

CHAIN REACTION

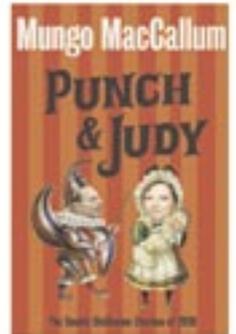
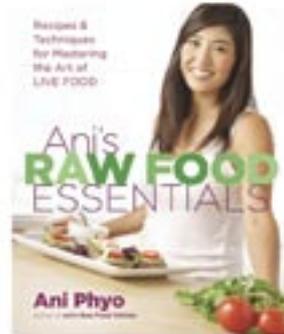
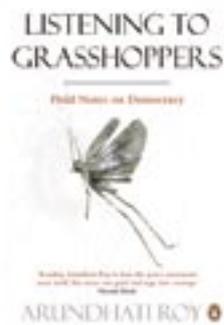
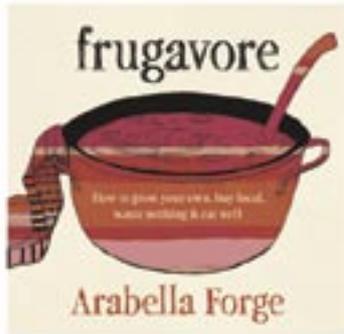
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- *CLIMATE POLICY – FROM CARBON TAX TO DIRECT ACTION*
- *NANOTECHNOLOGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE*
- *THE CASE AGAINST WAR MEMORIALS*
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FOE AUSTRALIA NEWS

Friends of the Earth Australia is a federation of independent local groups. You can join FoE by contacting your local group. For further details, please see <www.foe.org.au/groups>.

There is a monthly email newsletter which includes details on our campaigns here and around the world - you can subscribe via the FoE Australia website <www.foe.org.au>.

Golf War



Yering Flood Plains. September 2010. Lilydale and Corhanwarrabul (Mt Dandenong) in background.

FoE Melbourne is currently embroiled in a legal stoush with the Eastern Golf Club. The club is planning to sell its existing golf course at Donvale for approximately \$120 million. It is then proposing to move to a new location at Yering where \$65 million will be spent on constructing a new course. Much of the new course is located on plains that flood regularly.

The Yering location is situated only 1 km upstream from the pumps that supply Sugarloaf Reservoir with water sourced from the Yarra River. Sugarloaf Reservoir supplies 1.5 million Melbournians with drinking water and the Yering pumps are used in drought conditions to augment Melbourne's drinking water supply. The Yarra River at Yering also contains three federally listed native fish - Murray Cod, Macquarie Perch and Australian Grayling. FoE is arguing that water quality could be impacted both through sediment movement during construction and off-site pesticide movement once the course is constructed. FoE is also arguing that the site

is inappropriate due to the fact that in flood years much of the site can be metres under water.

FoE is working with the Environment Defenders Office on the legal challenge, which is due to be heard in the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal in November. Healesville Environment Watch Incorporated and a number of individuals are also objecting. This is an extremely important planning case and any donations to help with legal fees would be greatly appreciated.

Contact: Anthony Amis, FoE Melbourne, ph (03) 9419 8700, anthonyamis@hotmail.com

More information: www.baddevelopers.green.net.au/Docs/EasternGolfClub.htm

Insecticides and locusts

Aerial spraying with insecticides commenced in late September in three states to attempt to control locust numbers. This year appears to have authorities worried with claims being made in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales that locust numbers could be the largest seen since the early 1970s. FoE remains concerned about the impacts of vast areas of south east Australia being sprayed to control locusts.

In a September 22 media release, FoE expressed alarm regarding the widespread use of organophosphorus insecticides such as chlorpyrifos, diazinon, fenitrothion and maldison/malathion. These insecticides target the cholinesterase enzyme in the brain, resulting in symptoms of neurotoxicity. The action that impacts on insects also impacts on humans and other animals. Exposure to these insecticides has been linked to Parkinsons Disease, Chronic Fatigue and impaired neurological development in young children and foetuses.

Concern is also increasing regarding the targeting of high conservation value grasslands by locust spraying and the risks associated with off-site impacts. Canada banned the use of fenitrothion in 1997 after a large kill of songbirds and fipronil was banned in Madagascar in 1999 after

a series of bird deaths. Ecological concerns regarding locust spraying are discussed at www.savethelocust.com

Indonesian environmental activists speak out about Australia's offset schemes

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) is an international plan to make forests available as a source of offsets for developed countries to meet their emissions reduction targets. Under the proposed plan, rainforest nations such as Indonesia or Papua New Guinea, will sell 'credits' for the carbon stored in their forests to countries, such as Australia.

The Australian government has established two aid-funded REDD pilot projects in Indonesia to demonstrate the feasibility of forest carbon trading and assist Indonesia's integration into the international carbon market. While there has been some support within Indonesia for REDD, other groups have been more critical, including WALHI (FoE Indonesia, which unites more than 450 NGO's throughout Indonesia) and Aliansi Rakyat Pengelola Gambut (ARPAG), a collective of villagers living adjacent to Australia's REDD project in Kalimantan. ARPAG was established in 2007 and is a 7000-strong collective of peasants, fisherfolk, rattan handcrafters and rubber collectors.

In November, FoE Australia is sponsoring a national speaking tour of activists from WALHI and ARPAG to discuss their views on proposed REDD schemes. Speakers include Teguh Surya, campaigns director at WALHI, and Muliadi, secretary general of ARPAG.

More information: foe.org.au/climate-justice/activities-and-projects/redd

Victorian state election

Friends of the Earth has been working hard to achieve good environmental outcomes as a result of the Victorian state election in November. Key elements of

our work have been:

- a substantial lobbying effort and public campaign in support of a strong Climate Change Bill (see pp.21-22).

- a campaign to get all political parties to commit to a full closure of the ageing Hazelwood coal fired power station in the Latrobe Valley.

- a party scorecard, produced with Environment Victoria, the Wilderness Society and the Victorian National Parks Association, which rated the main parties against the vision outlined in the document 'Turning It Around'.

- a range of rallies, mobilisations and public forums, including support for the 350.org day of action event outside the Hazelwood power station.

More information: www.melbourne.foe.org.au

Solidarity with Carteret Islanders



Ursula Rakova building new homes in Bougainville. Photo by Cameron Feast / Oxfam

Ursula Rakova, from the Carteret Islands in Papua New Guinea, was in Brisbane in mid-September as a guest of the Earth Charter Festival. Ursula was here to raise awareness about the challenges of relocating her people due to the effects of climate change. FoE Brisbane took the opportunity to organise a fundraiser for the NGO that she works with, Tulele Peisa - 'Sailing the waves on our own'. The fundraiser was also supported by three local Catholic organisations and Oxfam Australia.

The people of the Carteret Islands have fought for more than 20 years against the rising ocean, building sea walls and planting mangroves. However, storm surges and high tides continue to wash away homes, destroy vegetable gardens, and contaminate fresh water supplies. At the fundraiser, Ursula told the audience that two families had already successfully relocated to mainland Bougainville, and that the next stage of the project is to build homes for the next 10 families to move. The Brisbane event raised almost \$4000, enough for the materials for one house and most of the labour costs to build it.

At the Earth Charter Festival, a panel on Pacific Islander Perspectives was facilitated by Wendy Flannery from FoE Brisbane. Attendees heard from representatives of Tuvalu, Samoa, Kimbe Province and the Carteret Islands in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Kiribati. The representatives gave passionate accounts of the diversity and vibrance of Pacific Island cultures and the importance of maintaining traditional knowledge and practices.

A number of speakers also highlighted the importance of culture when facing the challenges from climate change, international trade agreements and increasing pressures on customary land ownership. The failure of the Australian government to act on climate change also featured.

There are action alerts and further information on our website: www.melbourne.foe.org.au

National Day of Action on Forests



National Day of Action on Forests, August 5, 2010.

Along with many others, FoE campaigners took part in a national day of action across six states and territories on August 5 in the lead up to the federal election, calling for the protection of our native forests and for

legislation to ban the burning of native forests to produce electricity.

In Melbourne, forest protection groups occupied the roof and storefront of a major Officeworks building, unfurling banners over the rooftop billboards, targeting the Reflex Paper brand for its ongoing logging of Victoria's native forests. Local conservationists were on site at the Eden Woodchip Mill in south-east NSW, and in Tasmania, activists held a large-scale protest against burning forests for power, erecting a giant toaster and hosting a press conference outside the offices of Forestry Tasmania.

In NSW, a group wearing threatened species costumes cycled from the Tea Gardens woodchip mill to the woodchip-export seaport in Newcastle, while activists in Perth, Brisbane (King George Square) and the ACT unfurled banners at high-profile public locations. "Australia's timber industry is in crisis and needs a complete overhaul", said Melbourne based FoE campaigner Lauren Caulfield. "The shamelessly wasteful export woodchipping industry is on its last legs, with the collapse of overseas woodchip markets and the growth of plantation forests. It is time to resolve the forestry crisis." "As the market for native forests woodchips declines, some cynical logging industry sectors are trying to switch to burning our forests for electricity," said WA Conservation Council campaigns coordinator Louise Morris. "Since 2000, the WA native forest logging industry has been subsidised by taxpayers to the tune of \$7 million a year. WA could save money as well as our forests by ending native forest logging now."

A recent major US Government study found that burning wood for energy releases more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere per unit of energy than fossil fuels (oil, coal, or natural gas).

FOE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Friends of the Earth International is a federation of autonomous organisations from all over the world. Our members, in 77 countries, campaign on the most urgent environmental and social issues, while working towards sustainable societies. www.foei.org

You can sign up for 'Voices', the bimonthly email newsletter of FoE International, at www.foei.org/en/get-involved/voices

FoE's web radio station broadcasts the voices of the affected people we work with and the campaigners fighting on their behalf. Listen online (in a choice of five languages) at www.radiomundoreal.fm.

Check out the FoE International online shop at: www.foei.org/en/get-involved/shop for calendars, t-shirts, greeting cards, subscriptions to FoE publications, and more.

Electric cars not so green

Putting more electric cars on the road could increase carbon emissions unless they run on green energy, according to a new independent report commissioned jointly by FoE Europe, Greenpeace and Transport & Environment. Existing EU legislation on car emissions is also flawed because it allows manufacturers to use sales of electric vehicles to offset the continued production of gas-guzzling cars. So-called 'super credits' allow carmakers to sell 3.5 high-emitting cars for every electric car sold, without affecting their overall CO2 target.

The report is posted at: www.foeeurope.org/cars/Documents/green-power-for-electric-cars-08-02-10.pdf

GM crops failing to tackle climate change

A new FoE International report reveals that claims made by the biotech industry that genetically modified crops can combat climate change are both exaggerated and premature. The report, 'Who Benefits from GM Crops?', examines the evidence for these claims, and exposes the fact that GM crops could actually increase carbon emissions while failing to feed the world.

www.foei.org/en/media/archive/2010/gm-crops-failing-to-tackle-climate-change

'Alternative Nobel Prize' to FoE International chair Nnimmo Bassey



Nnimmo Bassey speaks to thousands of campaigners and volunteers from 20 countries demanding climate justice in a peaceful, colourful march during UN climate talks in Copenhagen. Photo by Christoffer Askman / FoEI

FoE International, the world's largest federation of grassroots environmental organisations, is proud to announce that its chair, Nnimmo Bassey from Nigeria, will be a recipient of the 2010 'Right Livelihood Award'. The award, often referred to as the 'Alternative Nobel Prize' will be delivered in Stockholm on December 6.

The announcement that Nnimmo is one of the four 2010 Laureates was made on September 30 at a press conference at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Stockholm. Nnimmo, who is also executive director of FoE Nigeria, was nominated "for revealing the full ecological and human horrors of oil production and for his inspired work to strengthen the environmental movement in Nigeria and globally."

Nnimmo said: "This award is a

vindication of the just and resolute struggles for environmental justice by impacted communities globally. We want to see an end to the corporate crimes committed by oil giants like Shell in Nigeria and around the world. Friends of the Earth and four Nigerian farmers recently filed a groundbreaking court case against Anglo-Dutch oil giant Shell in the Netherlands for its massive oil pollution in Nigeria and we look forward to the first hearing which will take place in the coming months." The other winners were:

* Brazilian Bishop Erwin Krautler, for a lifetime of work on human and environmental rights of indigenous peoples and for his efforts to save the Amazon forest from destruction;

* Israeli organisation Physicians For

Human Rights, honoured awarded for its work on the right to health for all people in Israel and Palestine; and

* Shrikrishna Upadhyay and his organisation Sappros in Nepal, for showing the power of mobilisation against the multiple causes of poverty, including political violence and instability.

www.rightlivelibhood.org

www.foei.org/en/media/photos/nnimmo-bassey-photos

Meanwhile, a major UN investigation into Nigerian oil spills funded by oil giant Shell relies more on figures from the oil companies and Nigerian state statistics than on community testimony and organisations who work with communities. The report claims that 90% of the oil spills in Ogoniland are caused by the locals stealing crude from pipelines – and that Shell's aged pipelines and ill maintained installations account for a mere 10% of the spills.

