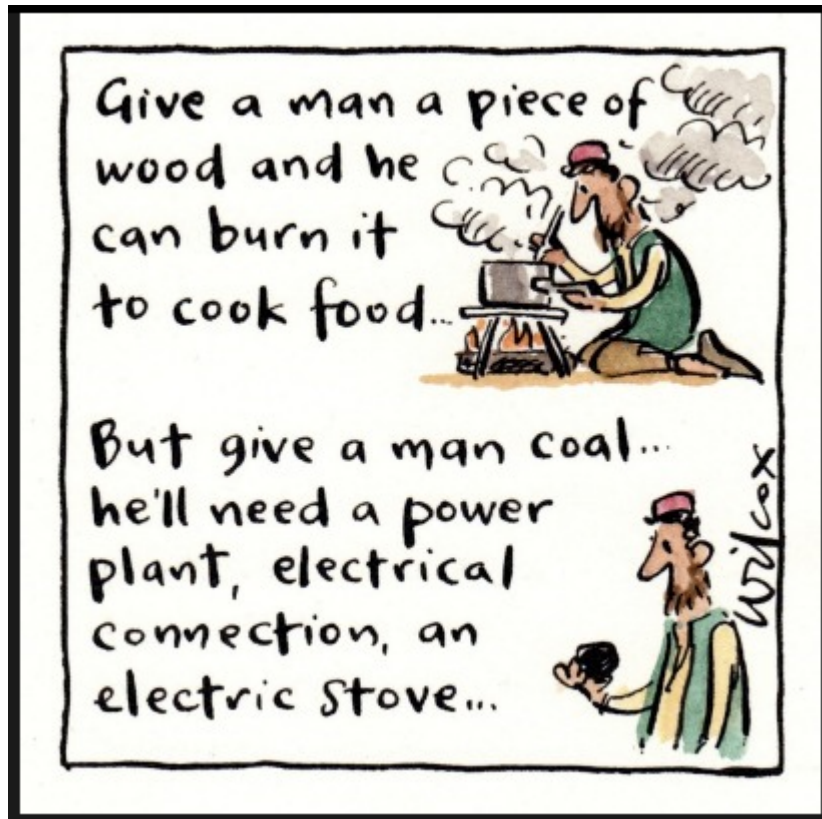
Thornhill farmer Theo Allan (left) chairs the non-profit, producer-driven Stanley Soil Management Association while Richard Warkentin is the group's project manager. *Photo: Lorraine Stevenson*

When the soil began to blow south of Winkler this spring, Richard Warkentin knew his phone would ring.

It did, almost on cue, as he drove the back roads eyeing dust storms swirling on a mid-April afternoon.

“It was a guy wanting to plant trees,” says the long-serving technician and project manager with the Stanley Soil Management Association (SSMA).

<http://www.manitobacooperator.ca/news-opinion/news/local/five-hundred-miles-of-trees-so-far/>



<http://www.smh.com.au/photogallery/federal-politics/cartoons/cathy-wilcox-20090909-fhd6.html>

On Climate Change, Malcolm Turnbull Is Singing From Tony Abbott's Hymn Book



By [Thom Mitchell](#) on October 27, 2015 [Environment](#)

The Liberal Party is said to be a broad church. But even under Turnbull it's not broad enough to come up with an effective response to climate change, writes Thom Mitchell.

Note to readers: we're trying to send reporter Thom Mitchell to the Paris Climate Talks. [To help us, pledge here.](#)

Negotiating teams are returning from UN talks on climate change in Bonn, Germany, this week. It was the last international meeting of governments before a crucial summit in Paris this December where, not to put too fine a point on it, the world will try to nut out a way to stave off ecological disaster. <https://newmatilda.com/2015/10/27/on-climate-change-malcolm-turnbull-is-singing-from-tony-abbotts-hymn-book/>

Greg Hunt Hands Adani A Loophole To Reduce Scrutiny Of Carmichael Mega-Mine



By [Thom Mitchell](#) on 21 October 2015 [Environment](#)

Leading public intellectual and Climate Change Authority board member Clive Hamilton has attacked Attorney General George Brandis and the government's attitude to environmentalism. Thom Mitchell reports.

