



Hi All,

If you wish to find an article from a previous CoP Opinion Pieces e-mail please go to <http://www.nswskn.com/cop-27-jan-2015/>

Regards

Brian

Data from the dirt means soils ain't simply soils

THE AUSTRALIAN

Reporter - Rural/Regional Affairs



Farmer Stewart Hamilton harvests vital data on his smart phone about his two grain farms, which are 200km apart in western Victoria. Picture: Stuart McEvoy

Western Victorian grain grower Stewart Hamilton is a young farmer already attuned to the potential of more and better information to transform his family’s farm business.

With two farms cropping 2700 hectares of land and located 200km apart, Mr Hamilton, 31, can already remotely check soil moisture sensors on his distant Charlton property via iPhone while working on his main Inverleigh farm.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/data-from-the-dirt-means-soils-aint-simply-soils/story-e6frg6nf-1227415207512>

Profit plans are just an erosion of Soil Con

ANDREW NORRIS

28 Aug, 2015 04:00 AM  A+ A-

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“
All it will end up doing is costing farmers more either for up front services or lost production
”

NEWS the state government is looking at how to shift the Soil Conservation Service from cost recovery to a profit centre is yet another example of where farmers will bear yet more environmental cost.

Since 1990, the service (which emerged as the Soil Conservation Act in 1938) has been operated commercially, but in a way which has meant farmers got access to remediation services and advice without cost to the public and without costing the farmer more than was needed to get the job done properly.

LATEST

Workers at centre of FTA fight

Wool drops another 41c/kg

Monsanto drops bid for Syngenta

China firm may buy \$1b in farmland

<http://www.theland.com.au/news/agriculture/general/opinion/profit-plans-are-just-an-erosion-of-soil-con/2741555.aspx>

Healthy Soils Provide Foundation for a Healthy Life on National Forests and Grasslands

Posted by **John Lane**, Acting National Soils Program Manager, U. S. Forest Service, on August 6, 2015



Challis National Forest Soil Scientist Jeremy Back monitoring forest soil

Soils sustain life. Without soils there would be no life as we know it. Consider what is at stake for the **154 national forests and 20 grasslands in 44 states and Puerto Rico**. Soils are needed to grow the plants, forests and grasslands that support and shelter humans; they store water and carbon; they recycle and purify water, air and nutrients; and they help reduce nutrient loading, sediment production and runoff.

<http://blogs.usda.gov/2015/08/06/healthy-soils-provide-foundation-for-a-healthy-life-on-national-forests-and-grasslands/>

2014 editions



Knowledge transfer is a key priority for the NSW SKN and previous editions of the CoP are a valuable resource which the SKN is keen to share with the broader community.

2014 editions

14 July 2014 CoP DailySoilsDigest

14 July 2014 CoP Opinion Pieces

22 July 2014 CoP DailySoilsDigest

23 July 2014 CoP Opinion Pieces


30 July 2014 CoP DailySoilsDigest

21 August 2014 CoP DailySoilsDigest



<http://www.nswskn.com/2014-cop-editions/>

A marriage made in heaven

ELIZABETH FARRELLY

27 Aug, 2015 09:30 AM  A+ A-

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“
*If we want to eat,
water is a problem for
us all.*
”

OPINION: FOOD, land, water, future: excepting white violets (for the soul), they're pretty much it.

They're also pretty much us; Australia's lucky country traits. Only now, oddly, not so much. Now it seems, if we want to keep our hand in the picnic basket, we may need to rethink not just farming and land use, but also the political map.

In Stockholm, right now, it's World Water Week. Australia doesn't really figure. Why would we? We're only the driest continent on earth. But you don't need a PhD in agro-politics to see that the so-called Coalition is misconceived. The Nats want to preserve food-land. The Libs want to dig it up and flog it, not necessarily in that order. That's not partnership. Eventually the Nats must leave the Libs, wed the Greens and save the future of food.

LATEST

Workers at centre of FTA fight

Wool drops another 41c/kg

Monsanto drops bid for Syngenta

China firm may buy \$1b in farmland

Ord's big seed harvest kicks off

Meat judging team set for US

<http://www.stockandland.com.au/news/agriculture/general/opinion/a-marriage-made-in-heaven/2741631.aspx>

Soil security on the political agenda

OPINION

ABC Rural

By [Professor Alex McBratney](#) and [Andrea Koch](#)

It is a realisation that soil has an integral part to play in addressing the major existential issues facing the world today, and in fact 'soil security' is, and has to be recognised as, one of those issues.

When an international coalition of scientists got together to form the [Soil Carbon Initiative](#), convened by the United States Studies Centre and the Faculty of Agriculture and the Environment at the University of Sydney in early 2011, they realised that carbon may be part of a solution to climate change but 'soil security' itself is the keystone issue.

Since then discussion has widened in an attempt to bring policy on soil security in line with that on food and water security. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-03-23/alex-mcbratney-andrea-koch-soil-matters/5332762>

Long-term soil experiments 'profoundly undervalued'

ABC Rural

By [Professor Richter Dan](#)

To meet these challenges, the science of soils is being transformed (Richter 2007; Richter and Yaalon, 2012) and an array of scientific and management approaches is being used to increase understanding of global soil changes and soil-environment interactions. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-03-23/dan-richter-soil-matters/5332674>

White Paper 'missing' soil health

COLIN BETTLES

25 Aug, 2015 04:00 AM A+ A-

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“
The problem is we've had stovepipe departments who look after a little bit of the task each.
”

SOILS for Life Chairman Major-General Michael Jeffery would have started with a different premise if he was writing the federal government's Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper.

He told Fairfax Media the [\\$4 billion White Paper](#) - released by the Abbott government in early July - was a good document which contained key strategic improvements in areas like agricultural research, development and extension (RD&E).