Find out more and read Nnimmo Bassey's article in The Guardian: www.guardian.co.uk/environment/cif-green/2010/aug/25/un-nigeria-oil-spill-shell

US: dirty BP dollars and opposition to nuke bailout

Join FoE US's new campaign to ask the 'BP Ten' politicians to take the dirty oil dollars they received from BP and donate them to the Gulf Coast Fund. The money they have accepted has corrupted the political process and perpetuated dependence on oil, making spills more likely.

For more information and to take action go to www.foe.org/bp-ten. To find out more about the 'hands across the sands' campaign against offshore drilling go to www.handsacrossthesand.com

Meanwhile, FoE US has launched two television adverts against the US\$55 billion in loan guarantees that President Obama's administration has proposed to hand out for the construction of the first new nuclear reactors in the US in 30 years. Watch them here: foe.org/new-ads-opposition-obama-administrations-nuclear-bailout.

New carbon fraud guide

A new 'guide' for would-be carbon crooks and schemers has been released by FoE US, as a warning about the fraud, corruption and gaming abuses that are inherent to

carbon trading systems contaminated with offset credits. The guide, 'Ten Ways to Game the Carbon Market,' outlines different ways in which fraudsters can game carbon trading systems. Nine methods have already been successfully carried out. Some tricks are variations of classic scams such as Ponzi schemes, phishing and tax fraud. But other cons are more particular to carbon trading. The report is posted at www.foe.org/10-ways-game-carbon-markets.

Action forces tar sands discussions with Shell and BP

Efforts to tackle climate change are under threat from the disastrous practice of tar sands mining carried out by some of the major oil companies. Together with the UK charity Fair Pensions, FoE-UK called on pension providers to pressure BP and Shell to disinvest in tar sands.

Tar sands are among the world's dirtiest fuels: their extraction produces on average three times the greenhouse gases of conventional oil. The associated pollution, deforestation and disturbance of wildlife also threaten the traditional livelihoods and well-being of indigenous communities.

Thanks to thousands of people taking action, Shell's AGM in May saw one in 10 shareholders refusing to heed the company's recommendation to vote against the resolution, just weeks after one in seven investors in BP refused to back management on tar sands.

These results - with some of the biggest pension funds in the world supporting FoE's resolutions - are a big achievement, which a number of financial analysts have said will send a strong signal to Shell and BP. Not only is it rare for campaigners to secure sufficient investor support to even have such resolutions discussed, but securing this level of support is also exceptional.

www.foei.org/en/get-involved/take-action/archived-cyberactions/take-action-on-tar-sands

Demand for palm oil driving deforestation

One of the leading suppliers of 'green' palm oil to Europe is illegally encroaching upon Indonesian forest and peat land, according to a new report published by FoE Europe. The report exposes the activities of the

Malaysian company IOI Group.

www.foei.org/en/what-we-do/agrofuels/global/2010/europe2019s-demand-for-palm-oil-driving-deforestation-and-land-grabbing

Chile: earthquake rebuilding fund

On February 27, Chile suffered a magnitude 8.8 earthquake, followed by a series of aftershocks and tsunamis. The catastrophes devastated the cities of Concepción and Talca, as well as numerous coastal towns and villages. FoE Chile (CODEFF) has been severely affected by the devastation and needs support.

www.foei.org/en/get-involved/take-action/chile-earthquake-rebuilding-fund

Pakistan flood - FoE statement of solidarity

While we express our solidarity with the Pakistani people and all who are contributing to the efforts to provide assistance to the displaced, we promise to relentlessly work for climate justice, demanding real and urgent actions to confront the realities of the climate crisis.

The Pakistani people are also victims of an international community that has failed to act and address the underlying causes of climate change. The causes of the recent increase in extreme weather conditions must be addressed now. Deforestation and other natural habitat destruction also play a part in this increased vulnerability, as do large infrastructure projects like mega-dams. Both the Pakistani and the Indian governments released water from their bursting dams due to the flood in order to 'save' their dams.

This action proved fatal to scores of people living around these dams. For several years, communities and civil society groups fought against the building of these mega-dams stating that they were catastrophes waiting to happen and the vulnerable communities living along the rivers would be impacted the most. In the event of extreme weather, as we are seeing now, these people would be on the front line. Sadly these predictions have been realised.

www.foei.org/en/blog/2010/08/12/statement-on-the-floods-in-pakistan

FoE at Cochabamba G77 and Bonn Climate Summit

On May 7, several members of FoE International formed part of a delegation of global social movements and civil society organisations invited to join President Evo Morales Ayma of Bolivia in presenting the outcomes of the Cochabamba People's Climate Summit to the Secretary General of the UN, Ban Ki-Moon.

The global delegation also included Via Campesina, 350.org, the Hemispheric Social Alliance, Third World Network, the Council of Canadians and the Indigenous Environmental Network, and aimed to be representative all the peoples of the world as well as every continent of the world. The group then presented the outcomes to the G77+China.

The outcomes of the People's Summit were also included in a formal submission to the UNFCCC negotiations and sent to the Chair of the LCA Working Group with a request to include them in the text for the next negotiating session.

More information: <http://tiny.cc/na7fi>

On the final day of the UN climate talks in Bonn in June, FoE International warned that US intransigence - in particular proposals to collapse the current two tracks of the negotiations into one - is threatening vital progress in the talks leading up to the climate conference in Cancun, Mexico, this November.

The parties should consider reaching agreement on industrial countries emission cuts without US agreement. FoE International is warning that 'Annex I' countries including Japan and Russia are also using the US position to escape strong, binding commitments under the Kyoto Protocol.

For a detailed assessment of the current round of UNFCCC talks in Bonn, see: www.foeeurope.org/climate/download/bonn_loopholes_08_10.pdf

Robin Hood climate tax

Environment and development groups including FoE released a joint statement in advance of a two-day 'Geneva Dialogue on Climate Finance' in September. Officials from approximately 40 governments convened to discuss a new global climate fund, the role of the private sector, and

oversight of climate finance. The groups called for discussions on climate finance to focus on how developed countries will meet their obligation to provide public finance for adaptation and mitigation, how to generate resources that truly match the scale of the challenge, and how to ensure that any new climate fund is built on fair foundations.

The G77 and China have previously called for an annual financial transfer from North to South equivalent to at least 1.5% of developed countries' gross domestic product. Civil society groups across the globe are also supporting the campaign for a tax on financial transactions - a Robin Hood Tax - to provide finance for developing interlinkages August 2010 countries to develop cleanly and adapt to the effects of climate change.

Download the joint analysis, 'Fair and Effective Climate Finance' at: http://www.ipsdc.org/reports/fair_and_effective_climate_finance

See also www.globalclimatefund.org and www.robinhoodtax.org.uk

Forests and biodiversity documents available

A range of new documents from FoE International's Forest and Biodiversity program are now available, including a position paper 'Plantations are not Forests'; a background paper on 'Free Trade and Plantations'; a paper about FoE's Biodiversity Agenda; and a report 'Africa Up For Grabs' from FoE Europe and FoE Africa.

www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/forests-and-biodiversity

Launch of 'responsible soy' label faces global opposition

235 civil society groups from across the globe, including FoE International and Corporate Europe Observatory, warned that a proposed new label for 'responsible' soy will not stop deforestation.

The groups have written to oppose the Round Table for Responsible Soy (RTRS) certification scheme, which they say could facilitate soy oil being used to meet the EU target for biofuels. This is despite evidence that soy biodiesel is worse in terms of greenhouse gas emissions than fossil fuels. The scheme will also label genetically

modified soy as 'responsible'.

For further information on the impacts of the RTRS and the full list of 235 signatories, see www.corporateeurope.org

Building alliances between women from Asia and Africa

From 26-29 July a joint meeting of FoE International, the World March of Women and La Via Campesina took place in Mumemo, Mozambique. The meeting aimed to build alliances between women from Asia and Africa from the three organisations, with a focus on three key issues: food sovereignty, climate change and violence against women. The meeting produced an open letter to be disseminated amongst the three organisations. For a copy of the letter or more information contact: Nina Ascoly, FoE International Programs Facilitator, nina@foei.org

Analysing climate injustice and mobilising in México

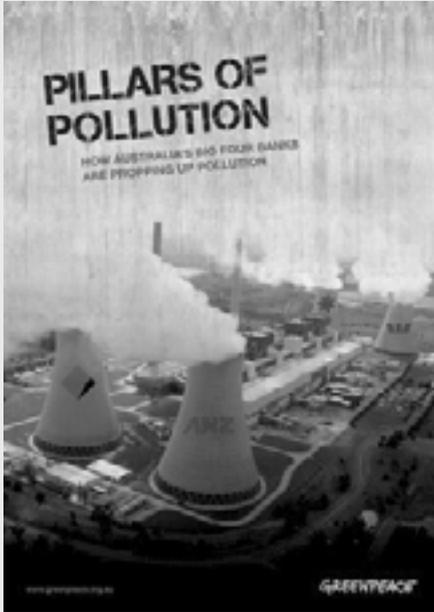
On 3 September about 100 delegates gathered in the community of Betania on the outskirts of the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve in Mexico. They represented three regions, community authorities, ejido farmers (who have rights to farm state-owned land), and campesino and indigenous organisations.

The purpose of the meeting was to analyse the impacts of megaprojects in the context of the climate crisis, a proposed carbon market for Mexico, and the excessive rainfall that has inundated and cut off forest communities.

Participants considered mining, oil extraction, tourism, oil palm plantations and other monocultures, plus other projects that prompt state and federal governments to expel communities from the forest. They shared information and agreed on joint positions on the defense of earth and territories.

They also prepared for mobilisations around the coming summit in Cancun, at which they will insist that governments take action on climate change.

Pillars of Pollution



A new report commissioned by Greenpeace, 'Pillars of Pollution: How Australia's Big Four Banks Are Propping Up Pollution', reveals the extent to which Australia's big four banks are investing in polluting coal power. The report shows the banks provided loans worth \$5.5 billion to the coal industry over the past five years, seven times more than the \$784 million lent to the renewable energy sector. Instead of investing in more pollution, the banks could drive the energy revolution forward. The first step they should take is to oppose the twelve new coal power stations that are on the drawing board for around Australia. The second step they should take is to invest in building a vibrant renewable energy industry in Australia.

The report is posted at www.greenpeace.org.au/climate/GI-profundo.php

Consumer guide to buying solar power released

The Clean Energy Council has launched a guide to help householders make an informed choice when buying solar panels. Policy director Russell Marsh said with more than 100,000 solar power systems installed across Australia, the range of solar companies, installers and products is

mind-boggling. It includes a list of sensible questions to ask when inquiring about solar power to ensure the installer and type of panel you choose is up to scratch. The guide, and a list of accredited installers, can be found at www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au

Protesters force shutdown of coal terminals

Environmental activists from Rising Tide Newcastle broke into coal terminals in Newcastle on September 26, strapping themselves to industrial loaders to protest against the industry's impact on climate change. More than 40 people broke into the three coal terminals, with 10 of them climbing onto machinery and unfurling banners. The final activist was removed almost 10 hours after operations were completely closed down at all three coal terminals in the world's biggest coal port. www.risingtide.org.au

Camp for Climate Action in December

A Camp for Climate Action will be held from December 1-5 at the Lake Liddell Recreation Area in the Hunter Valley. The event comprises a five-day program of discussion on climate change issues and solutions, planning, networking and one huge day of peaceful direct action targeting Australia's equal largest source of CO2 emissions - the Bayswater power station. More information: www.climatecamp.org.au

Groundwater depletion rate accelerating worldwide

In recent decades, the rate at which humans are pumping dry the vast underground stores of water that billions depend on has more than doubled since 1960, say scientists who have conducted a global assessment of groundwater use. These fast-shrinking

subterranean reservoirs are essential to daily life and agriculture in many regions, while also sustaining streams, wetlands, and ecosystems and resisting land subsidence and salt water intrusion into fresh water supplies.

Groundwater represents about 30% of the available fresh water on the planet, with surface water accounting for only 1%. The rest of the potable, agriculture friendly supply is locked up in glaciers or the polar ice caps. This means that any reduction in the availability of groundwater supplies could have profound effects for a growing human population.

The report, 'A worldwide view of groundwater depletion', is published in the journal of the American Geophysical Union. www.agu.org

Climate Advocacy Fund

Australian Ethical Investment has partnered with The Climate Institute in putting together the Climate Advocacy Fund. The Fund puts Australia's biggest companies on notice that they will face greater shareholder scrutiny of their climate change policy and strategy. The Fund differs from traditional 'green' funds which typically invest in renewable energy and low-carbon assets. The Fund will invest in and seek to influence the behaviour of all the largest Australian companies, and put forward Australia's first shareholder resolutions on climate change issues. This makes it the first of its kind in the world.

The Fund believes companies will be better placed to transition to a lower carbon economy if they:

- describe their carbon emissions footprint;
- have a plan to reduce their overall emissions to a publicly stated, targeted level (or at least to target a reduced level of emissions intensity); and
- ensure investment decisions and balance sheet valuations are based on publicly stated, reasonable assumptions about future carbon emission pricing and regulation.

