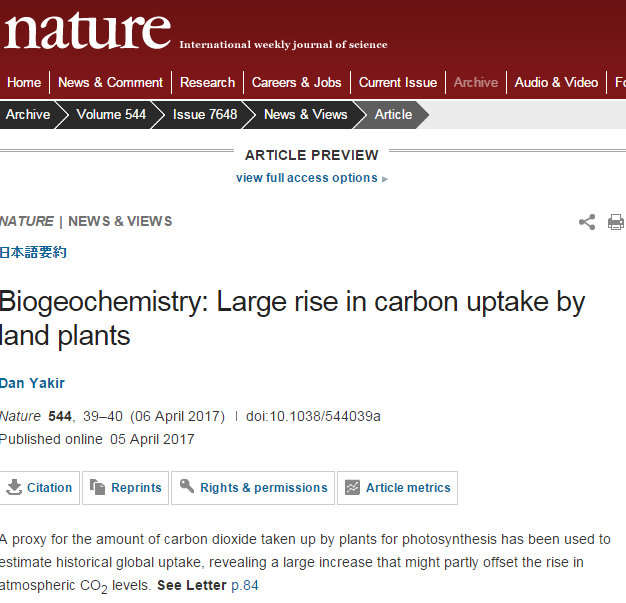


<https://theconversation.com/healthy-soil-is-the-real-key-to-feeding-the-world-75364>



<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v544/n7648/full/544039a.html>

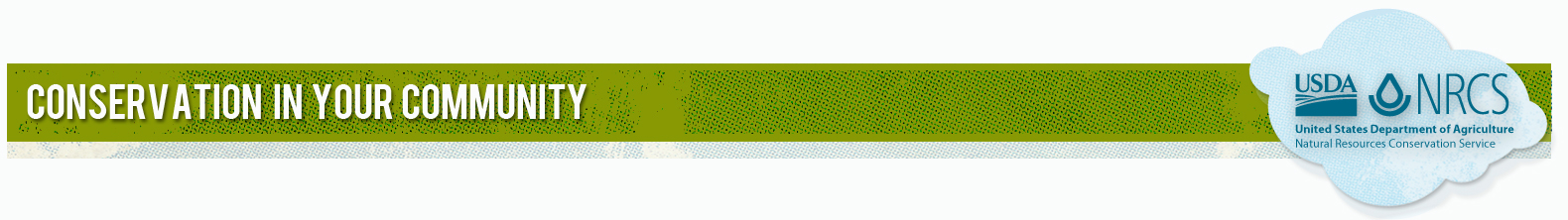
# Opinion | Reply to criticism of soil pollution research

Paul Harvey, Professor Mark Patrick Taylor Department of Environmental Sciences, Macquarie University, Sydney, NSW.  
6 Apr 2017, 3 p.m.



EXAMINED: "Our study examined previously unstudied private space soils where the greatest exposure occurs – backyards".

We thank Mr Devey for his recent commentary Conclusions on city pollution questioned dated 16th February 2017. His opinion piece was in response to the Newcastle Herald’s coverage of our recent research on the city of Newcastle titled Geochemical sources, forms and phases of soil contamination in an urban industrial city, published in Science of the Total Environment. <http://www.theherald.com.au/story/4580152/reply-to-criticism-of-soil-pollution-research/>

[](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/newsroom/features/?cid=stelprdb1078507)

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| Murray Fulton - Mississippi District Conservationist |
| February 25, 2013 By Murray Fulton Soil Conservationist  Fulton is a soil conservationist with the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service. He works in the agency’s Brandon office. |

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| --- |
| [Buffers play a crucial role as a safety net for the environment.](https://prod.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_MEDIA/stelprdb1081571.jpg) |
| |  | | --- | | **BUFFERS**  Properly installed buffers:   * Contribute to productivity * Curb pollution * Preserve water quality * Provide wildlife habitat * Reduce flooding downstream   In rural areas, many farmers and ranchers work with USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and other conservation partners.  <http://go.usa.gov/ghgz> offsite link image | |

When you hear the word “buffer,” what do you think of? Maybe it evokes a safety net, a filter, or an area of shrubs and trees. In the landscape context, that’s pretty much what it is.