Controversial Indian coal miner Adani has been thrown a bone in the second approval of its proposal to develop Australia's largest ever coal mine, with a key condition relaxed to allow the company to make changes to environmental plans with minimal scrutiny. <https://newmatilda.com/2015/10/21/greg-hunt-hands-adani-a-loophole-to-reduce-scrutiny-of-carmichael-mega-mine/>

Climate policy looms as Turnbull's greatest economic challenge

OPINION

By [Ian Verrender](#)

Posted about 7 hours ago Mon 26 Oct 2015, 7:33am



Photo: [Australia finds itself in the awkward position of being one of the few developed nations swimming against the tide on climate change policy. \(Reuters: David Gray\)](#)

With the Paris climate summit nearing, will Malcolm Turnbull be able to bring a rational economic approach to climate policy? It is likely to be his greatest challenge as Prime Minister, writes Ian Verrender.

The climate of fear may slowly be lifting after Tony Abbott's relegation to the political bleachers but the fear of climate persists within the Government.

With little more than a month to go before the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris, we find ourselves in the awkward position of being one of the few developed nations swimming against the tide.

*[Ian Verrender](#) is the ABC's business editor and writes a weekly column for *The Drum*.*

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-10-26/verrender-the-economics-of-climate-change/6883938>

School funding: Stop subsidising the haves and start investing in the have nots

OPINION

By [Jane Caro](#)

Updated yesterday at 1:52pm Mon 26 Oct 2015, 1:52pm



[Photo: A Knox Grammar advertisement promotes the school's cafe and "corporate-style boardroom". \(Google Maps\)](#)

A quarter of Australia's young people are not finishing school. This is the appalling legacy of our wilful neglect of our most disadvantaged kids, writes Jane Caro.

In last Thursday's The Land newspaper, in the middle of an extravagant advertorial promoting elite private schools, there's an ad for [Knox Grammar](#). It lists the following "key features" on offer to students:

[Jane Caro](#) is a writer, commentator and lecturer.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-10-26/caro-school-funding-stop-subsidising-the-haves/6884964>

20 Oct 2015: Report

As the Fracking Boom Spreads, One Watershed Draws the Line

After spreading across Pennsylvania, fracking for natural gas has run into government bans in the Delaware River watershed. The basins of the Delaware and nearby Susquehanna River offer a sharp contrast between what happens in places that allow fracking and those that do not.

BY BRUCE STUTZ

Over the last several years, with the hydraulic fracturing technology in hand to extract natural gas from the tight formations of the Marcellus shale, the industry moved quickly and seemingly inexorably from West Virginia and across the prized geology of Pennsylvania. State maps that designate each well with a colored dot look as if a storm of confetti has blown up from Pennsylvania's southwest, intensifying as it reaches the



Gerry Dincher/Flickr

A wellhead in north-central Pennsylvania on a platform used for drilling natural gas.

state's rural and heavily forested northeast.

In 2008, the state produced only two percent of the country's natural gas and the Gulf of

Mexico 26 percent. By 2013 the percentages were nearly reversed: Pennsylvania produced 23 percent to the Gulf's five percent. Now some 8,000 wells in Pennsylvania produce roughly 17 billion cubic feet of gas per day, and the expectation is that within the next decade new infrastructure will double those numbers, as well as add 60,000 miles of pipeline.

Bruce Stutz writes on science, nature, and the environment. A former editor-in-chief of *Natural History*,

http://e360.yale.edu/feature/as_the_fracking_boom_spreads_one_watershed_draws_the_line/2921/

[HOMEEDUCATION](#)

University Of Tasmania's Vice Chancellor Has Office Occupied For Eighth Day Over Fossil Fuel Investments



By [Thom Mitchell](#) on October 21, 2015 [Education Environment](#)

Students have now constructed as 'support camp' and are refusing to leave. Thom Mitchell reports.



Jeavons being arrested.

Students demanding the University of Tasmania divest from fossil fuels have remained holed-up in their Vice Chancellor's office for the eighth consecutive day, as protests associated with the stand-off escalate to what the university calls "dangerous" levels.