For the 2010-11 Australian corporate reporting season, the Fund has lodged resolutions for consideration at the AGMs of several companies: Aquila Resources Ltd, Paladin Energy Ltd, Oil Search Ltd, and Woodside Petroleum Ltd. The Fund claims that Aquila, Paladin and Oil Search are yet to disclose their greenhouse gas emissions, while Woodside is believed to have recorded its carbon footprint but will not make the information public.

More information: www.climateadvocacyfund.com.au

A just transition for the Hunter Valley

Dr Geoff Evans, a Chain Reaction Advisory Board Member (and, once upon a time, the editor of the magazine), has completed his PhD thesis on the topic 'A Just Transition to Sustainability in a Climate Change Hot-spot: The Hunter Valley, Australia'. Congratulations, Geoff!

The thesis includes a brief history of the Hunter Valley coal economy from pre-British invasion to contemporary times - acknowledging the critical role that the labour movement has played in forging progressive alliances for social change. It recognises that the transformation of the Hunter Valley from Carbon Valley to a Future Beyond Coal is linked to transforming global energy and commodity markets; strong local, national and global regulations and targets on climate change and clean energy; and challenging the power of global mining and energy corporations which wreak havoc locally and globally - spending hundreds of millions to block the proposed Super Profit / Resource Rent tax, manipulating national and global climate negotiations to prevent strong carbon markets, and converting ecosystems like the Hunter into a moonscape and the Gulf of Mexico into an oily soup.

The thesis is posted at <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.13/802944>

Senate backs Greens motion on Bisphenol-A

The Senate has passed a Motion moved by Senator Rachel Siewert calling on the Rudd Government to reassess the public health risk of Bisphenol-A (BPA) to all Australian

consumers. Australian Greens health spokesperson Rachel Siewert said: "The Senate recognised growing concerns over BPA, a chemical commonly used in plastics including food packaging, containers and baby bottles. This motion acknowledged research that links BPA to a range of health problems, including reproductive problems, endometriosis, heart disease and diabetes among other conditions. Unfortunately Food Standards Australia New Zealand continues to permit the use of BPA in babies' products. The Government supported this motion, the Greens now ask the Government to commence the reassessment process immediately."

'Capitalizing on Climate' report

Friends of the Earth US has released a report titled 'Capitalizing on Climate: The World Bank's Role in Climate Change & International Climate Finance'. The report examines the various, and often contradictory, roles played by the World Bank - a major climate polluter and driver of deforestation, an institution attempting to address climate change, a political tool used by developed countries in UN climate negotiations to maintain control over international climate finance, a supposed defender of developing country interests, and an institution asserting itself to capture as much climate finance as possible. The report aims to marry the worlds of those following the World Bank and its climate-related portfolios (i.e. energy lending, forestry, facilitating of international offsetting and carbon trading) with those following international climate finance and the World Bank in the context of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The report is posted at www.foe.org/sites/default/files/Capitalizing-on-Climate.pdf

Replacing Australia's dirtiest power station

Environment Victoria has released a report detailing how the coal fired Hazelwood power station could be replaced as soon as the end of 2012, cutting Victoria's greenhouse pollution by 12% and creating hundreds more jobs than it currently provides. The report, 'Fast-tracking Victoria's clean energy

future to replace the Hazelwood Power Station', was commissioned by Environment Victoria and written by energy market analysts Green Energy Markets.

Green Energy Markets Director Ric Brazzale said the report found that Victoria is in a fortunate position to have access to a diverse range of clean energy resources, which together could replace Hazelwood's generation many times over while maintaining energy security and affordability: "Clean energy projects that are ready to go with planning approvals, or close to having planning approvals, can replace both Hazelwood's peak electricity generation and also its annual contribution by the end of 2012, ensuring that we reduce emissions and keep the lights on. By combining new renewable energy with efficient gas and energy efficiency measures we can cut Hazelwood's annual emissions of 16.2 million tonnes to 1.8 million tonnes, which would reduce Victoria's emissions by 12% annually, as well as freeing up 27 billion litres of water for other uses."

The report is posted at www.environmentvictoria.org.au/replacehazelwood

Rosemarie Gillespie - 1942-2010



Humans rights activist Rosemarie (Waratah Rose) Gillespie died in Melbourne in June. "She was an amazing woman and nothing else would have stopped her," her family said. Her work in human rights spanned more than 40 years and began with protests against the 'white Australia' immigration policy. Some highlights of her remarkable life: she was a political prisoner in Fiji in the first military coup in 1987, acted as a human shield during the 2003 Iraq war, campaigned against a military blockade on the island of Bougainville in the 1990s as a founder of the Bougainville Freedom Movement, got a law degree, wrote books and produced films

National food policy



La Via Campesina delegates with farmer Graham Brookman at the Food Forest permaculture farm, Gawler.

Earlier this year Woolworths CEO Michael Luscombe made a call for a national food policy. In the pre-election frenzy, then agriculture minister Tony Burke asserted that such a policy would be developed should the ALP be returned to power, citing Woolworths, the National Farmers' Federation and other large industry interests as the key stakeholders.

In response, FoE Adelaide, in collaboration with the Food Connection Foundation and food activists around the country formed the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance, a growing national network of small farmers, community, environment and health organisations, social and business enterprises to assert the need for food policy to be truly democratic and to encompass the full social and environmental implications of our food and agriculture system. The first public statement from the Alliance, a letter to the agriculture ministers of all major parties, attracted well over 100 signatories, and can be viewed online at <http://foodsovereigntyalliance.org>

On June 23, South Australian Greens MP Mark Parnell moved a motion in parliament supporting the From Plains to Plate Declaration. His speech is posted at www.markparnell.org.au/speech.php?speech=965

FoE Adelaide's new film 'An Urban Orchard' had its world premiere at the annual food and agriculture film festival, Feast of Film 2010. The film, a short

documentary on the homegrown fruit and vegetable exchange coordinated by FoE Adelaide, celebrates the traditions of food growing and gathering on the Adelaide Plains, from Kurna fire-farming to present day suburban vegie patches. The film has already been snapped up for subsequent screenings around Australia and overseas, and will be available soon for download online and DVD.



In late June a delegation from the global peasant's network La Via Campesina made an historic visit to Australia. The Adelaide leg of the visit, which also took in Brisbane, was hosted by FoE Adelaide, and saw the farmers meet with local farmers, farming, environmental and community organisations in an effort to establish and strengthen links across the Asia-Pacific region for just and sustainable food systems.

The delegates were farmers from Korea, Japan, Timor-Leste and Indonesia. La Via Campesina is considered to be the largest civil society organisation on the planet, representing the interests of some 300 million small farmers.

Meanwhile, Melbourne RMIT students have embarked on an innovative project to reduce restaurant food waste. The students have worked individually with restaurants and produced a kit containing a guidebook, an information video, window stickers promoting food waste reduction, menu stickers to encourage small eaters to ask for smaller portions, a food waste tracking log, and a certificate of appreciation for their participation in our project.

More information: web: projectwhatawaste.wordpress.com, email: projectwhatawaste@gmail.com

Neocolonialism in Honduras

The colonisation and attacks against the Indigenous Peoples of Honduras have intensified since the 2009 coup. The Project Mesoamerica (previously Plan Puebla Panama) and Merida Initiative proposals have been consolidated through the Congress. They are strategies the international finance institutions use to appropriate the rivers, forests and energy resources that are part of the people's natural habitat.

Despite Honduras being one of the countries most affected by climate change, instead of taking measures to avoid destruction of its biodiversity and being compensated, Honduras is subject to UN Carbon Fund instruments like CDM and REDD, which hijack their rivers and forests. Forty-one hydroelectric dams have been approved despite opposition from communities who have been ignored.

For more info (in Spanish):
<http://ofraneh.wordpress.com>
<http://otrahonduras.blogspot.com>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-i5aKU2M0ec>



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Uranium industry's record raises doubts

Mia Pepper



Mia Pepper with 'Martin Ferguson'.

The WA Barnett government announced in August that the Australian Centre for Geomechanics had won a tender to form an “independent panel on uranium mining regulations”. Sitting on the panel are pro-nuclear lobbyists and behind the scenes are corporate sponsors including some that are anything but independent. BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto are two of the sponsors - companies with operating uranium mines in Australia and uranium interests in WA.

There are now more than 140 companies with uranium interests in WA, four proposed mines in the environmental approvals process and many more companies exploring, negotiating and sometimes even fighting over uranium deposits. But the industry's record in Australia should give us pause for thought. BHP Billiton is proposing the Yeelirrie uranium mine in WA. BHP Billiton also operates the Olympic Dam uranium mine in South Australia and enjoys a raft of indefensible exemptions from the SA Environment Protection Act, the Natural Resources Act, the Aboriginal Heritage Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

Photos taken by an Olympic Dam mine worker in December 2008 show radioactive tailings liquid leaking from the “retention” system. The company's response to the whistleblower's evidence was to threaten disciplinary action against any mine worker caught taking photos of the mine site.

Last year, a whistleblower released documents which suggest that the company uses manipulated averages of workers' radiation exposures and distorts sampling to ensure its official figures slip under the maximum radiation exposure levels set by government. There is still no national radiation dose register for uranium mine workers in Australia despite promises from Federal Labor that the register would be in place by the end of last year. Rio Tinto owns the Ranger uranium mine bordering Kakadu National Park

in the Northern Territory. There have been well over 100 leaks and spills at the mine. The independence and track record of the mine's regulator, the Office of the Supervising Scientist, has been hotly contested for many years.

One incident which attracted widespread attention occurred in 2004, with 150 workers exposed to drinking water containing uranium levels 400 times greater than the Australian safety standard. ERA (a Rio subsidiary) was fined \$150,000 - a rare example of a uranium mining company being prosecuted for breaching operating conditions.

The pattern of secrecy, poor performance and inadequate regulation is all too evident in the 2003 report by Federal Parliament's Senate references and legislation committee. The committee found “a pattern of under-performance and non-compliance” in the uranium industry, it identified many gaps in knowledge and found an absence of reliable data on which to measure the extent of the industry's environmental impacts.

Already problems are evident in WA. There have been many complaints by pastoralists and traditional owners who have not been told about uranium projects on their country. Traditional owners connected to specific areas have been left out of heritage surveys and pastoralists have not been told about projects that affect their property and water supplies.

Environmentalists, unions, indigenous groups and public health groups have been calling on the Barnett Government to hold an open public inquiry into uranium mining. The Government has refused that request and the culture of secrecy is further evident in the refusal by the Department of Mines and Petroleum to make public the full terms of reference for the new independent panel.

We still do not know whether or how key issues - such as workers' health and safety, tailings rehabilitation, transport and groundwater impacts - will be addressed by the panel. We fear that crucial issues, such as impacts on workers' health and communities and nuclear weapons proliferation, will not be addressed at all.

The panel excludes experts in relevant areas such as occupational health and safety, transport, Aboriginal heritage and native title, non-proliferation and safeguards.

Mia Pepper is the nuclear free campaigner with the Conservation Council of WA.

Nuclear Freeways

Jim Green

Friends of the Earth has launched a Nuclear Freeways campaign to raise awareness about - and opposition to - plans for an unnecessary and unwanted national radioactive waste dump in the Northern Territory. In August, we spent three weeks travelling the transport corridor from the Lucas Heights nuclear reactor site (south of Sydney) to the proposed dump site at Muckaty - a distance of over 3000 kms. One FoE team left from Sydney, another from the Melbourne office of federal resources minister Martin Ferguson.

We spoke to nine local councils, many Traditional Owners, media, and schools. Immediate outcomes included excellent media coverage and a resolution from the Mildura City Council to “support the Nuclear Freeways Campaign by opposing the transportation of radioactive waste through its municipality, particularly in close proximity to the river and via the Mildura/Wentworth route”. Swan Hill Council has also passed a strong resolution.

We stopped at Alice Springs for a few days for the annual meeting of the Australian Nuclear Free Alliance. Nuclear Freeways finally made it to Tennant Creek and Muckaty Traditional Owner Dianne Stokes and her family welcomed us to country with traditional singing and dancing. The next two days were spent sharing stories and visiting special places on country north of Tennant Creek and Muckaty.

The current Nuclear Freeways campaign builds on successful work carried out by FoE from 2000-2004 when

the Howard government wanted to impose a dump in South Australia. One indication of the success of that work was that 16 of the 18 councils along the NSW-SA transport corridor passed resolutions opposing the unnecessary trucking of nuclear waste through their communities. Sustained state government, Indigenous and community opposition forced the Howard Government to abandon plan for a radioactive waste dump in SA in 2004.

Friends of the Earth needs to systematically pursue the Nuclear Freeways campaign over the coming months and years and would appreciate any financial support to help us keep going.