RELATED

[Ag White Paper finally here](#)

[Sustainable ag must pay](#)

[Ag practices stuck in 'vicious cycle'](#)

<http://www.stockandland.com.au/news/agriculture/agribusiness/general-news/white-paper-missing-soil-health/2741291.aspx>



<http://globalsoilweek.org/uncategorized/better-save-soil-released-in-portuguese>

Opinion: To Solve Hunger, Start with Soil

By [Anne-Marie Steyn](#) [Reprint](#)

Anne-Marie Steyn is Series Producer of Shamba Shape-Up and a spokesperson for Farming First. The Farming First coalition is currently in New York advocating for agriculture's central role in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals.



Experts give advice on potato-planting for greater yields in an episode of Shamba Shape Up.

NAIROBI, Apr 24 2015 (IPS) - Peter looked confused as he recounted how he'd painstakingly planted potatoes to sell and to feed his family of eight, only to find that when harvest time rolled around he had been greeted with tiny tubers not much bigger than golf balls.

A young farmer living in Bomet County in Kenya, Peter had recently been 'shaped up' on film, as part of our farming reality TV show [Shamba Shape Up](#). The show is aired as a six-month-long (one growing season) series of 30-minute television programmes on leading channels in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda 2012 to audiences across Kenya.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2015/04/opinion-to-solve-hunger-start-with-soil/>

Opinion

Guest Blog: "Young people and the future of soil"



By the Sustainable Food Trust, published on 30 April 2015

<http://globalsoilweek.org/news-and-opinion/opinion/guest-blog-young-people-and-the-future-of-soil>

Weapons of maths destruction: Are calculators killing our ability to work it out in our head?

The Conversation

By Jeanne Carroll from Victoria University

Updated Mon at 2:02pm Mon 10 Aug 2015, 2:02pm



Photo: [Research has found calculators have little effect on the attainment of basic maths skills. \(ABC: Kate Hill\)](#)

Since the 1980s we have had access to calculators of various types. Today, we can include computers and smartphones which are attached to our hip 24/7. So does this ubiquitous access to calculators affect our ability to do maths in our heads like we used to?

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-08-10/are-calculators-affecting-maths-skills/6684542>



Gould's Petrel

▶ Listen now ▶ Download audio

Sunday 2 August 2015 7:45AM [\(view full episode\)](#)

Generally speaking, birds in Australia are disappearing - and have been, since European settlement.

There are many reasons for this: loss of habitat, feral cats, decreased biodiversity, perhaps even noisy miners raiding nests.

Which makes it all the more interesting when a bird is able to turn its fortunes around.

Gould's Petrel, Australia's rarest endemic seabird, was once endangered - but no longer!



IMAGE: GOULD'S PETREL WAS NAMED AFTER JOHN GOULD, THE FATHER OF AUSTRALIAN ORNITHOLOGY. (TONY MORRIS/FLICKR - CC BY-NC 2.0)



Sundays 7:45am
Presented by Robyn Williams

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/ockhamsrazor/goulds-petrel-sue-taylor-conservation/6655960>

Sustainable ag must pay

COLIN BETTLES

25 Aug, 2015 04:00 AM A+ A-

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“
If farmers are being screwed to produce more with less...they'll eventually kill their soils
”

Soils for Life Chairman and former Governor General, Major-General Michael Jeffery.

AUSTRALIAN farmers must be paid fairly for producing food and fibre that meet increasing consumer expectations on social and ethical outcomes like climate change and the environment.

That was a key point raised at a high level industry roundtable of about 30 stakeholders in Canberra recently where the contents of a new report by the Centre for Policy Development (CPD) were debated.

RELATED

Farmer confidence rebounds

Ag practices stuck in 'vicious cycle'

<http://www.stockandland.com.au/news/agriculture/agribusiness/general-news/sustainable-ag-must-pay/2740725.aspx>

Crop WUE improvement a soil health triumph

May. 20 Soil health, plant nutrition, trial reviews 1 comment

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

Senior supply dynamics research officer with the Australian Export Grains Innovation Centre (AEGIC) Dr David Stephens has created national WUE maps using an analysis from AEGIC's Stress Index (STIN) crop model. This uses data from more than 800 rainfall stations in grain-growing regions across the country.

<http://www.moffittsfarm.com.au/2015/05/20/crop-wue-improvement-a-soil-health-triumph/>



A hungrier, wealthier, choosier, smarter, riskier world: five challenges for Australian agriculture

August 20, 2015 6:24am AEST

Australian agriculture has a bright future, if it can avoid the clouds on the horizon. CSIRO, Author provided

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You don't need a crystal ball to know Australia's rural industries will face significant change at global, national and local levels over the coming decades. This will create opportunities and challenges for small and large farms, and will affect rural lifestyles, agricultural landscapes and Australia's society and economy.

In a new report, we describe this future through a series of interlinked

Authors



Sandra Eady
Principal Research Scientist,
CSIRO Agriculture at CSIRO



Stefan Hajkowicz
Leader - CSIRO Futures at
CSIRO

<http://theconversation.com/a-hungrier-wealthier-choosier-smarter-riskier-world-five-challenges-for-australian-agriculture-46183>

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Abbott's hyperbole doesn't match reality

OPINION

By Mungo MacCallum

Updated Tue at 12:19pm

Our bellicose Prime Minister has figured out his latest wedge on environment and trade, but the problem is his line of attack against everyone from Bill Shorten to unions to environmentalists doesn't always stack up, writes Mungo MacCallum.

Once again our creative Prime Minister has devised a bold and imaginative solution. Now it just remains to discover a credible problem to go with it.

Tony Abbott's latest wedge, to shut down the protection of the environment from its friends and restrict it to the immediate neighbours is spun as the desperate need to protect fragile mining developments from vigilante litigation, green saboteurs, economic treason - the hyperbole is without restraint or limit.

But unfortunately it simply defies reality. As has been extensively documented, there have been very few cases taken to the tribunals, and less than a handful of them have been successful.



PHOTO: Tony Abbott's latest wedge on the environment employs hyperbole without restraint or limit. (Jane Norman)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-08-25/maccallum-abbotts-hyperbole-doesnt-match-reality/6722570>

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Abbott's infatuation with coal blinds him from reality

OPINION

By [Mungo MacCallum](#)

Posted 11 Aug 2015, 10:13am

The Government has belatedly put its cards on the table for the Paris climate conference, but Tony Abbott's romanticism of coal and the Adani mine suggests he still harbours delusions others have outgrown, writes Mungo MacCallum.