A “buffer,” when referred to by a conservationist or a farmer, is a small strip of land of trees, shrubs and other plants. This strip provides protection from such things as wind or pollutants entering waterways and plays a crucial role as a safety net for the environment.

Conservation buffers trap sediment, fertilizers, pesticides, pathogens and heavy metals. To do this, buffers act like natural filters, removing nutrients or sediment that water runs off the field, keeping them from entering waterways.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/newsroom/features/?cid=stelprdb1081581>

# Alexis Ellicott: Bringing Gender Parity to the Agricultural Inputs Sector



In this guest blog post, Alexis Ellicott, CNFA Chief of Party on the [*USAID/Agro-Inputs Project*](https://www.cnfa.org/program/agro-inputs-project/) tells Farming First how women are being empowered to enter into the male-dominated sector.

Women produce [more than half of the world’s food](http://www.fao.org/docrep/x0262e/x0262e16.htm). Global population is forecast to reach [9 billion by 2050](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/wsfs/docs/Issues_papers/HLEF2050_Global_Agriculture.pdf), and the world’s women will continue to shoulder a huge share of the responsibility for feeding all those additional mouths.



AIRN has a trainers’ pool comprised of experts and retailers who deliver hands-on, easy-to-understand training on quality inputs and business management.

<https://farmingfirst.org/2017/03/alexis-ellicott-bringing-gender-parity-to-the-agricultural-inputs-sector/>

# Our very existence depends on soil, so why is it not protected?

**DISCLAIMER:** All opinions in this column reflect the views of the author(s), not of EURACTIV.com PLC.

By [Balázs Horváth](http://www.euractiv.com/authors/balazs-horvath/) | [European Environmental Bureau](http://www.euractiv.com/content_providers/european-environmental-bureau/)



The UK has estimated that its soil will only be able to support 100 more harvests. [[Shutterstock](http://www.shutterstock.com/downloading_tips.mhtml?code=&id=300375812&size=medium&image_format=jpg&method=download&super_url=http%3A%2F%2Fdownload.shutterstock.com%2Fgatekeeper%2FW3siZSI6MTQ3MzY5NzEzMSwiYyI6Il9waG90b19zZXNzaW9uX2lkIiwiZGMiOiJpZGxfMzAwMzc1ODEyIiwiayI6InBob3RvLzMwMDM3NTgxMi9tZWRpdW0uanBnIiwibSI6IjEiLCJkIjoic2h1dHRlcnN0b2NrLW1lZGlhIn0sIkJZMHdyL2dvaHpkMnVQcldpb2w3bVRJQyt6cyJd%2Fshutterstock_300375812.jpg&racksite_id=ny&chosen_subscription=163&license=standard&src=vaGVpEodbcW0Slgv_izyhw-2-27)]

**In the minds of many, soil is simply dirt, but without it we would all cease to exist. Unlike the water we drink and the air we breathe, soil is not protected in the EU and its quality is getting worse. This has to change, writes Balázs Horváth.**

Balázs Horváth is senior policy officer at the European Environmental Bureau (EEB).

The headlines are full of stories about migration, food and climate change – soil, perhaps unsurprisingly, barely gets a mention in these stories, yet it is crucial to understanding all three issues. <http://www.euractiv.com/section/agriculture-food/opinion/our-very-existence-depends-on-soil-so-why-is-it-not-protected/>

# Farming Beyond Borders: Farmers Share Challenges and Solutions



Whilst many challenges facing Farming First’s supporters can vary from region to region, we also stand to gain much from sharing our common experiences, to identify relevant solutions. With this in mind, we recently interviewed farmers from opposite ends of the world, to find out which concerns and interventions – if any – they shared.

Beatrice Wakwabubi, a Kenyan farmer with Farm Africa’s [Growing Futures](http://www.farmafrica.org/kenya/growing-futures-western-kenya) initiative, and Jean Lam, a member of the [National Farmers’ Union](https://nfu.org/) in the US, who works a no-till operation in Oklahoma, US, may seem to have little in common. But like many farmers in today’s uncertain climate, both women told Farming First that financing, rising costs and land access were their main concerns.