More info, photos, and a travel blog are posted at www.nuclearfreeways.org.au and see also www.sydney.foe.org.au/projects/nuclear-free

Big thanks to all the people who helped with the 2010 Freeways trip - Madeline, Kasey, Purdy, Kite, Roman, Sarah, Camilo, Marlin, Mudla, the Sydney FoE team Jen, Gem, Libby, Darren and Susannah ... and many others. Biggest thanks of all to Cat Beaton for doing such a great job leading the project.

To contact the Nuclear Freeways campaign: Cat Beaton, cat.beaton@foe.org.au, 0434 257 359.



Australian Nuclear Free Alliance protest, Alice Springs.



Launch of Nuclear Freeways at Martin Ferguson's office, Melbourne. All photos by Madeline Hudson.



Kasey, Purdy and Kite at Mildura West Primary School. Check out Kasey's 'Don't Waste Muckaty' rap at www.acecollective.org/store.php



Muckaty Traditional Owners and Nuclear Freeways campaigners at Tennant Creek.



Cat Beaton being interviewed by Prime TV, Wagga Wagga.



Wadi Wadi Traditional Owners with Nuclear Freeways campaigners, Swan Hill.

Zero Carbon Australia 2020 – 100% renewable energy for Australia

Pablo Brait and John Fisher

Growcom wants one. So does the Public Health Association of Australia and sustainable agriculture expert at the University of Sydney, Bill Billotti. A national food policy, it seems, is something of a catchy idea. But what kind of policy are we talking about?

On a cold and wet July night in a full-to-bursting auditorium, the Zero Carbon Australia 2020 Stationary Energy Plan (ZCA2020) was launched. Over 600 people heard prominent speakers from the renewable energy industry, academia and an economist discuss the merits and practicalities of powering the Australian economy with 100% renewable energy within a decade.

ZCA2020 is a collaboration between the University of Melbourne Energy Institute and the climate solutions think-tank Beyond Zero Emissions. It was put together by a team of engineers, scientists and other experts who contributed thousands of pro bono hours. ZCA2020 represents one of the most significant contributions to the debate on solutions to the climate crisis in recent times, and conclusively shows that renewable energy can power the Australian economy.

Since the launch the plan has been featured in the media including The Age, Sydney Morning Herald, Herald Sun, ABC Radio National, Triple J, ABC TV, SBS Insight and a mention in the New York Times.

In August, the ZCA2020 Stationary Energy Plan was launched in Newcastle and Sydney. Over 1,000 people were at the Sydney Town Hall to hear Liberal and Labor party heavyweights Malcolm Turnbull and Bob Carr and Western Australian Greens Senator Scott Ludlam discuss the plan.

By the end of 2010, the ZCA2020 Stationary Energy Plan will be going to Brisbane, Lismore, Hobart and Wollongong. Climate activists all over Australia are finding it a useful tool in their campaigning and it helped give the Australian Greens confidence in putting forward their policy of 100% renewable energy by 2030 in the lead up to the federal election.

The reason for the popularity of the Stationary Energy Plan is that it shows in great detail how Australia can reach 100% renewable energy by 2020, using technology that is commercially available right now. This is the first piece of research that shows how the whole job, a zero emissions electricity sector, can be constructed.

Baseload electricity

Electricity is difficult and expensive to store and needs to be produced to meet demand at any given moment. In a fossil fuel-based system, 'baseload' coal plants run at a

pretty much constant output, while gas peaking plants are brought online to meet peak demand.

One of the perceived blocks to a wholesale shift to renewable energy is the idea that renewable energy can't supply baseload power. The argument run relentlessly by the carbon lobby is that, because the wind doesn't blow all the time and the sun doesn't shine at night, renewable energy can't provide the constant, or 'baseload,' electricity needed to meet demand around the clock.

However, a combination of wide-spread large-scale concentrated solar thermal plants with molten salt storage (otherwise known as 'baseload solar') and wind farms can power Australia 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Baseload solar thermal is the game-changing renewable energy technology. It was developed by the US Department of Energy between 1980 and 2000. It is now commercially available from SolarReserve of California, and Torresol Energy/SENER of Spain. Many other solar thermal companies are upgrading to this technology.

Concentrating Solar thermal plants use mirrors to concentrate sunlight onto a receiver - ZCA2020 proposes the use of 'power towers'. The sunlight heats molten salt. The hot molten salt is safely stored in insulated tanks. At any time of day or night, the hot molten salt is used to generate steam for the turbine, creating zero-emission, baseload solar electricity.

According to US Department of Energy projections, solar thermal will soon be cost-competitive with coal and gas power, as the solar thermal industry scales up to an installed capacity in the thousands of megawatts around the world.

In Spain, where the solar resource is roughly on par with Victoria, plants using molten salt storage have been operational since 2008. Two plants are currently being constructed in the USA. The ZCA2020 Plan has 12 solar regions across the country, consisting of 3500 MW of power tower units. These would supply 60% of Australia's electricity in 2020.

The other 40% of Australia's electricity would come from wind - 6400 gearless Enercon 7.5 MW turbines would be distributed across 23 sites around the country.

Detailed modelling of the plan shows that 100% renewable electricity can be delivered 24 hours, seven days, every day of the year to match Australia's demand profile. The specified wind and solar system requires backup from existing hydro and agricultural waste biomass for the 2% of the time when there is less sun or wind than required.

A national grid is costed into the plan, to allow the renewable generating mix to be shifted from point of

supply to demand, and to take advantage of geographical diversity.

Yes we can!

Sounds like a big task – all those wind farms and solar plants and power lines? Could we do it? Can we afford it? Yes we could, and yes we can.

The investment in this transition to zero emissions electricity is around 3% of GDP over 10 years, or \$370 billion. This is about as much as we spend on insurance over the same time. For an average household this would mean an increase to their electricity bill of \$8 per week, with a 100% renewable electricity grid to show for it.

Australia's industrial economy is also up to the task of constructing the infrastructure. By 2016, the peak of construction, we'd need an 80,000-strong construction workforce, about 8% of Australia's existing construction workforce.

We also have the manufacturing resources to build all the components. One manufacturing plant, as big as a car making plant, could produce all the mirrors. We already have three car plants.

Jobs? There are jobs in manufacturing, construction and in running and maintaining the solar and wind sites. The plan shows there will be far more permanent jobs created than the number lost in the domestic fossil fuel industries.

There are no more excuses. We know we have the technology, the industry, the workers, the engineers, the money and the materials to do the job. Now we need the leadership to step forward.

The Zero Carbon Australia Stationary Energy Plan can be downloaded from the Beyond Zero Emissions website <http://beyondzeroemissions.org>. A hardcopy can be purchased from the Melbourne Energy Institute <http://energy.unimelb.edu.au>

Pablo Brait is a staff member, and John Fisher a volunteer, with Beyond Zero Emissions.

“The Zero Carbon Australia Stationary Energy Plan represents the kind of visionary work that should be eagerly embraced. It is the first time that I have seen a plan that makes the possibility of zero emissions feasible and affordable. In particular, solar energy offers so much promise in the dry and sunny continent.”

“Politicians have been postponing decisions in this area for too long. They, and decision-makers generally, should study Zero Carbon Australia intensely and urgently. The work is so comprehensive that it makes me eager to see the further studies that will be emerging in the near future.”

*– Professor Emeritus Sir Gustav Nossal
Department of Pathology, University of Melbourne
Former Australian of the Year.*

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How can we get 100% renewable energy?

Chris Breen

Almost everyone loves renewable energy. Even climate denier Bob Katter MP has it on his wish-list of new projects for his electorate. In December 2009 a Newspoll of 1205 people found that 93% think the federal government should be supporting the development of renewable energy.

But government support for funding major renewable energy projects is sorely lacking.

In Victoria early this year, Solar Systems, a world leading concentrated photovoltaic solar company was liquidated. Solar Systems had been working towards Australia's first large scale solar power plant in Mildura. It collapsed in part because key backer TRUenergy made a decision not to invest further in the company. This happened when the financial crisis hit, and Solar Systems could not get more funding on open credit markets. TRUenergy is instead planning a new \$1.3 billion gas plant, and parent company China Light & Power owns the brown coal Yallourn power station, where federal Labor resources minister Martin Ferguson has promised \$40 million for a carbon capture project.

Federal and state governments had promised \$125 million in funding to Solar Systems, but only \$500,000 of that was ever delivered. Compare that with the federal government guarantee of wholesale funding for banks, and \$6 billion for the car industry (where one former Solar System engineer now works) when those industries were hit by the financial crisis. The best government could do for Solar Systems was claim 'the money is still on the table' if a buyer was found.

Solar Systems was sold to Silex, a producer of solar panels, and a uranium enrichment company, over 100 workers were made redundant in the process. The South Australian government owned solar power station at Umuwa in SA, built and maintained by Solar Systems, has also been shut down. The project had provided power to the remote Anangu Pitjantjatjara community saving 140,000 litres of diesel a year.

Bizarrely TRUenergy has now put up a proposal for a solar power station in Mildura under the federal governments solar flagship scheme. In the lead up to the State election, Victorian premier John Brumby has promised TRUenergy \$100 million if it secures federal funding. While there is a desperate need for a large scale solar power plant in Mildura, TRUenergy is primarily a coal and gas company, and it previously walked away from Solar Systems with \$125 million of government money on the table.

Why so little government support for large scale renewable energy?

To put it simply, coal is cheap. There is over 500 years supply of brown coal in Victoria, and neither government nor industry want to leave in the ground. The Victorian government is offering \$50 million for the proposed new HRL coal power station. But it is not simply the profits of the coal industry that get in the way. Coal provides cheap electricity that many major businesses see as an international competitive advantage.

To challenge corporate power we will need a mass movement that forces government to act. To build such a movement, we need to be clear on our demands – what mechanisms for supporting renewable energy will work, what won't and, crucially, because renewable energy will initially cost more - who should pay?

First let's look at the current state of government policy. The Gillard government, like many in business and The Greens, see some form of carbon price as the key mechanism to encourage renewables. This is complemented with the existing Mandatory Renewable Energy Target and funding for the Solar Flagships scheme.

Mandatory Renewable Energy Target

The MRET of '20% renewable energy by 2020' sounds like a serious step. But it is riddled with loopholes. The legislated target is actually not a percentage, but is set at 45,000 Gwh of electricity generation, which is more likely to be around 15% of Australia's energy use in 2020.

But we won't even get 15% 'renewable energy' because the MRET's definition of renewable energy is ridiculously wide. It even includes methane gas released as waste during coal mining, which is neither clean nor renewable. Biomass generation, including from burning wood or sugar cane waste, is expected to comprise a significant part of the total growth in 'renewables'.

The MRET relies on a market mechanism, trading Renewable Energy Certificates, which is supposed to ensure the cheapest form of renewable energy is favoured. As a result the scheme will lend no support to large baseload solar power stations. There will be some wind power built - accounting for 50-70% of the new MRET supply according to Fairfax journalist Paddy Manning.

Solar Flagships

That the Solar Flagships scheme exists separately to the government's MRET is an admission that policy was never going to lead to large-scale solar power.

The scheme provides \$1.5 billion over six years, or just \$250 million a year, to fund four solar power projects, in two rounds. This is not enough money to seriously launch a solar industry. There is no suggestion of pursuing a serious

percentage of power generation from solar energy. This was made crystal clear when Gillard announced during the 2010 federal election campaign that \$200 million would be ripped from Solar Flagships to go instead to the 'cash for clunkers' scheme.

The government is spending much more on subsidising fossil fuels. According to a 2007 Greenpeace report, the federal government subsidises coal, oil and gas companies by around \$9 billion a year. The federal government is also promising over \$2 billion in funding to develop Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS). CCS is essentially an ideological exercise to prolong the life of the coal industry, since it is estimated 20 years more development is needed, and it looks likely to be too expensive to ever be used at a commercial scale. Nor can the storage of carbon dioxide underground be guaranteed not to leak.



Rally in Melbourne to Save Solar Systems, October 2009

Mildura solar power plant

Under the Solar Flagship scheme, companies are expected to find \$2 of private funding for every \$1 of government funding. Using the same flawed funding model, state and federal governments promised one third of the funding needed to the company Solar Systems, to build a solar power plant in Mildura. As we have seen Solar Systems failed to raise the necessary additional private capital, and collapsed.

The Mildura solar power plant was first promised in 2006. According to Victorian Premier John Brumby's climate white paper, we can now expect a 154 megawatt (MW) solar power plant in Mildura by 2016. New owner Silex claims it will build "a 2 MW pilot solar facility commencing in 2011, potentially a precursor to the second stage: a ~100 MW solar power station." But this is by no means guaranteed. When Silex, took over Solar Systems, they made 26 more workers redundant that same day, leaving 14 employees out of the original 150. Silex promised to double this workforce by the end of 2010, but to date there are still less than 20 employees, working

only on one key component of the technology.

According to the Victorian government TRUenergy's new proposal (if it gets federal funding) will build on Silex's proposed demonstration plant. This new proposal appears to have ditched Solar Systems ground breaking technology for more common and less efficient flat plate solar panels. How TRUenergy dealt themselves back in after walking away from Solar Systems is unclear. All that is clear is that there have been a surfeit of solar announcements, but still nothing on the ground.