Byron Shire, on the north coast of New South Wales, is something of a Green-Left enclave surrounded by a conservative heartland dominated by the National Party.

As a result it can adopt a defensive, even embattled posture, and when it does have a chance to celebrate, as in the annual writers festival, it tends to flaunt its wares.

And thus last weekend, when the secular saints and their disciples were assembled, there was not doubt about who was the potential messiah. Julia Gillard could hardly have received more rapturous applause if she had been reincarnated as Joan of Arc, walking free from the flames to proclaim the dawn of a new and better world.



PHOTO: Tony Abbott still clings to the comforting myths of Santa Claus and the Magic Pudding of endless coal. (AAP Image: Dan Peled)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-08-11/maccallum-abbotts-infatuation-with-coal/6687542>

Mining companies should not fear proper judicial scrutiny

Jo-Anne Bragg ABC Environment 10 Aug 2015



Approval of Adani's \$16 billion Carmichael coal mine has been suspended after community group legal action.

If a multinational mining company has followed all the correct procedures, when a environment legal centre brings a case against them, they should have nothing to fear.

THE AUSTRALIAN COAL industry is clearly suffering, with thousands of jobs lost from existing mines due to the low coal price and the world moving away from coal towards renewables.

Rather than face these realities, the mining industry, and now even the Federal Environment Minister, are hitting back, bizarrely asserting that a major problem is environmentalists running court cases allegedly designed to delay or obstruct mining projects.

Jo-Anne Bragg is chief executive and solicitor at the [Environment Defenders Office Queensland](#) (EDO Qld)

<http://www.abc.net.au/environment/articles/2015/08/10/4290403.htm>

Australia has denied environmental approval to just 18 projects since 2000

Guardian Australia analysis shows figures for mining projects are skewed even more starkly, as critics of environmental laws renew calls for reform



📷 The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act is designed to scrutinise projects deemed to potentially impact sites of national environmental significance such as the Great Barrier Reef and Kakadu. Photographs: Trevor Smithers/ARPS/Alamy, Bloomberg via Getty Images, Helen Davidson for the Guardian

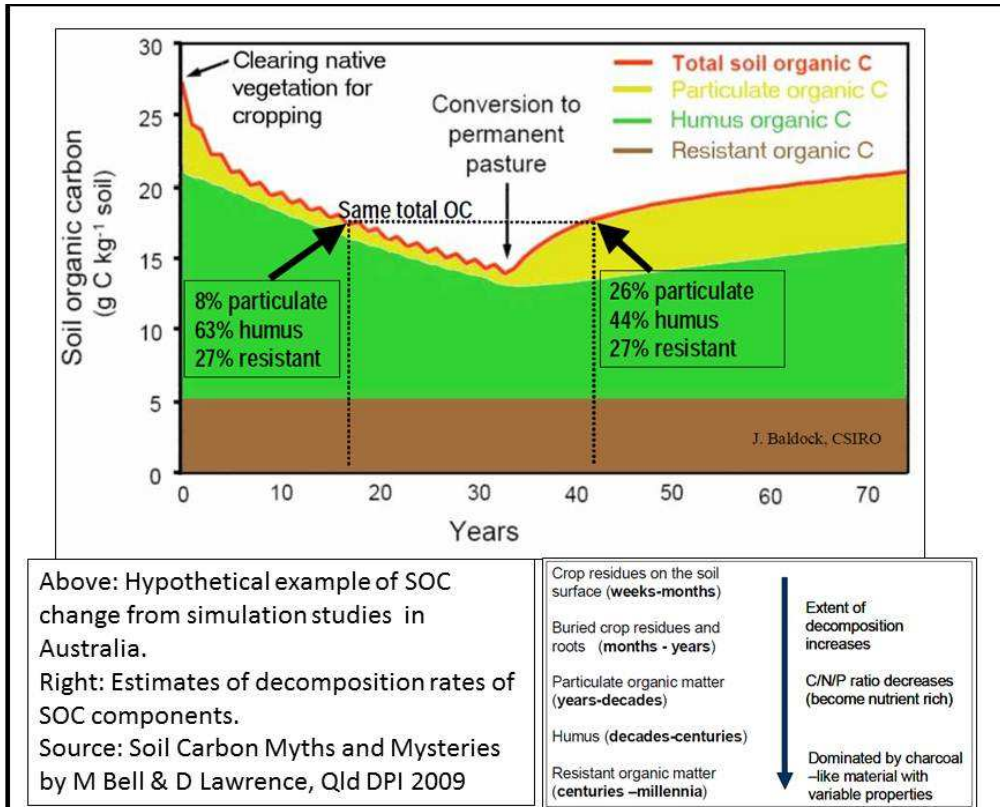
<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/aug/12/australia-has-denied-environmental-approval-to-just-11-projects-since-2000>

Perennial pasture soil carbon opportunities more about opinion than science

24 July 2015 [Soil carbon types & carbon flows](#) no comments

By Patrick Francis

The value of optimising soil organic carbon (SOC) to farming ecosystems and plant and livestock productivity is unquestionable. In paddocks where soil organic carbon has been depleted which is the common scenario across most of Australia's cropping zones and in grazing land which suffered soil erosion, returning carbon onto the surface as herbage and into the soil as organic matter produces significant beneficial responses.



<http://www.moffittsfarm.com.au/2015/07/24/perennial-pasture-soil-organic-carbon-opportunities-more-about-opinion-than-science/>

Did Abbott mislead us on emissions reductions?

OPINION

By [Greg Jericho](#)

Posted Wed at 6:43am

Did Tony Abbott mislead the public on the cost of emissions reductions? A Government report quietly released on Friday afternoon suggests he did, and that his direct action policy is costing us more than it needs to, writes Greg Jericho.

Last Friday afternoon the Government released two reports relevant to climate change. The timing of such releases should always prick one's attention, because it invariably means it involves something the Government would rather everyone ignore. And the Government certainly would like to ignore these reports.