University of Tasmania (UTas) student Brodie Jeavons was arrested this morning after he scaled a 20-metre high building and unfurled a banner entreating the University to 'stop funding coal'. <https://newmatilda.com/2015/10/21/university-of-tasmanias-vice-chancellor-has-office-occupied-for-eighth-day-over-fossil-fuel-investments/>

Careful! Earthworms Underfoot

Worms Help Farmers With Gardening.



A **soil scientist** for the past 25 years, Dr. Dennis Linden knows a thing or two about earthworms.

Sure, he knows worms are good for gardens and farmland. By tunneling through soil, they bring in oxygen, drain water and create space for plant roots. Like many people, he also knows worm “casts” (manure) are rich in nutrients.

Linden works at ARS’ **Soil and Water Management Research Lab** in St. Paul, Minn. There, he is literally unearthing important clues farmers can use to get the most from their land’s earthworm population.

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/kids/soil/story2/goodworm.htm>

Malcolm Turnbull: ‘Small L’ Liberal Or Planet-Eating Death Star? Early Indications From The Turnbull Government



By [Dr Lissa Johnson](#) on October 25, 2015 [Australian Politics](#)

Next week, Malcolm Turnbull will clock up six weeks as Prime Minister. So what's changed? Has the direction changed, or are the messages just a little more polished. Psychologist and New Matilda columnist Dr Lissa Johnson delves into the ideology behind a government led by an ultra-wealthy former merchant banker.

What lies at the heart of a Turnbull Government agenda?

There have been mixed signals and mixed opinion, and striking similarities as well as differences to the Abbott leadership so far. <https://newmatilda.com/2015/10/25/malcolm-turnbull-small-l-liberal-or-planet-eating-death-star-early-indications-from-the-turnbull-government/>

How Australia's biggest dust storm went on to green the ocean

September 18, 2015 10.32am AEST

Spot the opera house. NSW Maritime/Flickr, CC BY-NC-ND

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One proposed way of dealing with climate change includes fertilising the oceans with iron. This “[geoengineering](#)” would encourage the growth of microscopic plants - phytoplankton - which, if growing vigorously enough, remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

If they're not eaten, these tiny plants fall to the ocean floor, storing carbon for long periods of time, although we don't yet know how this

Author



Albert Gabric
Associate Professor, School of Environment, Griffith University

Disclosure statement

Albert Gabric works for Griffith

<https://theconversation.com/how-australias-biggest-dust-storm-went-on-to-green-the-ocean-47695>

Starting Later This Year, 400 and Up is Likely to Be the New Normal for CO2 Measurements

By

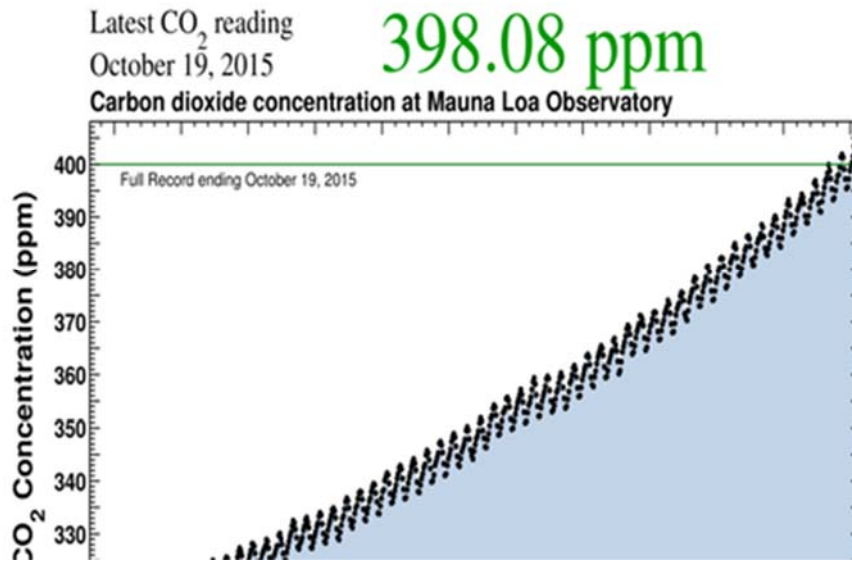
[Andrew C. Revkin](#)