Carbon price

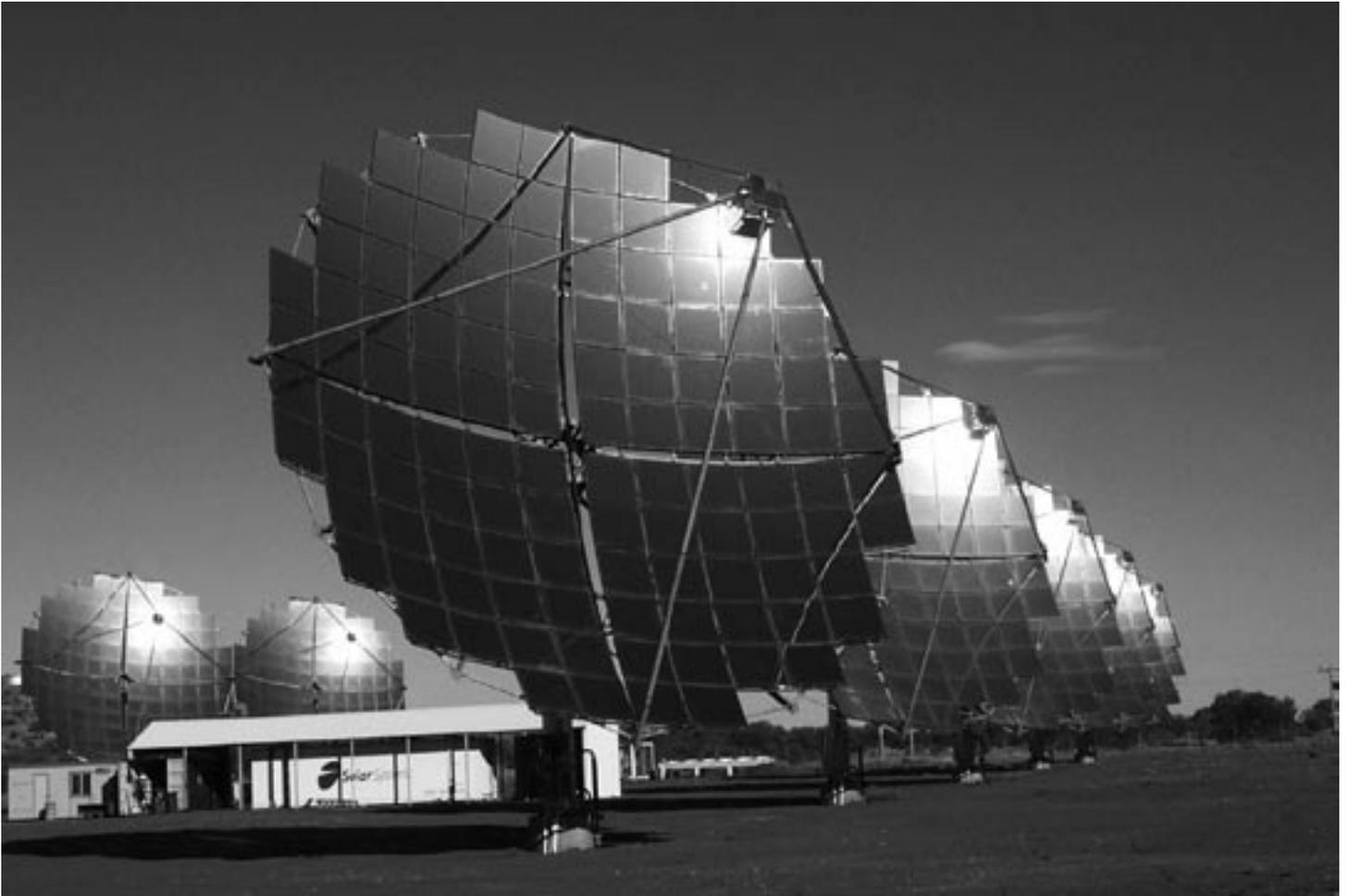
The demand for a carbon price is widespread in the climate movement. The Greens support a low carbon tax, leading to a fully fledged emissions trading scheme. But just as rising petrol prices have not lead to new investment in public transport, a carbon price will not in itself see renewable energy built. At best it is likely to make gas more competitive with coal. Many businesses are actually looking for a low carbon price, to lock in a weak climate policy and give them the certainty they need to continue investment in polluting industries.

A carbon price, it is claimed, will 'make polluters pay'. But in reality it will do no such thing. Whether a tax or emissions trading, a carbon price is a regressive tax like the GST. It is effectively a flat tax on electricity, because electricity producers will pass the price rises on to consumers. Some in the climate movement claim 'we should all pay our share' - but this ignores massive existing economic inequality. Electricity is an essential service, and the lower your income, the higher the proportion of it you spend on power costs. Electricity prices rises will also flow on to increase the price of other goods and services, because most companies use electricity in producing their products.

Compensation measures have been proposed by both the Labor government, but the compensation proposed under Labor's emissions trading scheme was based on price rises lower than those the NSW pricing tribunal indicated it would pass on to consumers. The federal government underestimated price rises by \$100 a year. This is not an accident, the demand for a carbon price is an alternative to really make the polluters pay, it is an attempt to make climate demands palatable to business and push the costs onto the rest of us. We should instead demand that those who have the resources fund renewable energy, for instance through government borrowing or raising corporate tax.

Feed-in tariff

One proposal to strengthen support for renewable energy is to introduce a government subsidy for renewable energy providers, in the form of a feed-in tariff that pays them higher prices for the power they sell to the electricity grid. John Brumby recently announced a plan for a large scale



Solar Systems power plant at Umuwa South Australia - now closed.

feed-in tariff in Victoria, but no new government funding is promised. Brumby has suggested it will be paid for by raising electricity prices, but the details have yet to be released.

There are different types of feed-in tariff. Many states in Australia currently have small-scale tariffs, mostly for rooftop solar panels. These are the weakest kind. Solar panels on houses are the least efficient form of renewable energy. Large solar thermal power stations are much more efficient.

Like emissions trading schemes and carbon taxes, most feed-in tariffs are funded through increasing ordinary people's power prices. The NSW feed-in tariff is expected to raise prices by up to \$9 a year. The average cost for solar panels without rebates is around \$12,000 for a 1 KW system, making them unaffordable for most.

Working class electricity users subsidise those who can afford solar panels, through higher electricity prices. This price rise may seem small, but like carbon pricing, raising feed-in tariffs to a level that could lead towards 100% renewables would mean much higher price rises.

Germany and Spain

Germany and Spain have adopted stronger tariffs. Spain's in particular has encouraged the building of solar thermal power plants. But neither of them has been strong enough

to see renewables go beyond providing a third of their country's energy needs. They will not close existing coal-fired power stations, and will not necessarily even reduce emissions. As a result of growth in energy needs, Spain's emissions have risen about 20% since 1990.

The large-scale German feed-in tariff has been a widely cited example. The German Ministry for Environment found that in 2008 the feed-in tariff led to price increases of about 5% of an average electricity bill. Germany's feed-in tariff has stimulated the growth of renewable energy. Its share of German power grew from 6.3% in 2000 to 16.1% in 2009. But the rate of growth has slowed. Current plans are to reach 30% renewables by 2020. This is not fast enough to deal with the climate emergency we face.

Spain's feed-in tariff has led to large amounts of solar power, but this has been partly by accident. According to the New York Times, the tariff was set so high that much more solar power was installed than the government expected. About 3000 MW of solar power was installed in 18 months, equivalent to three large coal-fired power stations. But the government panicked at higher-than-expected costs and cut the scheme - and the climate movement was not strong enough to stop them. This caused the loss of more than 20,000 jobs.

Feed-in tariffs have stimulated some renewable energy, but are second-best mechanisms. Rather than partially

subsidise renewable energy, why not go the whole way and have government build it? All of the above mechanisms are intended to create changes in the real economy. So why not just do it directly?

Real solutions - direct investment and regulation

It was government that built all the coal-fired power infrastructure in this country. It has been a similar story with most large infrastructure that has a large upfront cost and slow pay-back period - from public transport to dams and highways. The climate crisis makes renewable energy an essential service - just as the government builds schools and hospitals, it should build renewable energy. It would work, and there is no other way of getting to 100% renewable energy in the time frame needed.

Just as the government employs teachers, nurses and firefighters, it could employ renewable energy workers. It could then offer job and training guarantees to workers in existing fossil fuel industries. It could consciously locate new manufacturing in places like the Latrobe Valley, where otherwise the market is incapable of delivering. Unlike various other forms of industry subsidy, from loan guarantees to public private partnerships, direct investment would mean that government subsidy is not wasted going towards private profit.

Beyond Zero Emissions say their plan for 100% renewable energy in a decade would cost \$370 billion. Where would the money come from? There are many options. Governments can borrow money more cheaply than the private sector, so government debt would be one option.

Another is reallocating spending priorities. The annual \$9 billion subsidies to fossil fuel industries should be redirected to renewables. Defence spending is planned under the 2009 white paper to increase from 1.8% of GDP (8% of total government expenditure) to around 2.5% of GDP by 2020.

There is \$100 billion of new spending planned, including \$36 billion for new submarines. To put that in perspective, \$36 billion could employ 360,000 people to work on renewable energy on a wage of \$100,000 each. This spending should be reallocated for renewable energy.

Raising corporate tax back to 46%, as it was in the mid 1980s, could raise over \$30 billion per year. Even making companies actually pay the headline rate of 30% rather a much lower effective rate would raise billions, but the federal government is actually planning to cut corporate tax to 29%.

Some in the climate movement will say that none of this is realistic, but such demands for funding have been won in the past, for instance for Aboriginal health clinics, women's refuges or the welfare state as a whole. To give up on such demands is to give up on the idea that we can democratically determine spending priorities, or redistribute wealth. It is also to effectively give up on the

idea that we can solve the climate crisis.

We know the money is there. Around the world, governments have found trillions for war, and they found trillions overnight to bail out the banks. We need to start demanding it for the climate.

To win such demands will need a mass movement - a movement that aims to use the power of organised workers in unions towards winning social ends - to give us the jobs that will save the world. Building such a movement requires us being clear on what it is we are asking for.

Chris Breen is a climate activist, union activist and socialist. He played a leading role in the Save Solar Systems campaign.



Locks on the gate of Solar Systems Abbotsford factory.

Don't Undermine Our Farms: Coal and Gas Protest in Brisbane

Shani Tager, Robert Price and Daniel Sharp



The banner read 'don't undermine our farms' as an unlikely scene unfolded at Queensland's State Parliament on August 4. Ten kids on pedal tractors; two people hanging a banner off the roof of parliament house; a platypus staring down the police; 'the frackman'; 10 members of parliament; a federal senator and a senate candidate; a US gas activist, author and filmmaker; and a large crowd that included a few busloads of farmers who made the 3-4 hour trip into the city.

Farmers and environmentalists, concerned citizens and rural landholders, children and grandparents rallied together to demand protection of farmland from coal and gas mining. The groups - Six Degrees, Friends of the Earth, Save our Darling Downs, Community Climate Network Queensland, Friends of Felton, the Basin Sustainability Alliance, Western Downs Alliance, Wandoan Clean Foods Alliance, the Kingaroy Concerned Citizens Group and the Queensland Conservation Council - are all concerned about the threats posed to valuable cropping land, rural communities, the Great Artesian Basin and our climate. Together they brought three simple demands to the Queensland parliament:

1. Ban coal and coal seam gas mining on good quality agricultural land
2. Institute a moratorium on coal seam gas until the environmental and social impacts are assessed.
3. Support renewable energy and sustainable agriculture.

In light of the plan to put about 40,000 gas wells across the fertile Darling Downs, one of Australia's most agriculturally productive areas, US filmmaker and author Tara Meixsell warned the crowd that the recent unhappy experience

with gas mining in the US could be Queensland's future.

The expansion of Queensland's coal and gas mining industries is rampant. The state government is committed to doubling coal exports. Open-cut coal mines, underground coal gasification, and coal seam gas projects are being planned and developed at a frightening pace and it seems nothing is sacred. The Great Artesian Basin, an enormous underground aquifer which supports agriculture, communities and ecosystems across vast swathes of the Australian continent is under threat of contamination.

The 2.2% of Queensland which is prime cropping land is afforded no protection under current laws, risking future food security. Nature refuges have no protection. The health and livelihoods of rural communities are under threat and entire towns actually face being wiped off the map, cemeteries, war-memorials and all. Waterways are threatened by carcinogenic chemicals, heavy metals and salination from mining activities. And all of this is being vigorously pursued despite the science telling us we need to phase out fossil fuels if we don't want climate change to wreak havoc.

Modelled on a citizens assembly, the rally heard the voices of those being ignored by our government and sent a clear message that we will not sit idly by as Queensland is turned into an industrial wasteland. The banner was hung by demonstrators from Six Degrees who snuck past police and security and managed to go undetected before scaling scaffolding, traversing the roof and climbing along a ledge to unfurl their banner. They surrendered to police peacefully and were charged with 'unregulated high risk activity' and trespass.