The two reports showed that the Prime Minister has misled the public on the cost of larger cuts to emissions and that the Government's current direct action policy is a high cost alternative. They also showed electricity greenhouse emissions have once again started to rise.



PHOTO: Modelling on emission reductions reveal the Prime Minister was being careless with numbers. (Andrew Meares/Fairfax Media)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-08-26/jericho-did-abbott-mislead-us-on-emissions-reductions/6723162>

OPINION

Solar: the new normal for a sunny country

BY [CLAIRE O'ROURKE](#)

ABC Environment | 11 AUG 2015

[Comments \(24\)](#)

With more than a million Australian rooftops now sporting solar panels, it's created a powerful advertisement for the benefits of renewable energy and a powerful block of pro-renewable voters.

HERE'S AN INCENDIARY statement: solar is ordinary. Really ordinary. In fact, it's so ordinary that these days solar has become the new normal in our homes and in our culture. Soaring uptake rates are driving sky-high engagement in clean energy that is influencing people, policy and politics in ways we have not seen before.



Rooftop solar has created a powerful group of voters with an interest in renewable energy.

<http://www.abc.net.au/environment/articles/2015/08/11/4290434.htm>

Our hearts and minds agree: national parks should not be logged

Warrick Jordan ABC Environment 7 Aug 2015



An area of native forest in NSW where some trees have been logged. *Credit: Sam Provost (ABC)*

Responding to an opinion piece from Timber NSW, Warrick Jordan argues that science and our love of country tell us that logging has no place in national parks.

THE LOGGING INDUSTRY has a long history of trying to undermine the value of national parks. Timber NSW general manager Maree McCaskill has teamed up with timber industry consultant Nick Cameron to update this long running attack.

Warrick Jordan is the National Forest Campaign Manager of [the Wilderness Society](#) based in Newcastle.

<http://www.abc.net.au/environment/articles/2015/08/07/4288454.htm>

Why national parks will not save our endangered species

Nick Cameron and Maree McCaskill ABC Environment 7 Aug 2015



Aborigines using fire to hunt kangaroos by Joseph Lycett approximately 1775-1828. (NLA nla.pc-an2962715-s20) *Credit: Joseph Lycett (National Library of Australia)*

Public forests in New South Wales are governed by a muddle of laws and regulatory bodies and it's not succeeding on economic, social or environmental grounds. It's time for change.

TWO CENTURIES AGO we had sustainable land management, world class fire management practices and abundant biodiversity. What happened?

Over a short period of time, Aboriginal land management skills and knowledge disappeared and our control over fire was lost. At the same time we introduced plants and animals that became widespread pests. As our population grew, much of our native vegetation was cleared for the production of food and fibre and most of what remained was left unmanaged. The combined effect of these things had a major impact on our biodiversity. The greatest impacts were west of the Dividing Range with the extinction of the majority of our small ground dwelling mammals including the iconic bilby, numbat, and brush-tailed bettong.

Nick Cameron is a consultant to the forestry industry. Maree McCaskill is the general manager of Timber NSW, the association of NSW forestry companies.

<http://www.abc.net.au/environment/articles/2015/08/07/4276458.htm>

Coal giant exploited Ebola crisis for corporate gain, say health experts

Public health experts outraged after world's largest privately-held coal company, Peabody Energy, promotes its product in the fight against Ebola in Africa as part of a PR campaign to rebrand the fossil fuel as a solution to global poverty

● [Join the Guardian's Keep it in the Ground campaign](#)



📷 A nurse walks with a little girl suffering from Ebola, at the Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) compound in Monrovia. Peabody suggested more energy access with coal generation could have helped with the distribution of an Ebola vaccine, had there been one. Photograph: Pascal Guyot/AFP/Getty Images

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/may/19/peabody-energy-exploited-ebola-crisis-for-corporate-gain-say-health-experts>



Revealed: how a wobbly axis helped our planet escape 'snowball Earth'

August 27, 2015 12.06am AEST

Kelvin Ma, CC BY-SA

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The idea of a deep-frozen world, "snowball Earth", has captured the imagination since [first proposed](#) in the 1990s. On several occasions in history, long before animals evolved, apparently synchronous ice sheets existed on all the continents. However, much like falling into a crevasse on a glacier, it's easy enough to enter such an ice age, but very difficult to escape.

Author



Ian Fairchild
Professor of Geosystems at
University of Birmingham

Disclosure statement

<http://theconversation.com/revealed-how-a-wobbly-axis-helped-our-planet-escape-snowball-earth-46543>



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Against mass extinction

[Download audio](#)

Sunday 5 July 2015 7:45AM ([view full episode](#))

What could be worse than a random rock from space killing everything on Earth?

Elizabeth Kolbert's *The Sixth Extinction* popularised the idea that the planet's most dangerous killer is none other than homo sapiens—us.

Peter Ward, palaeontologist and expert in mass extinction events from the University of Washington, takes volcanic exception to this idea.



IMAGE: PETER WARD THINKS VOLCANOES, NOT HUMANS, WILL CAUSE THE NEXT MASS EXTINCTION EVENT. (WIL C. FRY/Flickr - CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)



Sundays 7:45am
Presented by Robyn Williams

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

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'Vigilante litigants' didn't stop the Carmichael mine, the law did

OPINION
By [Michael Bradley](#)
Posted 20 Aug 2015, 6:44am

It's extraordinary to watch our chief law officer, George Brandis, attack "vigilante litigants" for taking action against the Carmichael Mine. They didn't write the law, they just asked that it be enforced, writes Michael Bradley.

The Abbott Government, whenever it doesn't get its way, tends to react like a deranged puffer fish.

The trajectory is wearily familiar: the Prime Minister stalks out of his man-cave, asserts some facts that aren't and chucks a few incendiary word-bombs. His ministers, alerted by Twitter to what he's said this time, fill the following days with increasingly inflammatory commentary, before finally announcing some half-baked measure about which Cabinet will probably learn at the same time as the rest of us and well after the Daily Telegraph.