**FF: Tell us what inspired you to become a farmer?**

**Beatrice Wakwabubi**: I needed money to help me with the necessities of day to day living. I couldn’t find a regular job and needed a way to make do. I spoke to my father who had a farm and he let me have a part of his land from September after he had harvested maize. I could use the land for about five months to plant crops and sell to make some money. The money was my motivation.

**Jean Lam**: My family has been farming since the early 1900s in the same area of Oklahoma I currently farm. As a fourth generation agriculturalist, being a good steward of the land is deeply engrained into my identity. I am inspired to continue the legacy given to me by my family and to leave the land better for future generations.



Beatrice Wakwabubi (left), 34, of the Songea Group, and Jean Lam, 26, of Lam Farms, Oklahoma, US.

<https://farmingfirst.org/2017/04/farming-beyond-borders-farmers-share-challenges-and-solutions/>

# Catherine Bertini: Ending Hunger Is Within Our Grasp



In this guest blog post, Catherine Bertini, distinguished fellow, Global Food and Agriculture at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, and professor of public administration and international affairs, Maxwell School, Syracuse University, reflects on the progress made in tackling malnutrition, and the challenge that remains to achieve zero hunger.



After years of incremental progress in the fight against poverty and malnutrition, eradicating hunger is now within our grasp. The world is changing, and we face growing challenges and new risks—but we’ve also never been as well prepared to meet these challenges. Ending hunger will require action, engagement, commitment, and collaboration from all sectors, across generations, and from every corner of the world. <https://farmingfirst.org/2017/03/catherine-bertini-ending-hunger-is-within-our-grasp/>

OPINION: Knowing the soil is important for modern dairy farmers

BALA TIKKISETTY



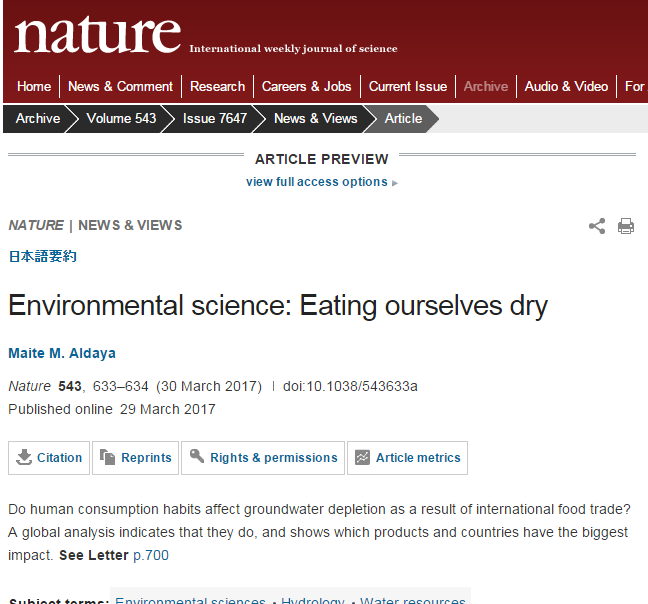
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Bala Tikkisetty.