October 22, 2015 3:24 pm October 22, 2015 3:24 pm 134 Comments

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Photo



Scientists at the Scripps Institution project that the powerful El Niño condition this year, along with rising emissions, will send concentrations of carbon dioxide, even accounting for annual ups and downs, beyond 400 parts per million shortly. Credit Scripps Institution of Oceanography

On Tuesday, a simple but sobering note predicting an imminent end to measurements of carbon dioxide in air lower than 400 parts per million was posted by [the group at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography](#) that has been carefully measuring the rising concentration of this greenhouse gas in the atmosphere since 1958.

<http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/10/22/starting-later-this-year-400-and-up-is-likely-to-be-the-new-normal-for-co2-measurements/?module=BlogPost-Title&version=BlogMain&contentCollection=Climate Change&action=Click&pgtype=Blogs®ion=Body>



<http://www.smh.com.au/photogallery/federal-politics/cartoons/cathy-wilcox-20090909-fhd6.html>

The Other Problem With The China Free Trade Deal



By [Paul Mahony](#) on October 23, 2015 [Environment Uncategorized](#)

The promise to beef-up Australian cattle exports comes with significant environmental risks, writes Paul Mahony.

It was ironic that an image of a cattle farmer's empty dam was used in the print edition of *The Age* to demonstrate the scourge of drought in western Victoria. Beef production is a major contributor to climate change, though the [article](#) did not mention that fact.

<https://newmatilda.com/2015/10/23/the-other-problem-with-the-china-free-trade-deal/>

How 'Third Way' Technologies Can Help Turn Tide on Climate

In a Yale Environment 360 interview, Australian scientist and author Tim Flannery explains how the development of technologies that mimic the earth's natural carbon-removing processes could provide a critical tool for slowing global warming.

BY RICHARD SCHIFFMAN

Massive seaweed farms that suck carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and counteract ocean acidification. The widespread adoption of carbon fiber technology that extracts CO₂ from the air and turns it into cars and other industrial products. Concrete manufacturing that is carbon-negative rather than the energy-guzzling Portland cement used today. And giant chiller boxes installed in Antarctica that super-freeze the



Damien Fleming

Tim Flannery

already frigid air there, producing “CO₂ snow” that can be sequestered in the continent's massive ice sheet.

These and other ideas represent what Australian scientist Tim Flannery calls “third way technologies” — safe methods to reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide levels that could be adopted in concert with large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Flannery, former head of the Australian Climate Commission, lays out these ideas in his

latest book, *Atmosphere of Hope*. In an interview http://e360.yale.edu/feature/how_third_way_technologies_can_help_win_the_climate_fight/2923/

Climate Talks Imperiled by Rich-Poor Fight Over Hard Targets for Aid

By
[Andrew C. Revkin](#)

23 October 2015 3:37 pm October 23, 2015 3:37 pm 105 Comments



Spin-off group on compliance (Article 11), final clauses (Articles 12 - 26), and related decision paragraphs