PHOTO: The Carmichael coal mine debacle has scaled rapidly to maximum lunacy level with George Brandis' press release. (AAP)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-08-20/bradley-vigilante-litigants-didnt-stop-the-carmichael-mine/6708414>

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The Drum report: How does Australia's emissions target stack up?

ANALYSIS

By [Mike Clay](#)

Posted 11 Aug 2015, 3:35pm

It's worth taking a closer look at Australia's newly announced emissions reduction target. Too often, starting points are used as a way of fudging the stats or moving the goal posts, writes Mike Clay.

The next UN Climate Summit is in Paris in December. It's shaping up to be the most important meeting of its kind since the kerfuffle that was Copenhagen back in 2009.

It will be a meeting of foreign ministers, rather than world leaders. They'll be announcing their emissions reductions targets for 2030 and hoping to come away with a global deal between developed and developing countries on how to keep warming to 2 degrees Celsius.

Today, Tony Abbott has given Australia's negotiators some new targets to trumpet.



PHOTO: Targets are one thing. A roadmap to get there is another entirely. (AAP: Dean Lewins)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-08-11/clay-how-does-australias-emissions-target-stack-up/6688942>

Bulky pastures best defense against new born lamb exposure deaths

3 June 2015 Holistic Farming & Landcare no comments

By Patrick Francis

A feature of grazing management on Moffitts Farm is allowing summer active perennial grass species in lambing paddocks to flower in spring. As a consequence of this happening over a number of years, the plants have developed large "bushy" crowns up to 20cm across and grow numerous tillers with leaves up to 30cm high after 8 to 12 weeks rest from grazing.

Figure 1: Moffitts Farm has 26% of its land devoted to conservation corridors and forest blocks which provide a macro level of shelter for new born lambs. While this is helpful it is the micro level shelter provided by bushy perennial grasses which gives the greatest impact on ewe nutrition and lamb survival.



<http://www.moffittsfarm.com.au/2015/06/03/bulky-pastures-best-defense-against-new-born-lamb-deaths/>

China's environmental record goes up in smoke

By [Asher Judah](#) - posted Thursday, 27 August 2015

As the spectacular explosion of hazardous industrial materials gradually renders the Chinese port city of Tianjin unliveable, it is worth sparing a thought for the myriad of other environmental disasters slowly ruining what was once one of the world's most beautiful landscapes.

As home to some the world's most fertile soils, best natural runoff and long term fresh water resources, China used to be a nation luckier than most. Unfortunately, as a result of its relentless quest for industrial development at any cost, China's natural environment has paid a horrible price.

[About the Author](#)

Asher Judah is the author of *The Australian Century* (Connor Court).

<http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=17625>

A MATTER OF OPINION

Enough talk over fire prevention

Posted By: Andrew Norris on 8/08/2015 4:00:00 AM | Comments (1)

🖨️ A+ A-

🗨️ Comments 1



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.

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



The 'green-tech' future is a flawed vision of sustainability

August 28, 2015 5:59am AEST

Digging up that nature strip and planting tomatoes is one way of reducing consumption. Mosman Council/Flickr, CC BY

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What does your vision of a sustainable future look like? Some [people](#) imagine a scenario whereby technology solves the world's most pressing environmental problems.

In this world we all drive electric cars and have solar panels on our roofs that power our air conditioners and flat-screen televisions. We purchase "eco" products that provide all the convenience and comfort but without degrading the planet. We continue consuming and growing our economies, without degrading Mother Nature.

Author



Samuel Alexander
Research fellow, Melbourne
Sustainable Society Institute at
University of Melbourne

Disclosure statement

Samuel Alexander does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organization that

<http://theconversation.com/the-green-tech-future-is-a-flawed-vision-of-sustainability-46681>

Opinion: Evolving CO₂-Hungry Crops

Breeding plants that can convert more carbon dioxide to food could help feed a growing population.

By Lewis H. Ziska, and Mark Howden | December 4, 2012



In 2007 and 2008, due in part to rapidly rising energy costs and climatic extremes, the world experienced a sweeping food crisis, with food riots observed in more than 30 countries. In 2010 and 2011, unprecedented drought in Russia reduced the global supply of wheat, with social and political ramifications for wheat importing countries around the globe. Last summer's extensive drought in the United States, the world's largest grain exporter, suggests that food supply will, once again, continue to be an immediate and global concern.

<http://www.the-scientist.com/?articles.view/articleNo/33530/title/Opinion--Evolving-CO2-Hungry-Crops/>

Renewable energy evangelists preach a fact free utopia

By [John Slater](#) - posted Friday, 28 August 2015

It has long been the standard fare of green evangelists to prosecute their cause with persuasion by emotion rather than sticking to the facts at hand. Labor's recent decision to opt for a 50% renewable energy target by 2030 without undertaking any economic modelling is a case in point.

The arguments in favour of renewable energy are well rehearsed and morally compelling. Renewable energy is not just necessary to abate dangerous carbon emissions that threaten the planet with extinction. Australia would be crazy not to reap the benefits of what promises to be one of the world's major growth industries of tomorrow.

[About the Author](#)

John Slater is in his fourth year of studying a double degree in Law/Arts at the University of Queensland. He is the Immediate Past President of the University of Queensland Liberal National Club and the current chair of the Ryan Young LNP branch.

<http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=17628>

Restoring Appalachian Soils to Restore the Forests

Posted by [Mary Beth Adams, Northern Research Station, U.S. Forest Service](#),
on 19 August 2015 at 3:00 PM



An American chestnut seedling being planted on the Wayne National Forest in Ohio.
Photo credit: Jared M. Dort, US Forest Service

The land of forest-covered hills, mountain music and coal has a lesson for restoration: healthy forests require healthy soils.

The forests of Appalachia, a region that extends from southern New York to Georgia, are considered to be among the most diverse temperate deciduous forests in the world, with as many as 30 different tree species growing together. Coal has played an important role in the development of Appalachian culture, but mining for coal has also created a need for restoration in extensive areas of the 13 states that make up the Appalachian region.