Farmer and Friends of Felton spokesperson Rob McCreath told the rally: "Mining destroys farmland, pollutes rivers, and drains aquifers. Burning coal accelerates global warming, which leads to more frequent and severe droughts. There is a solution - it's called renewable energy."

For more information about coal and gas mining and the campaign against their destructive effects visit www.sixdegrees.org.au.

For more information about the groups who participated in this action visit these websites

Six Degrees www.sixdegrees.org.au

Friends of the Earth Brisbane www.brisbane.foe.org.au

Friends of Felton www.fof.org.au

Save Our Darling Downs www.sodd.com.au

Queensland Conservation Council www.qccqld.org.au

Community Climate Network Queensland www.climatetworkqld.org

Coal4Breakfast <http://coal4breakfast.com.au>

Basin Sustainability Alliance www.basinsustainabilityalliance.org

Western Downs Alliance <http://westerndowns.group-action.com>

Shani Tager, Rob Price and Daniel Sharp work with Friends of the Earth Brisbane's Six Degrees campaign. They were key organisers of the 'Our Land, Our Water, Our Future' rally.

Victorian Climate Bill - a good start to cutting emissions

Cam Walker

In the build up to the November state election in Victoria, the key focus of the climate movement has been the closure of the ageing and dirty Hazelwood coal fired power station. With the mid-year release of its White Paper on climate change, the government has indicated it will come at least some way on this issue, by committing to the 'phased' closure of the plant, with an initial equivalent of a quarter of the plant being phased out by 2014.

The full closure of Hazelwood would be a profound act on at least two levels. It would be a powerful symbol that Victoria is now finally shifting from its historic reliance on coal, and would remove around 12% of the state's greenhouse emissions.

But beyond individual actions to reduce emissions, we will require a strong legislative framework to guide an effective response to the threat of climate change. As part of its White Paper response, the government introduced a Climate Change Bill, which passed through the Victorian Upper House in early September, where it was supported by the ALP, the Greens and the Coalition.

The key element of the Bill is that it will commit Victoria to a 20% reduction in greenhouse emissions by the end of this decade.

It is worth looking at the genesis of this Bill to understand its significance. In 2006, the Victorian government committed to introducing a "landmark" Climate Change Bill. At this time, there was growing momentum around the world for governments to put in place legislation which would drive down the production of greenhouse gas emissions. A big part of the drive for these Bills came from the glacial pace of the international climate change negotiations and a sense that someone actually had to do something to avert dangerous climate change.

The UK took the lead, with a Bill being proposed in 2005 which was eventually signed into effect in late 2008. A range of other jurisdictions also acted, including South Australia.

In most cases, new Bills have built on earlier ones, with progressively deeper targets, especially the short term ones. For instance, the UK Bill commits it to 34% reductions against 1990 levels by 2020. The most recent legislation, the Climate Change Scotland (2009) Act commits Scotland to an ambitious 42% reduction against 1990 levels by 2020,

and the intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change suggests targets of 25-40% for developed nations in this time frame.

Against these figures, Victoria's 20% against 2000 levels looks less impressive. But we should also note that, unlike in Europe, Australia does not have an emissions trading scheme or price on carbon. A 'bidding war' between the parties pushed the target upwards in the case of the Scottish Bill. In contrast, here we have seen the collapse of federal government action on climate change, and at the state level the Coalition has been missing in action on the issue. In this light the Victorian target starts to look more ambitious.

In its final form, the Bill is a far more impressive piece of legislation than early drafts. In addition to the targets, it will mean that new 'conventional' coal fired power stations can no longer be built, greenhouse gases will be regulated, and a 'trigger' will be created for large emitters. The government will be required to take climate change into consideration in planning decisions in certain circumstances.

The Bill will guide adaptation plans for the state, facilitate a substantial roll-out of carbon sequestration (locking carbon into tree plantings) and require public reporting on the Bill every two years, and a review after five years. It intends to take the community with it as it develops solutions to climate change, and includes a substantial retrofit of housing stock to improve energy efficiency standards. The potential job yield from all these measures is substantial.

Of course, the devil is always in the detail, especially when it comes to election promises and complex legislation. The government will have to work hard and act decisively if it intends to meet its targets. It has not yet spelt out how it will meet all of the reductions and even the partial phaseout of coal power is reliant on federal funds. There is a new proposal from HRL to build a combined coal/ gas power station which, although is expected to come in under the new emissions intensity targets, is highly contentious. There are a range of questions about how the carbon sequestration will work and whether it is a viable strategy for reducing emissions. There is the need for deeper targets and a baseline of 1990 in measuring these cuts.

Incremental gains

While the response from some industry groups was predictably miserable, what was more interesting was the reaction from the climate movement. While groups like Friends of the Earth and Environment Victoria welcomed the Bill and White Paper as 'a good start', many in the movement were overtly hostile. Some felt that the positive response from groups like FoE and EV gave undue credit to the government and so undermined their campaigning. Others felt that the situation was worse: because by implying that there was forward movement there was the chance that the government and possibly the community would think it had 'solved' the climate problem, making future action

and deeper cuts even harder to achieve. They argued that no Bill was better than a 'bad' Bill.

This raises the perennial question of environmental campaigning. Do we go for (and then acknowledge) short term incremental gains, or hold out and only acknowledge action commensurate with the scale of the problem? In this instance, FoE opted for the former, while continuing to argue for the latter.

As environmentalists, our job is to look at the coming climate crisis and demand action commensurate to the problem we all face. We are painfully aware of the need for deeper cuts in greenhouse pollution. We continue to call for the complete and rapid closure of the Hazelwood plant and for the government to rule out the proposed HRL coal fired power station. Much of the track record of the Bracks' and Brumby governments has been a litany of disastrous policy decisions – the incredibly expensive desalination plant and North-South water pipeline, the support for carbon capture and storage research and coal in general, and so on.

And yet, at the same time, we need to acknowledge the leadership that is now being shown by the government of John Brumby on this most pressing of issues. Certainly it is because of the electoral threat posed by the Greens, especially in inner northern seats. It is also because of what seems to be a genuine shift in approach and an attempt to respond to climate change.

Two or three years ago I would have said that John Brumby was a borderline climate sceptic. Now I think he 'gets it' and is trying – according to his world view – to respond to the threat of climate change while protecting energy 'security' and Victorian 'lifestyles'.

The fact is that Victoria is now well ahead of any other Australian state when it comes to climate change policy. The deeper target recently promised by the ACT government will be far easier to meet because the population is so much smaller. As the preamble to the Bill notes "early action is necessary to build Victoria's capacity to respond to the challenges of climate change" and will "ease the task of long term transition to an environmentally sustainable economy". We must give credit where it is due and say well done for a good start to this process.

Cam Walker is campaigns co-ordinator with Friends of the Earth Melbourne.



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www.foe.org.au

**Friends of
the Earth
Australia**

Climate Policy: from carbon tax to direct action?

*James Goodman and Stuart Rosewarne
Climate Action Research Group, Sydney*

To date the international and Australian policy debate on how to address climate change has centred on market-based solutions. These indirect solutions rely on re-pricing carbon to shift incentive structures, and thereby de-carbonise.

Re-pricing is said to internalise externalities, thus correcting market failure, to set us off on a new low-carbon growth trajectory. There are differences on the detail: some advocate emissions trading through a state-run market to seek-out lowest-cost emissions reduction; others favour carbon taxes whether on producers or consumers as a more predictable means of repricing for existing commodity markets. While both approaches are presented as pro-market, ironically enough, electricity pricing in Australia is fully regulated.

Indirect market-based schemes may conform to the dominant orthodox mythologies, but are they adequate? There are at least four important tests.

One, will repricing penalise the extraction of fossil fuels? No, we are told it is the burning of fossil fuels that must be targeted, not their extraction. So, while mining companies continue to reap super-profit, as Rudd called it, power stations (and power consumers) will foot the bill. As such, repricing, whether through a tax or emission trading, creates no direct disincentive to extraction. The only question is how will the revenues be spent, and the corporates are already lining up. Take Marius Kloppers, for instance, chief of the world's largest diversified mining company, BHP Billiton, recent convert to a 'revenue neutral' carbon tax. And Greg Combet, our new Minister for Climate Change, is happy to compensate the corporates, whatever scheme gets up.

Two, what scale of re-pricing will deliver de-carbonisation? Re-pricing must be sufficiently punitive to produce the required shift from carbon dependence. In Australia it is suggested that a carbon price of \$40 a tonne of greenhouse emissions would incentivise renewables to about a third of energy needs, leaving coal and gas to account for the rest. While it is questionable whether this is in any way adequate, it is also highly unlikely: even the Greens \$20/tonne tax would only rise to about \$30/tonne in 2020. On these terms the scheme fails.

Three, will the resulting reduced carbon intensity be offset by accelerated growth in overall energy demand? This has been the experience of repricing where it has been

most forcefully applied, through carbon taxes in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, from the early 1990s. Of these three countries, only Denmark delivered significant per capita emissions reductions - 15% lower in 2006 than in 1990 - but mainly by directly spending tax revenues on energy efficiency and renewables, not by shifting incentives.

Four, will the costs of addressing climate change be displaced to those least responsible for it and least able to pay? A carbon tax makes fossil-fuel fired energy more expensive to produce: it increases the overall energy price structure in order to make renewable energy more competitive. Whether it succeeds in reducing emissions, the price hike is passed on to consumers. Revenue flows may be used to compensate low income consumers, but is unreliable and unlikely to keep pace with rising costs; revenue for corporate welfare, for the large emitters, is likely to be more reliable.

As demonstrated by the EU ETS, and with Rudd's version, emissions trading is especially vulnerable to policy capture by dominant market players. Carbon taxes are not immune - demonstrated last December when the French constitutional court ruled that the proposed Sarkozy carbon tax unfairly favoured corporates (through exemptions for 93% of industrial emissions). Not surprisingly the tax was dumped. We are now witness to a growing international disillusionment with indirect market-based measures. Many have speculated about cause of the apparent shift in public opinion to the climate sceptics - citing the financial crisis, or the corporate-funded campaign as turning the tide. More important is a healthy scepticism of climate policy that funds polluters and shifts the burden to consumers. If climate policy is captured for elite interests, where do the mass of people sit? If you are presented with a choice between the status quo and a patently unjust climate policy, that is in any case grossly inadequate, which would you choose?

Give the uncertainties, and indeed the urgency to generate substantial emissions reductions immediately, what are the prospects for more legitimate direct measures, both in the form of expenditure and through direct regulation? In the Climate Action Research Group we have been seeking to explore these possibilities, in the form of a program for meaningful 'direct action' on climate change, that recognises the urgency of the task at hand.

Key aspects

Clearly a 1.5 °C temperature rise on pre-industrial levels, and no more than 350 ppm CO_{2e}, is the only objective consistent with climate justice. In April 2010 atmospheric CO₂ stood at 392 ppm. The 1.5 °C target thus requires long term 'draw down' of existing carbon pollution into carbon sinks, as well as immediate drastic cuts in future emissions.

If we extrapolate from 350 ppm then global reductions in total greenhouse emissions by more than 85% below 1990 levels by 2050 are required. Reflecting historic

responsibility this should be achieved by a 100% cut by 2050 for industrialised countries; reflecting present day emissions, meeting a 350 ppm reduction would also require strong new emissions reductions for industrialising countries.

Given these imperatives, what might a progressive climate policy look like? What non-market direct action measures are available?

First, and foremost, we need to direct the economy and society to regenerative sufficiency, away from the productivist exploitation of natural resources (in particular fossil fuels). New norms of development are required to shift to forms of regenerative growth, growth that enhances ecology rather than exploiting and diminishing it. These norms must drive and underpin any 'direct action' program proposed.

Second, regeneration must be bound-in with global climate justice, through climate debt repayments. This would entail supporting Trust Funds to address adaptation and mitigation needs in the Global South, with the scale of obligation calculated both as an expression of the ratio between Australian per capita emissions and the global average, and as an expression of historic emissions debt. Such mechanisms should fund immediate emissions reductions in the South, given the loss of a Southern 'emissions window' with a 350 ppm target.

Third, localisation and social justice must guide the regenerative model. The national energy market must be dismantled, to disaggregate and scale-down the base load power system. Decentralisation of energy supply can enable localisation of energy production, and democratisation of provision. Equally, localisation of energy supply can outflank the fossil fuel power sector, allowing direct delinking from the coal cycle, and from energy dependence. It is also an antidote to cost-shifting, removing reliance on social protection by directly addressing energy poverty under the climate transition. There are also direct remedies for the transport sector – for public renewable transport, vehicle emissions standards, or car-free cities – which, again, cut emissions and promote social justice.

Fourth, regulatory instruments must be deployed for large domestic industrial emitters: minimum reductions in emissions could simply be announced for the 1000 companies and agencies listed under the Rudd CPRS, which account for about 70% of emissions in Australia. Compliance with the CPRS targets has already been assessed as having comparatively minimal impact on these companies, whether or not they claim special privileges as 'energy-intensive' or 'trade-exposed' companies. Sanctions for breaching a 30-year phase-out of emissions could include hefty fines, fixed as a fine per tonne of excess emissions. Entities failing to meet required emissions reductions could ultimately be compulsorily acquired by a new Commonwealth agency, with reasonable compensation to shareholders.