Spin-off group on finance (Article 6), and related decision paragraphs



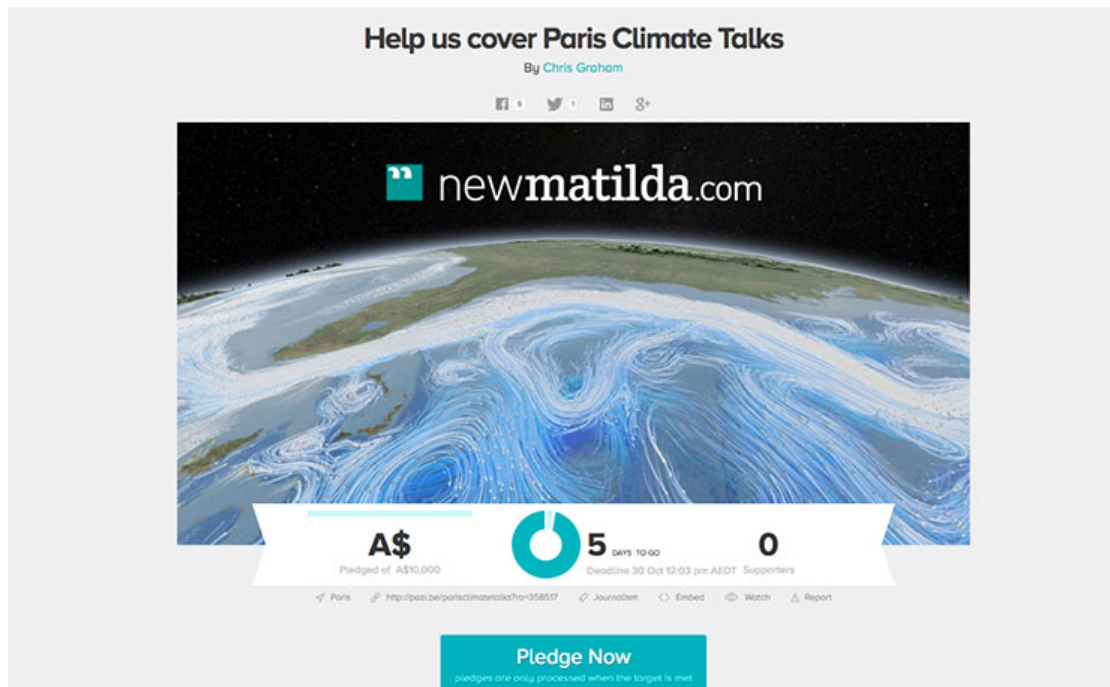
Spin-off group on transparency of action and support (Article 9), and related decision paragraphs

Snapshots of negotiators who [split into groups](#) in climate talks in Bonn, Germany, to address contested details in a draft climate agreement ahead of final talks in Paris late in the year. Credit IISD.ca

Just three years after the world's nations established the [Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, a push was initiated to move from that agreement's aspirational goals for cutting emissions of greenhouse gases to hard targets and timetables for wealthier countries. That effort started in Berlin in 1995 at the first Conference of the Parties (the shorthand is [COP 1](#)) and [fell apart in Copenhagen](#) (COP 15) in 2009.

<http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/10/23/climate-talks-imperiled-by-rich-poor-fight-over-hard-targets-for-aid/?ref=earth>

Thom Mitchell And New Matilda Want To Keep the Bastards Honest At The Paris Climate Talks



By [Chris Graham](#) on October 25, 2015 [Environment](#) [Featured](#)

New Matilda has launched a mini-fundraiser – the first of several which are aimed at both securing the future of the site for another year, and taking our reporting to the next level. Chris Graham explains.

Australia is in no position to lecture the world about climate change.

We're one of the worst carbon polluters on earth per capita; we're the only nation on earth to actually abolish an emissions trading scheme; and Malcolm Turnbull – the man who said he would die in a ditch in the fight to tackle climate change – has just approved a coal mine in the Galilee Basin that will pump out four times the carbon emissions of New Zealand in a single year. And we're definitely the only country on earth who had a minister and prime minister laugh about the affects of climate change on small Pacific Islands at a public meeting. <https://newmatilda.com/2015/10/25/help-thom-mitchell-and-new-matilda-keep-the-bastards-honest-at-the-paris-climate-talks/>



<http://www.smh.com.au/photogallery/federal-politics/cartoons/alan-moir-20150921-gjrcxr.html>

📷 Coal faces: the last miners in Spain – in pictures

Pierre Gonnord spent five years shooting Spain's last generation of coal miners the moment they finished their shifts – an important record of a disappearing community. Mining began here centuries ago, and the pits will close in 2018

- [Going under: meet the last coal miners](#)



<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2015/oct/21/coal-faces-portraits-of-the-last-miners-in-spain-in-pictures>



“Confidence is ignorance. If you're feeling cocky, it's because there's something you don't know.”

— Eoin Colfer, *Artemis Fowl*