- See more at: <http://blogs.usda.gov/2015/08/19/restoring-appalachian-soils-to-restore-the-forests/#sthash.VPM7s7ed.dpuf>



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Speaking with: Crystal Legacy on the politics of transport infrastructure

August 28, 2015 5:59am AEST



Author



Dallas Rogers
Urban Studies Lecturer at
University of Western Sydney

Interviewed



Crystal Legacy
Vice Chancellor's Research
Fellow, Centre for Urban
Research, School of Global,
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Disclosure statement

Email

As anyone who travels to work would probably realise, Australia's transport infrastructure needs urgent upgrades.

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As our cities continue to grow, it is virtually impossible to escape the tangle of peak-hour congestion. But with governments focused on reducing deficits, only one or two transport infrastructure projects are likely to be implemented.

<http://theconversation.com/speaking-with-crystal-legacy-on-the-politics-of-transport-infrastructure-46409>

Opinion: On Global GMO Regulation

Advances in genome-editing technologies have made modifying crops easier than ever before. They've also clouded the already murky realm of genetically modified foods.

By Tetsuya Ishii | February 25, 2015



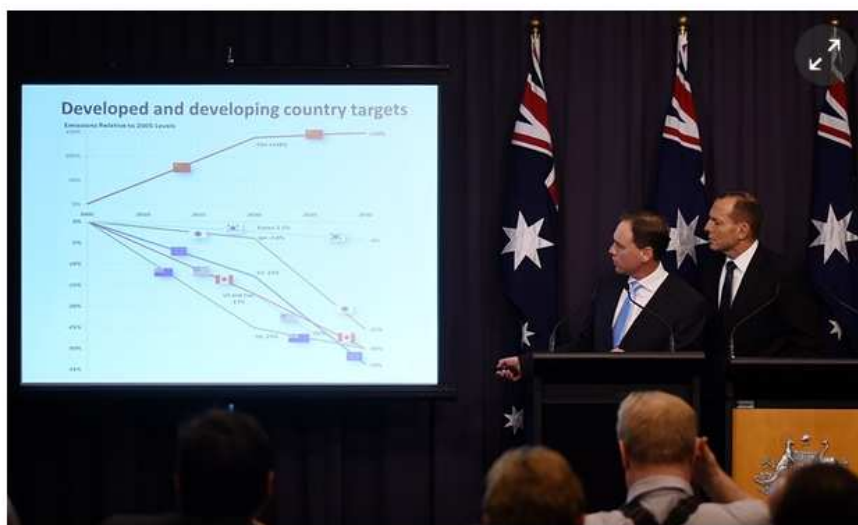
USDA, [KEITH WELLER](#) Genome-editing technologies—including zinc finger nuclease (ZFN), transcription activator-like effector nuclease (TALEN), and CRISPR/Cas tools—have facilitated various gene modifications even in higher organisms. Meanwhile, advanced genetic engineering raises a worldwide regulatory issue by creating indistinct boundaries in genetically modified organism (GMO) regulations because, without introducing new genetic material, genome editing can be used to make modifications similar to naturally occurring mutations. To encourage public discussion on the regulatory issue, my colleagues and I last year presented a general drawing of the complicated regulatory issue in [Trends in Biotechnology](#). Now, in an article published in [Trends in Plant Science](#) this week (February 25), Motoko Araki and I focus on

genome-edited crops in the context of global GMO regulation. <http://www.the-scientist.com/?articles.view/articleNo/42276/title/Opinion--On-Global-GMO-Regulation/>

You're crazy if you believe Labor's emission cuts would cost \$600bn
Greg Jericho



Despite the fear-mongering, the Coalition's own modelling shows if emissions were cut 45% below 2005 levels by 2030, GDP growth would stay above 2%



Abbott suggested that the cost under the ALP's policy of emissions reduction would be a '\$600 billion hit on our economy'. That figure is breathtakingly stupid. Photograph: Lukas Coch/EPA

When a government is embarrassed about something, it puts it out late on Friday afternoon without even a media release.

Such was the case last Friday, when the release of the government's modelling of emissions cuts was put online without any fanfare, and with a fair degree of embarrassment. It showed the cost of emissions reductions is much less than suggested by the prime minister in parliament.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/grogonomics/2015/aug/24/youre-crazy-if-you-believe-labors-emission-cuts-would-cost-600-bn>

Barnaby Joyce draws line in the soil on foreign farm buyers

THE AUSTRALIAN

Barnaby Joyce has defended his personal opinion that foreign state-owned enterprises should be barred from purchasing

Australian farmland, despite Tony Abbott insisting his Agriculture Minister was merely re-articulating government policy.

The Agriculture Minister has drawn fire over his comments to the NSW Nationals conference at the weekend, where he claimed foreign states had a “long-term purpose” in buying farms which “could over the long run undermine our nation’s interests”.

As *The Australian* reported this morning, Mr Joyce told the conference in Cessnock: “I just don’t want to see agricultural land owned by foreign governments.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/foreign-affairs/barnaby-joyce-draws-line-in-the-soil-on-foreign-farm-buyers/story-fn59nm2j-1227399527612>



The lawsuit accuses the US government of knowing about the harmful effects of greenhouse emissions for 50 years, but failing to stop them rising. EPA/Justin Lane/AAP

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This month’s decision by 21 young American citizens, mostly teenagers, to [sue President Barack Obama and various branches of the US government](#) over climate change has highlighted a crucial issue that is all too often overlooked: the tendency to value current generations’ well-being much more highly than that of future generations.

The “youth plaintiffs”, aged between 8 and 19, argue that the US government has known for more than 50 years that carbon dioxide from fossil fuels is causing dangerous climate change, and yet has not prevented emissions from rising.