Fifth, direct action requires directly decommissioning coal power and coal exports. Large-scale energy supplies must be transformed with the closure of fossil-fuel dependent power stations, and public investment redirected into a publicly-

owned renewables industry. A halt on all new mines, and a just transitions program for the wholesale decommissioning of coal mining for export is central to support renewables internationally. Reductions in export volume could be simply achieved through mandated reductions in mine output. There may be legitimate claims for compensation from investors, although with climate change on the agenda for two decades, it is clear they should have accounted for the risk. More real may be specific obligations to assist countries importing Australian coal, to reduce coal dependence.

Sixth, public funds for de-carbonisation could be raised through progressive direct taxes. Hypothecated carbon income and corporate taxes could be imposed to fund renewables, to finance just transitions in coal-dependent communities, and to meet international obligations. Such taxes have a progressive effect on income distribution, ensuring that the cost of emissions reduction are borne by those most able to pay. Such direct taxes would complement direct non-market regulatory measures: in contrast, the incentive-based logic of indirect taxation would clash with direct efforts at limiting emissions and decommissioning. But recognising that direct decommissioning can only extend across the national jurisdiction, there would also be a need for taxes on importing embodied carbon, such as in the form of tariffs on the emissions content of imports.

Seventh, and finally, systematic expansion of sink capacity is required as a key component. Meeting the 350 ppm target requires 'drawing down' CO₂e on a massive scale. If we reject geo-engineering as inherently high-risk, then the chief mechanism to do this is by changing land use patterns, both to retain stored emissions and to expand sinks, through afforestation and changed agricultural practices, in relation to both livestock and arable production. Clearly this requires a range of direct land regulations, which will shift the meaning of land ownership.

These parameters of direct action are becoming more salient as climate change accelerates. Clearly market-based measures such as a carbon tax are inadequate. We have to be campaigning with our proposals now, for the moment when market measures lose favour. Market measures are also, for good reason, deeply unpopular. As argued here, climate movements need positive transformative agendas, centred on the regenerative models for transformation.

For discussion.

A referenced version of this article is posted at foe.org.au/resources/chain-reaction/editions/110

James Goodman works at UTS in the Social and Political Change Group; Stuart Rosewarne works at the University of Sydney in the Department of Political Economy. The Climate Action Research Group website is www.ccs.uts.edu.au/work/carg.html

Floodwaters replenish the Murray – but for how long?

Jonathan La Nauze

After a decade of drought the forests of the Murray are in flood, replenishing parched red gums and ushering in a boom time for aquatic plants and animals. Thousands of waterbirds have descended on wetlands like Barmah-Millewa to establish nests and raise young, transforming the forest into a winged menagerie until the Summer.

With big rains predicted again later in Spring this is shaping up to be a major flood, and it's not before time. The last big one was in 1996, and since then many of the red gums and associated ecosystems have been in steady decline. This flood has already reached out onto the forest floor in most parts of the Riverina, and is predicted to last in many areas until December. For the newly declared Red Gum National Parks, it is revitalising.

The benefits will extend downstream as well, all the way to the Murray's stricken mouth. For the first time in a decade the river has reached the sea, taking with it the toxic quantities of salt that built up in the Coorong over recent years. Just upstream, the rapidly acidifying beds of Lakes Albert and Alexandrina are inundated once more, holding back an ecological catastrophe of untold proportions.

It's not all good news, however. Whilst this flood is the biggest in over a decade it will be artificially foreshortened as massive quantities of water are held back in the dams of Eildon, Dartmouth and Hume. In many wetlands water levels will drop off rapidly and colonial waterbirds such as the critically endangered Intermediate Egret may be forced to abandon their young before they are old enough to survive without their parents.

And whilst the Coorong and lower lakes will be brought back from the brink, they are yet to receive an official pardon. The damage of the past decade will not be restored by one wet spring. It would require several years of good flows for aquatic vegetation to recolonise the dead floor of the lower lakes, restoring the bottom rung of the foodchain, and many more years after that for the entire ecosystems to recover. Without real change to the way we manage the Murray, there is no guarantee it won't be back in crisis within a couple of years. The only reason it is flooding now is that it was physically impossible for water authorities and corporate irrigators to impound rain that fell in unregulated streams or downstream of the big dams. If they could have, they would. Legally, the river is not entitled to the flood it is receiving.

In collaboration with Indigenous nations and several environment groups, the Barmah-Millewa Collective at

Friends of the Earth Melbourne will continue campaigning to restore resilience to the Murray's ecosystems and recognition of Traditional Owners' right to manage water on their land for the health of their country and their people.

The first leg of our campaign is called Water for Parks, a collaboration with the Australian Conservation Foundation, Environment Victoria, Victorian National Parks Association and the Wilderness Society. In the lead-up to the Victorian state election in November, we are calling on all parties to commit to environmental water allocations for all of our new red gum national parks, and reforming the Water Act to give our rivers a right to their own water.

Throughout October we distributed 100,000 postcards to Victorian voters and delivered the signed ones to the Premier and Opposition leader.

An excellent report on the problems with the Water Act has been produced by Environment Victoria and the Environment Defenders Office. Entitled 'Bringing the Water Act into the 21st Century', it is posted at www.environmentvictoria.org.au/library/bringing-victorian-water-act-21st-century.

To subscribe to the Barmah-Millewa Collective's email bulletin, email barmah@foe.org.au.

Jonathan La Nauze is the Red Gum Campaign Coordinator with Friends of the Earth Melbourne



Photo: Ecologists are hoping that the endangered intermediate Egret will have a successful breeding event this Spring, but there is a risk many will abandon their young if floodwaters recede rapidly.

Nanotech in sunscreens and cosmetics

Elena McMaster



Summer is just around the corner and the case for mandatory labelling and safety testing of nano-ingredients in sunscreens and cosmetics is gathering momentum.

In the wake of the latest CSIRO research which shows that zinc from sunscreens can penetrate healthy adult skin, and other research questioning the efficacy and aesthetic benefits of nano zinc oxide and titanium dioxide, the Australian regulatory regime looks more like an anachronism every day. With continued scientific uncertainty around the toxicity and exposure risk of nanoparticles in sunscreens and cosmetics it is more urgent than ever that the government takes action to require safety testing and mandatory labelling of nano-sunscreens and cosmetics.

The Australian sunscreens and cosmetics industry and regulators are making moves towards supporting regulatory reform on nanoparticles. At the end of 2009, the cosmetics and industrial chemicals regulator NICNAS made a series of recommendations for regulating nanomaterials, significantly that they should be subjected to nano-specific risk assessments before commercialisation.

Following these recommendations, cosmetics industry peak body ACCORD has released a proposal calling for mandatory labelling of nanoparticles in cosmetics. Friends of the Earth Australia (FoEA) notes that ACCORD's proposal does not include nano-specific safety testing. FoEA has encouraged ACCORD to include nano-specific safety testing in its proposal in line with the European Union's new regulatory framework. Nonetheless, the proposal is a positive sign that the cosmetics industry is hearing public concern and recognising consumers' 'right to know'.

With NICNAS committed to safety testing and ACCORD committed to mandatory labelling, consumers could find themselves in the contradictory and bizarre position of being able to buy cosmetics that had been subjected to nano-specific safety testing and mandatory labelling but not sunscreens, which are regulated separately by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA). Despite mounting public concerns, the TGA maintains its position that nanoparticles in sunscreens do not penetrate the skin and are innocuous.

Consumer advocacy group Choice has conducted tests on 12 common sunscreens to assess their nanoparticle content (www.choice.com.au). Choice found that only four of the sunscreens tested were nano-free. Worryingly, the testing found that some sunscreens listed in Friends of the Earth's Safe Sunscreen Guide as nano-free were found to contain low levels of nanoparticles. This highlights problems with contamination and post-manufacture processes and underscores the need for appropriate standards associated with labelling and testing.

FoEA's preference is for a maximum of 5% nanoparticulate contamination allowable for a product labelled as nano-free in contrast to the industry's proposed 10% cut-off level. The fact that four companies tested were found to be completely free from nanoparticles suggests that it is reasonably possible to avoid contamination and manage manufacturing processes to ensure that the final product is nano-free. The Choice article argued that the regulation of nanoparticles should be based on the 'precautionary principle' and that "nanoparticles should be proven to be safe before they hit the market and clearly labelled so that consumers can avoid them if they choose." Without regulatory reform, consumers will remain largely dependent on manufacturers' claims to inform their choice of sunscreen.

The good news for concerned consumers – FoEA Australia will be helping you welcome summer nano-free with the release of the 2011 Safe Sunscreen Guide on December 1. Stay nano-free as the days get longer, the sun gets warmer and your garden goes wild! This year the Guide will include a reply paid postcard so that you can demand the federal government act on regulatory reform.

Elena McMaster is a campaigner with Friends of the Earth's Nanotechnology Project. If you would like more information about nanoparticles in sunscreens and cosmetics, ph (03) 9024 3404, email elena.mcmaster@foe.org.au, web nano.foe.org.au

New report on nanotech's climate implications

Georgia Miller (FoE Australia) and Ian Illuminato (FoE US)

After a long time researching, investigating and evaluating, Friends of the Earth Australia and United States, in collaboration with colleagues in El Salvador and Europe, are preparing to release a report on nanotechnology's energy and climate implications.

The report looks at the claims made regarding nanotechnology's 'green' potential, and investigates its potential for use in energy generation, storage and efficiency applications. It weighs up the energy costs associated in the majority of products that are not designed for energy efficiency (cosmetics, sports equipment, cleaning products, household goods). It also sheds light on some of the applications the industry is less keen to promote publicly – including using nanotechnology to find and extract more oil and gas. Here is an extract from the report:

Nanotechnology, the so-called 'science of the small', has been the subject of consistent and often unqualified promotion from governments and industry. Some have claimed that by supporting highly precise manufacturing, reducing energy and material demands of production, delivering more efficient, flexible and cheap renewable energies, and enabling full material recovery at end of life, nanotechnology could assist to 'decouple' economic expansion from resource use. Specifically in the energy sector, proponents predict that nanotechnology will offer solutions to climate change by improving energy generation, storage, and energy saving technologies.

Unfortunately, current research suggests that many of the claims made regarding nanotechnology's environmental performance, and breakthroughs touted by companies claiming to be near market, are not matched by reality. As one observer puts it, "market ready [green] nanoproducts remain elusive". In 2009 only 1% of global nanotechnology-based products came from the energy and environmental sector (although this figure doesn't include nano-coatings or nano-composites).

Many of the claims regarding nanotechnology's potential to deliver environmental outcomes are based on extremely early stage, laboratory based work. Some researchers have cautioned that in the promotion of nano-solar, manufacturing constraints and barriers are commonly ignored, and much of the work in the published literature is based on unrealistic expectations.

Lux Research analyst Kristin Abkemeier emphasizes that the scaling up problems experienced by nano-solar are not

isolated: "The same is true with other nanotechnologies; it's not happening as soon as people thought it would".

Perhaps more importantly, even where companies have brought products to market, it appears that some nano-products touted as 'green' actually impose both net energy costs and heavy environmental burdens. The manufacture of nanomaterials is extremely energy and water intensive and has a high ecological footprint. This is related to: highly specialized production environments, high energy and water demands of processing, low yields, high waste generation, the production and use of greenhouse gases such as methane and the use of toxic chemicals and solvents. Some researchers have suggested that single walled carbon nanotubes may be "one of the most energy intensive materials known to humankind". Further, many nanomaterials themselves introduce new and poorly understood toxicity risks for humans and the environment.

Of serious concern, there is already strong interest in harnessing nanotechnology to expand and prolong production of fossil fuels. The world's biggest petrochemical companies are collaborating to fund research and development to use nanotechnology to double the oil and gas that can be extracted from known reserves, and to find new reserves. This will inevitably result in the massive release of additional greenhouse gases. The environmental cost will be exacerbated by the enormous quantities of nanomaterials predicted to be used.

Nanotechnology is not an unqualified environmental saviour nor will its widespread use in everything from socks to face creams to household appliances enable us to pursue 'business as usual' while drastically reducing our environmental footprint. At best, such claims can be interpreted as the result of excitement and wishful thinking on the part of proponents, coupled with a failure to invest in rigorous life cycle analysis; at worst they can be seen as disingenuous and misleading marketing or greenwash.

Nanotechnology is a powerful technology that is capable of underpinning technical breakthroughs; it will certainly deliver novel approaches to the methods by which we harness, use, and store energy. Nevertheless, Friends of the Earth warns that in toto, this technology will come at a huge energy and broader environmental cost.

Nanotechnology may ultimately facilitate the next wave of expansion of the global economy, deepening our reliance on fossil fuels and existing hazardous chemicals, while introducing a new generation of hazards. Further, it may transform and integrate ever-more parts of nature into our systems of production and consumption.