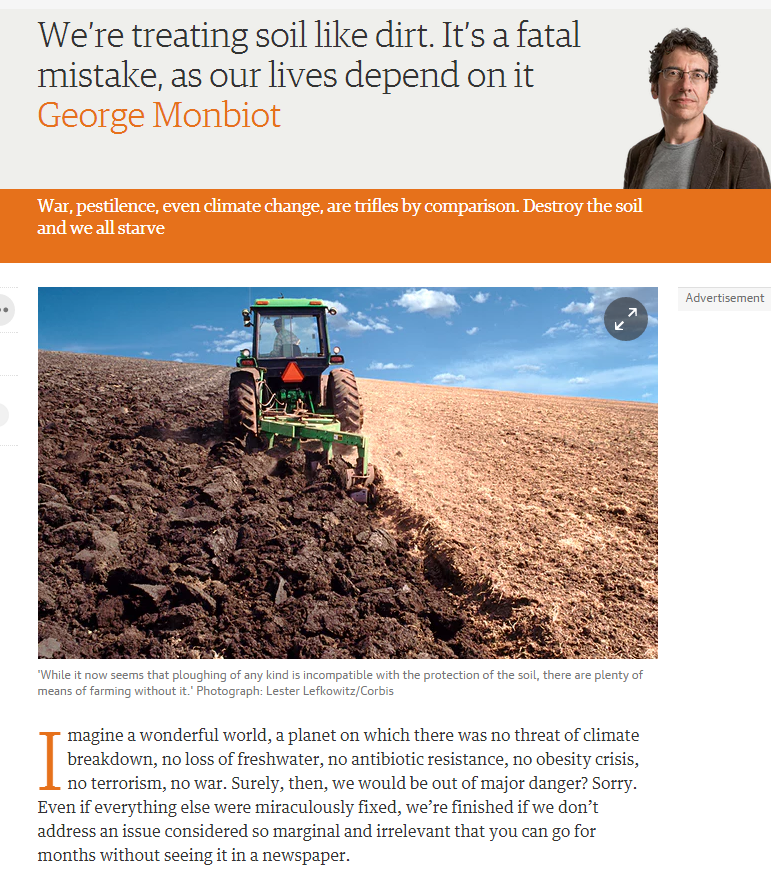
Knowing the soil has always been the basis of good farming because the soil is the foundation of the production system.

For modern dairy farmers a good understanding of their property's soils has even more importance because the soil is also the basis of the effluent treatment system.  Knowing the soil conditions and how they vary during the year can help to deliver very practical benefits including maximising utilisation of nutrients in dairy effluent and preventing contamination of ground water and waterways.

Soil properties such as texture and structure determine the amount of water and nutrients that can enter and be retained within a particular soil, and the rate at which excess water goes through that soil. Infiltration rates, water retention, drainage characteristics and consequent leaching losses of nutrients in effluent are strongly dependent on these properties, and they vary over time as a result of weather and farming activities <http://www.stuff.co.nz/waikato-times/opinion/74010739/opinion-knowing-the-soil-is-important-for-modern-dairy-farmers>



<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v543/n7647/full/543633a.html>



<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/mar/25/treating-soil-like-dirt-fatal-mistake-human-life>

# Nicolas Mounard: British and African Farmers Face Similar Challenges and Opportunities



In this guest blog post, Nicolas Mounard, CEO of Farm Africa, discusses the similar challenges faced by British and African farmers associated with uncertain trading conditions as well as growing and increasingly complex global demands.



Never before has the world asked so much from its farmers. The challenge of feeding a rapidly expanding global population in a changing trade and environmental landscape is a daunting task. Farmers are up to it but to succeed, they need support to sustainably increase production as well as certainty on trade agreements.

A recent meeting in London organised by Farm Africa, an international NGO working to grow farming in eastern Africa, and the UK’s National Farmers’ Union highlighted the importance of well-functioning supply chains to global food security. <https://farmingfirst.org/2017/04/nicolas-mounard-british-and-african-farmers-face-similar-challenges-and-opportunities/>

# Hot-desking and activity-based work perhaps not so hot, research suggests

**Opinion**

[**The Conversation**](http://theconversation.com/)

By Libby Sander, Bond University

Posted Wed at 1:26pmWed 12 Apr 2017, 1:26pm

[](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-04-12/generic-businesswoman-at-a-laptop-with-a-book/8438810)

[**Photo:** Hot-desking and activity-based work can bring on a range of issues. (Supplied: Start Up Stock Photos)](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-04-12/generic-businesswoman-at-a-laptop-with-a-book/8438810)

A recent survey of 400 multinational corporations found that two-thirds plan to implement shared-desk workplaces by 2020.

But research shows these arrangements have a range of outcomes, many of which are negative.

A [recently published study](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0003687016302514) of 1,000 Australian employees found that shared-desk environments had a number of problems.

These included increased distrust, distractions, uncooperative behaviour and negative relationships.