Authors



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Disclosure statement

<http://theconversation.com/teens-sue-obama-over-climate-asking-why-future-generations-rights-are-not-respected-46470>

Commitment to Innovation and Conservation Shapes the Littles' Family Farm

By Dan Zinkand, NRCS South Dakota, 24/08/2015



The Littles have a diversified farming and ranching operation. Photo: Dan Zinkand for NRCS. When you stop on a bridge that crosses the Big Sioux River in Hamlin County, South Dakota, and look south you can see how well Donnie, Barry and Eli Little manage their cows and crops to improve soil and water quality and increase productivity. - See more at: <http://blogs.usda.gov/2015/08/24/commitment-to-innovation-and-conservation-shapes-the-littles-family-farm/>



Kane-DuPage Soil & Water Conservation District



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Land Use Opinion Reports

Purpose and Intent

The purpose and intent of the Land Use Opinion report is to furnish natural resource information to officials of the local governing body and other decision makers. This report is required under the Illinois Soil and Water Conservation District Act, Section 22.02a (Illinois Compiled Statutes, Chapter 70, Paragraph 405, Section 22.02a), enacted December 3, 1971, effective July 1, 1972 which states:

The Soil and Water Conservation District shall make all natural resource information available to the appropriate county agency or municipality in the promulgation of zoning ordinances or variances. Any person who petitions any municipality or county agency in the district for variation, amendment, or other relief from that municipality's or county's zoning ordinance or who proposes to subdivide vacant or agricultural lands therein shall furnish a copy of such petition or proposal to the Soil and Water Conservation District. The Soil and Water Conservation District shall be given not more than 30 days from the time of receipt of the petition or proposal to issue its written opinion concerning the petition or proposal and submit the same to the appropriate county agency or municipality for further action.

The Land Use Opinion report intends to present the most current natural resource information available in an understandable format. It contains a description of the present conditions and resources available and their potential impact on each other. The report comes from the following: standardized data, on-site investigations, and information furnished by the petitioner. Please read the entire report to coordinate and inter-relate all natural resource factors considered. The report, when used properly, will provide the basis for good land use change decisions and proper development while protecting the natural resource base of the county. The conclusions of the Land Use Opinion report in no way indicate the impossibility of a certain land use. However, it should alert the reader to possible problems that may occur if the capabilities of the land are ignored.

LAND USE OPINION REPORTS

Application
to request a report

see application Form for Fees



http://www.kanedupageswcd.org/land_use.htm



Decades on, the promise of 'clean coal' remains elusive

August 26, 2015 6:02am AEST

Carbon capture and storage would help the coal industry survive, but it remains elusive. AAP Image/Dave Hunt

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For more than a decade the coal industry's favoured response to climate change was carbon capture and storage, or CCS. CCS is still the main defence, but the absence of functioning projects is making it ever more threadbare.

Last week Citigroup released a report with the catchy title [ENERGY DARWINISM II: Why a Low Carbon Future Doesn't Have to Cost the Earth](#) arguing that commercial CCS may come too late to save some members of the coal industry, unless it receives significant government assistance.

Author



Marc Hudson

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Disclosure statement

Marc Hudson does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organization that would benefit from this article, and has

<http://theconversation.com/decades-on-the-promise-of-clean-coal-remains-elusive-46522>



There's another way to combat climate change — but let's not call it geoengineering

August 25, 2015 2:19pm AEST

Geoengineering the climate may be more palatable if it supports natural processes. Tree planting image from www.shutterstock.com

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14

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No matter how much we reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it will not be enough to keep global warming below 2C – the internationally agreed “safe” limit. This fact has been implied by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and confirmed again recently by [international research](#).

Does this mean we should give up? Not at all. There is a plan B to keep warming below dangerous levels: helping the planet to take more carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

Authors



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<http://theconversation.com/theres-another-way-to-combat-climate-change-but-lets-not-call-it-geoengineering-46519>

Time for the 'green tape' debate to mature: jobs and the environment are not implacable foes

August 25, 2015 5:43am AEST



Tinkering with the law is likely to entrench positions on both sides of the 'green tape' debate. AAP Image/Supplied

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The [highly charged debate](#) over the proposed Carmichael coal mine, which culminated in Attorney-General George Brandis's decision last week to [propose winding back environmental legal protections](#), has exposed the simmering tension between "jobs" and "the environment" on Australia's political landscape.

<http://theconversation.com/time-for-the-green-tape-debate-to-mature-jobs-and-the-environment-are-not-implacable-foes-46538>

Holistic grazing ensures ecosystem resilience during dry time on Moffitts Farm

Apr. 13 Our Farm, Our farm's pastures & grazing no comments

By Patrick Francis

The nine months from 1 July 2014 to 1 April 2015 have been unprecedented in terms of low rainfall and frequency of falls since we started our holistic grazing program in 2000. What sets this period apart from the same time span in other years has been failure of a significant rainfall (over 60mm) event in early summer or in early autumn. For the first time a flush of summer active perennial grass growth did not happen, so pasture availability relied on the bank grown in spring.

Author



Allan Dale

Professor in Tropical Regional Development, The Cairns Institute at James Cook University

Disclosure statement

Allan Dale receives funding from various Federal and State Government agencies to undertake research into governance and regional development issues in the tropics. He is Professor in Tropical Regional Development at The Cairns Institute at James Cook University. He is also Chair of Regional Development Australia (Far North Queensland and Torres Strait), a community-based not for profit.

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James Cook University provide funding as a member of The Conversation AU.



This pasture photographed in April 2015 on Moffitts Farm after three weeks grazing started summer with around 6000 kg of herbage. It demonstrates how a pasture bank built in spring provides a maintenance diet for sheep while retaining ecosystem functions during dry summer-autumns. Note our MLA pasture ruler is two rulers stuck together which is necessary to measure our high pastures. The edible herbage level is around 3000 kg per hectare. Photo: Patrick Francis
<http://www.moffittsfarm.com.au/2015/04/13/holistic-grazing-ensures-ecosystem-resilience-during-dry-time-on-moffitts-farm/>



OPINION | LETTERS

Good Soil Is the Key To Good Agriculture

The world's farmlands have been depleted by poor farming practices and decades of chemical inputs.

August 19, 2015

"To Feed Billions, Farms Are About Data as Much as Dirt" (Business & Tech., Aug. 10) correctly addresses the challenges ahead for America's farmers and how technology is helping them feed a growing world population. But no amount of software will provide

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/good-soil-is-the-key-to-good-agriculture-1439926406>

Partnership shares soil, water data

MILK MATTERS - DAIRY SA

29 Jul, 2015 03:30 AM **A+** **A-**

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Soil-moisture monitoring equipment and a weather station established on two dairy farms at Mount Compass will help farmers make improvements in water use and nitrogen efficiency.