**Libby Sander is a lecturer at the Bond Business School, Bond University. She is currently co-authoring a book on the changing context of work which will be published** **in 2017.**

[**http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-04-12/hot-desking-activity-based-work-not-so-hot-research-suggests/8438664**](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-04-12/hot-desking-activity-based-work-not-so-hot-research-suggests/8438664)

# OPINION: Unlocking the agricultural potential of northern Australia

[**ABC Rural**](http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/)

Peter Stone, Gary Fitt and Michael Robertson

[](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-03-29/irrigation-channel-in-the-ord-valley/6038946)

[**RELATED STORY:** CSIRO finds 1.5 million hectares of northern Australia suited to irrigated agriculture](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-04-05/csiro-finds-enough-water-and-soil-for-north-australia-irrigation/7300050)

[**RELATED STORY:** ABC Rural coverage of the Northern Australia Food Futures Conference](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-04-12/food-futures-developing-agriculture-in-northern-australia/7308572)

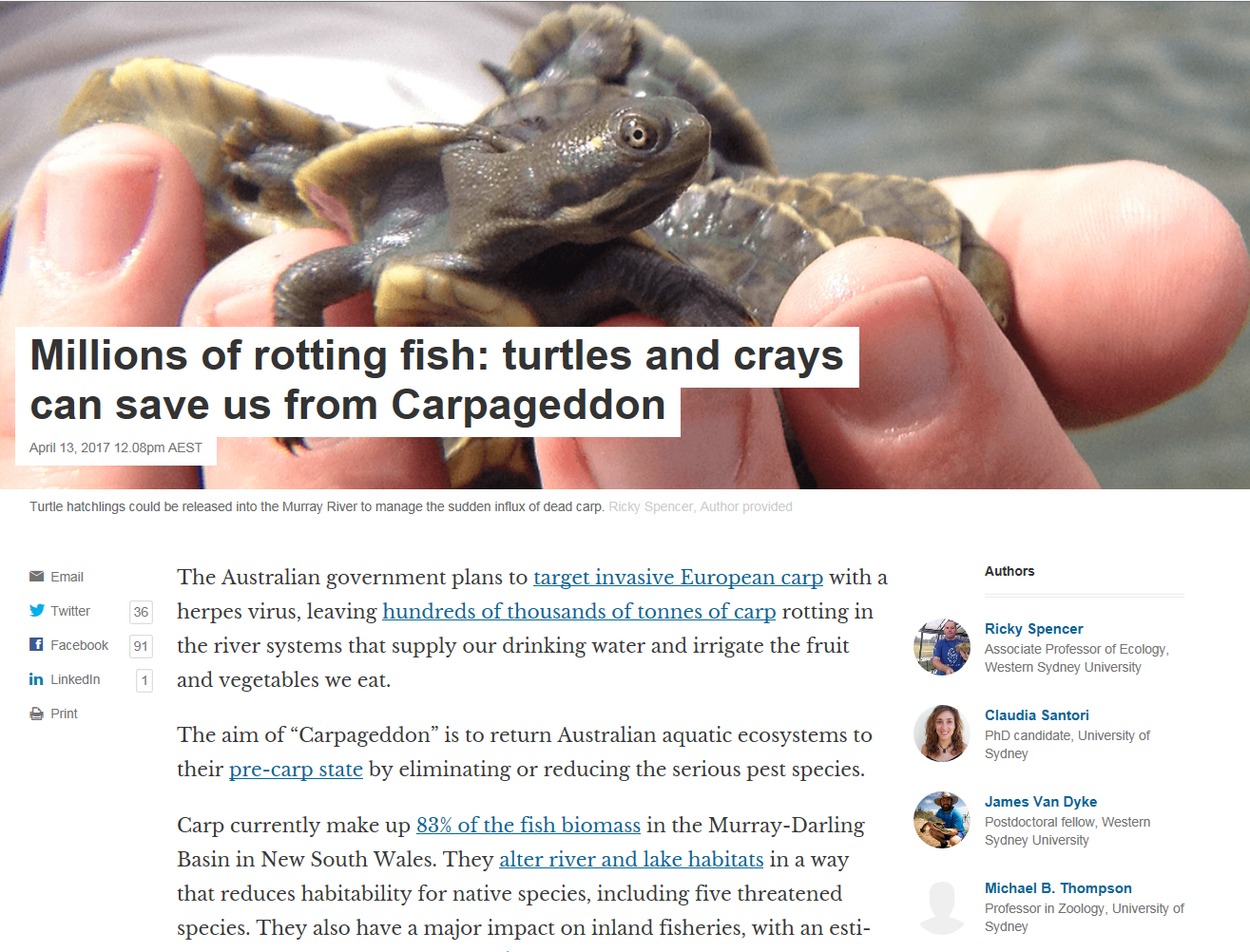
[**MAP:**Darwin 0800](http://www.google.com/maps/place/Darwin%200800/@-12.4668,130.8433,5z)

**The Food Futures Conference is on in Darwin this week, focussing on what it will take to develop agricultural projects in northern Australia.**

**CSIRO researchers Peter Stone, Gary Fitt and Michael Robertson have done a lot of work in this space.**

## **Unlocking the agricultural potential of northern Australia**

Northern Australia is already the world's fifth largest beef and sugar exporter, with 12 million cattle and 3,000 sugar farms bringing in more than $3 billion each year. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-04-12/csiro-views-on-developing-agriculture-in-northern-australia/7317100>



[**https://theconversation.com/millions-of-rotting-fish-turtles-and-crays-can-save-us-from-carpageddon-75297**](https://theconversation.com/millions-of-rotting-fish-turtles-and-crays-can-save-us-from-carpageddon-75297)

# A gentle word on the state of Australian debate and freedom of speech

**Opinion**

By Q&A executive producer [Peter McEvoy](http://www.abc.net.au/news/peter-mcevoy/5434548)

Updated Mon at 6:54amMon 10 Apr 2017, 6:54am

Australian Broadcasting Corporation ...



[**Video:** Yassmin Abdel-Magied and Jacqui Lambie on Q&A (ABC News)](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-02-13/yassmin-abdel-magied-jacqui-lambie-in-fiery-exchange-sharia-law/8267174)

"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." Proverbs 15:1

My father wrote those words above his signature in my autograph book when I was a kid.

People collect selfies now — not autographs, and share memes and tweets — not proverbs, but I find myself thinking about those words more and more often as I watch the national debate unfold on Q&A each week.

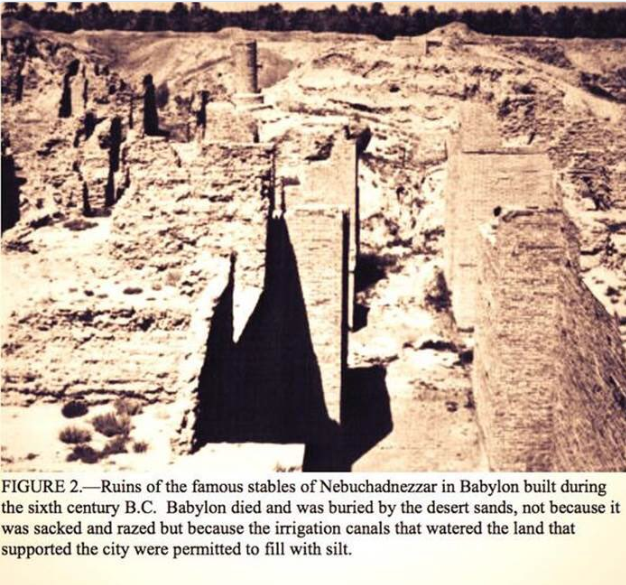
[**http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-04-10/peter-mcevoy-a-gentle-word-on-the-state-of-australian-debate/8426894**](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-04-10/peter-mcevoy-a-gentle-word-on-the-state-of-australian-debate/8426894)



<https://theconversation.com/australian-gas-between-a-fracked-rock-and-a-socially-hard-place-74932>



<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/24749508.2017.1301053>



**“History warns us not to abuse the soil”** **USDA NRCS** 29th March 2017