MOUNT Compass landholders will be able to access hourly weather and soil data to aid irrigation and pasture management decisions this season, through a partnership between landholders and Natural Resources SA Murray-Darling Basin.

Soil-moisture monitoring equipment and a weather station established by Natural Resources on two dairy farms will provide weather and soil information to help farmers make improvements in water use and nitrogen efficiency, as well as pasture and crop management, supporting improved productivity, profitability and reduced greenhouse-gas emissions.

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Feed focus fires up production

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<http://www.stockjournal.com.au/news/agriculture/general/opinion/partnership-shares-soil-water-data/2738504.aspx>

How much does wind energy cost? Debunking the myths

June 23, 2015 3:44pm AEST



Wind energy will not cost Australians billions of dollars. David Clarke/Flickr, CC BY-NC-ND

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Are renewables pushing up the cost of electricity? That's the claim made by Alan Moran in an [opinion piece](#) for the Australian Financial Review this week.

Moran, executive director of [Regulation Economics](#) and a [former director](#) at the Institute of Public Affairs, argues that increasing investment in renewables and particularly wind energy will cost consumers billions of dollars. The high operating costs and requirements for backup when the wind isn't blowing are the problem, he argues.

Author



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Disclosure statement

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Partners



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<http://theconversation.com/how-much-does-wind-energy-cost-debunking-the-myths-43710>

New attitudes to native grasses for win-win outcomes

Apr. 19 Holistic Farming & Landcare no comments

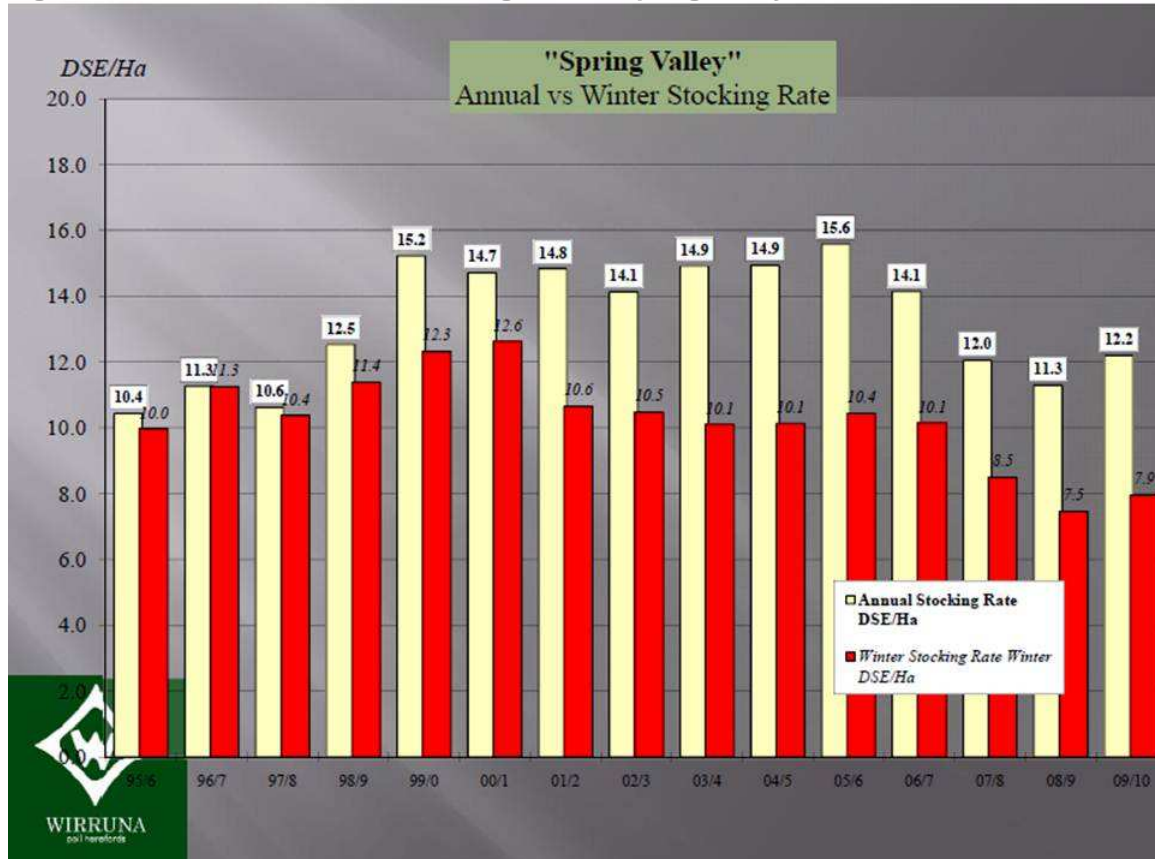
Precede:

There has been a paradigm shift in the way Ian Locke 'Spring Valley' Holbrook NSW manages and grazes the steep native pasture hills on the property. With the help of thorough records he has been able to demonstrate why the new approach is benefiting financial performance and environmental outcomes on the property. This is his story of change.

'Spring Valley' is largely sown to highly-productive phalaris and sub clover pastures with some 'feed gap' pastures such as lucerne, ryegrass and forage rape. Traditionally, spring rains are very reliable (10% of springs fail) and autumns not so reliable (60% of autumns' fail).

We grow 80% of our pasture in spring and therefore our livestock systems are designed around calving and lambing and growing out animals in spring to best match the pasture production curve.

Figure 1: Annual versus winter stocking rate on Spring Valley since 1995.



The role of the native country

<http://www.moffittsfarm.com.au/2015/04/19/improved-pasture-advocate-reverses-attitudes-to-native-grasses-for-win-win-outcomes/>

Soil science has been searching for a grand narrative that plays out globally, soil security provides that, and places soil scientists in a key position for contributing to the earth's future sustainability.

Alex McBratney and Andrea Koch