The report will be posted at www.nano.foe.org.au

Australian workers flying blind on nano risks

Elena McMaster



Australian workers and employers are flying blind when it comes to management of nanotechnology's risks in the workplace, according to a report released in June by Safe Work Australia. The federal agency commissioned a review of 50 Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS). 84% of the MSDS "did not provide adequate and accurate information sufficient to inform an occupational risk assessment for nanomaterial contained in the product".

Eleven out of 12 MSDS relating to carbon nanotubes described their risk as equivalent to that of graphite, despite some forms of carbon nanotubes having been demonstrated to cause asbestos-like disease.

The fact that 89% of the MSDS surveyed conformed with the Australian Code of Practice for Preparation of MSDS suggests strongly that the Code requires updating to meet the new risks and challenges of nanomaterials.

Workers and employers rely on MSDS to inform their risk management in the workplace. The Australian Council of Trade Unions' spokesperson on nanotechnology, Renata Musolino, told ABC Science that: "The Material Safety Data Sheet is your 'go-to' document to find out what you're using ... It tells you what you have to do in the workplace to ensure people's health and safety is protected, and what you need to have in place to ensure you can handle a spill or an accident."

The fact that such a high proportion of MSDS provided irrelevant or unreliable information is a great concern. The report also found that information about control measures

and exposure standard was similarly inadequate, and largely related to the bulk forms of a substance, rather than their nano-forms. Further, only three out of 50 MSDS described the material's ecotoxic properties. As waste from industrial waste streams and workplaces grows, the potential for adverse environmental impacts could become a serious problem.

On a positive note, the review found that 14 out of 15 labels surveyed did state that the substances contained nanoparticles. However, as with the MSDS, the labels failed to provide appropriate information to manage nanotoxicity risks. A precautionary approach demands that in circumstances of uncertainty, with early warning signs that some nanomaterials could cause serious health harm, occupational exposure to nanomaterials be prevented. However, without halting the commercial use of nanomaterials, it may be practically and economically impossible to prevent occupational exposure to nanomaterials in the wide range of industries and workplace settings in which they are used.

During the federal election campaign, the Australian Greens pledged their support for a national, mandatory and publicly available register of all nanomaterials in commercial use. This has been a past call from the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the (now defunct) Australian Nano Business Forum. Yet Labor government innovation minister Kim Carr ruled out support for a register, citing nano's economic potential.

Welcome to new nano-campaigners

It's been a big year of change for Friends of the Earth's Nanotechnology Project. Earlier this year we farewelled Fiona Thiessen, who has returned to Columbia to continue her masters degree, and Dr Rye Senjen, who has moved on from the project following several years as a key contributor to the campaign. We would like to thank both Fiona and Rye for all their work with FoE and to wish them well in their future pursuits.

On an exciting note, we have welcomed two new folk. Elena McMaster is now working four days / week as a campaigner with the project, and will be coordinating our sunscreen guide, outreach and activism over summer. Dr Gregory Crocetti has come on board one day a week and is focussing on the key technical work of how nanomaterials are defined for regulation - if we can't get some agreement on how to describe, measure and characterise nanomaterials, it's pretty damn hard to regulate them! We welcome Elena and Gregory to the team and look forward to having some fresh minds tackling the nano-issues.

For more information on FoE's Nanotechnology Project, please visit www.nano.foe.org.au, email georgia.miller@foe.org.au, ph. (03) 9419 8700.

The Southern Cassowary - an iconic species that needs our help

Anneke de Graaf



Female Cassowary, Mission Beach. Photo by Liz Gallie.

The Endangered Southern Cassowary is an ancient, flightless bird found in the tropical rainforests of the Wet Tropics and Cape York in far north Queensland.

The cassowary is important for a number of reasons. It is at the heart of traditional Aboriginal culture of the Wet Tropics, featured in traditional ceremony, dance and an important food source for some groups.

The cassowary also plays a key role in maintaining the biodiversity of the rainforest. It is recognised as a 'keystone' species for its essential role in seed dispersal. This vital role in rainforest regeneration and maintenance benefits a huge array of other rainforest species. The cassowary is also important for the social identity of far north Queensland and the tourism industry. Although cassowary habitat is primarily rainforest, they also use woodland, swamps and disturbed habitat for a year-round supply of fleshy fruits. Their dependence on fresh fruit causes their home range to fluctuate from 0.5 to 2.4 sq kms depending on the seasons and availability of food. Habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation, roads and traffic, dogs, feral pigs, human interaction, disease and natural catastrophic events makes everyday life a challenge for the cassowary. Habitat loss is recognised to be the most prominent threat yet it is still being cleared in areas within the Wet Tropics.

Lowland rainforests are different from upland rainforests and provide vital habitat for the cassowary. By 1983, 57% of lowland rainforest had been cleared with much of the remainder highly fragmented. By 1997, 81% of native vegetation had gone. There are 3777 kms of highways, roads

and tracks criss-crossing the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area intersecting approximately half the home ranges of cassowaries in the Daintree. Most other significant cassowary population areas such as Mission Beach are also either fragmented or surrounded by roads. Over the past 15 years, 61 cassowary deaths have been recorded due to vehicle collisions.

The cassowary's nomadic nature is not favourable in a fragmented landscape. In this environment, they may need to cross roads, navigate around fencing and sometimes meander through backyards all in one day. This not only increases the risk of being hit by a car, attacked by a dog or trapped by fences; it also means that the cassowary is likely to come into more contact with humans, which poses further problems. Regular contact with humans makes them less wary and can result in the bird becoming 'braver' to approach cars, pedestrians and houses in search of food.

Today, there remain 185 residential properties in the Daintree zoned for development within the World Heritage Area. How can this happen? Ten years before World Heritage Listing, large sections of the lowland rainforest were subdivided for residential development by Cairns property developer, Mr George Quaid. So when the Hawke federal government listed the Wet Tropics Rainforests as a World Heritage Area in 1998, developers left a legacy of freehold properties in the heart of the Daintree lowlands surrounded by the National Park and World Heritage Area. While the World Heritage Area included the majority of the Daintree Rainforest uplands, it excluded most of the hill slopes and coastal lowlands, which were mainly privately owned.

In Mission Beach, local council and state laws leave loopholes that allow developers to partially or completely clear lowland rainforest on their properties, both inside and outside the urban footprint. Currently there are over 1000 blocks cleared on subdivision properties in speculation for future development. This kind of suburbanisation seriously fragments cassowary habitat, restricting movement to and from the coast from the highlands, food supplies and safe habitat territory.

The Save the Cassowary Campaign is urging the federal government to commit \$60 million towards protecting the remaining cassowary habitat in the Daintree and Mission Beach. There is no easy solution, but voluntary buy back and protection of freehold properties in the Daintree, conservation incentives for land owners, and special planning in Mission Beach would be a significant step in the right direction.

Please help the campaign by signing our online submission at www.savethecassowary.org.au, join our Facebook page facebook.com/savethecassowary and spread the word through your networks.

For more information or to get involved, please contact the Save the Cassowary Campaign, PO Box 47, Brunswick Heads, NSW, 2483. Email enquiries@savethecassowary.org.au, ph 0428 566 499.

Heavy metal contamination in a Tasmanian mining town

Kay Seltitzas, Marsha Stejskal, Huw Carson, Dr David Leaman and Isla MacGregor - Toxic Heavy Metals Taskforce Tasmania

The small Tasmanian west coast mining town of Rosebery has become the focus for an important public health and environmental regulation issue.

In October 2008, several Rosebery residents came to believe that their chronic health problems and those of their pets was probably caused by the effects of toxic heavy metals in the environment. Three residents contacted the Rosebery mine owner Oz Minerals after they had received results from testing for heavy metals of groundwater and soil by a government laboratory. The residents asked Oz Minerals to relocate them away from Rosebery to similar standard homes in a safe environment.

Subsequently the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Environment Protection Authority (EPA) commenced an investigation into five Rosebery residents' claims of heavy metal contamination of their properties with arsenic, lead, cadmium, copper and manganese and their numerous chronic health problems. High levels of various metals were found in soil on three properties including lead and arsenic. High levels of manganese were detected in groundwater samples. Three more Rosebery residents who were ill applied to the DHHS be included in the investigation but the DHHS rejected them. By this stage a total of nine residents' blood and urine tests showed high levels of heavy metals (only five of whom were in the investigation).

A DHHS/EPA report concluded that the three residents' properties were not contaminated; the chronic health problems of five residents could not be attributed to heavy metal poisoning; and no further medical examination, biological testing or environmental testing relating to heavy metals was required.

The five residents involved in the investigation rejected the findings and called on health minister Lara Giddings to establish an independent population-based public and environmental health survey into heavy metals in Rosebery. Giddings rejected this call. Several of the affected Rosebery residents joined forces with other concerned Tasmanians, medical and environmental professionals and formed the Toxic Heavy Metals Taskforce Tasmania.

With the assistance of an expert on contaminated sites, the Taskforce released a critique which outlined serious flaws in the DHHS/EPA methodology, analysis and conclusions. Several people including the original five sought medical advice from the most appropriate and qualified specialist in

Tasmania - Dr Andreas Ernst, an occupational health and musculoskeletal specialist with many years of experience in the mining industry both in Tasmania and elsewhere. Dr Ernst assessed 10 patients in detail and made a diagnosis of heavy metal poisoning. He subsequently provided a confidential report to Dr Roscoe Taylor, Tasmanian Director of Health.

Since the release of the DHHS/EPA report in April 2009, the revised recommendations for residents on reducing their risks of heavy metal exposure in Rosebery were not made publicly available. Taskforce members could not find any copies of these recommendations from a number of community facilities in Rosebery including the library and the hospital. So the Taskforce produced a pamphlet which included the 16 precautionary measures outlined in the DHHS/EPA report as well as nine additional precautionary measures. The Taskforce letterboxed all residences in Rosebery as well as broad distribution in other towns on the west coast.

Legal action flagged

Residents sought the advice of law firm Slater and Gordon. In December 2009 Slater and Gordon announced that it was representing several residents. The law firm believes that it will be in a position to commence legal proceedings in the near future.

Also in December 2009, the DHHS announced it would conduct an assessment of the diagnosis by Dr Andreas Ernst. Additionally, MMG, the new mine owner, announced that GHD, its environmental consultant, would conduct another environmental sampling program in Rosebery and that MMG would also conduct a biological testing program for mine workers and their families.

In January 2010 the Rosebery Community Reference Group Committee was established. Represented in this group are government departments, the mine, local council, unions and selected members of the community. The Committee was established to act in an advisory capacity and to provide input for the environmental and biological investigations underway. As the design and planning phase for these investigations had already been decided upon by MMG and the DHHS, and because of the condition of confidentiality, the Taskforce declined to participate on the Committee.

In February, the Taskforce was contacted by a representative of the Rosebery Technical Advisory Group, an additional body established to advise the reference group. The Taskforce was invited to join this Committee but again declined because of the confidentiality requirement. Nevertheless, the Taskforce provided a detailed submission - 'Proposals for Action on Heavy Metal Contamination and Health Risks in Rosebery'. The Taskforce was concerned about the independence of the DHHS and GHD investigations and the testing and assessment methodologies being used. Previous Rosebery mine owner Oz Minerals

and the current owner MMG have not released any data from their tests of soil, water or dust from their sampling programs since 2007/08. Numerous properties tested for heavy metals in Rosebery from several investigations over a period of years have returned high levels of heavy metals (especially lead and arsenic).

Several residents have felt it necessary to leave their contaminated homes in Rosebery but continue to suffer from serious chronic health problems. Those people diagnosed with heavy metal poisoning by Dr Ernst who remain in Rosebery have steadily deteriorating health problems but they are unable to leave their homes for economic reasons.

The Rosebery case highlights the need for urgent reform of state legislation relating to regulations on blood/urine metal levels and contaminated sites. In addition there is an urgent need for updating and reviewing national guidelines for health investigation and remediation levels, especially for arsenic, lead and levels of metal mixtures.

There needs to be a shift within the NH&MRC and state health departments concerning the issue of synergism and chronic health effects from low levels of complex chemical or heavy metal mixtures. This concept of the synergistic effect of more than one toxic agent is now well accepted in scientific literature. Many of the heavy metals in question are linked to cancer.

It is hoped that the outcome of future legal action by Slater and Gordon will lead to establishment of an independent, population-based public and environmental health survey in Rosebery and for just compensation to those people whose health has been affected. None of the people diagnosed with heavy metal poisoning knew about the potential health risks of living in Rosebery when they first purchased their homes.

The Lomborg Deception

The Lomborg Deception: Setting the Record Straight About Global Warming

Howard Friel

March 2010

Yale University Press

272pp

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Review by Ellen Roberts

Bjorn Lomborg - Swedish economist, climate sceptic and author of the best-selling book *The Skeptical Environmentalist* - hit the news again recently for his dramatic u-turn on climate change, seemingly going from

sceptic to advocate for climate action. Since 2001, Lomborg has been arguing against environmental action and for 'business as usual', claiming that environmental groups are exaggerating human impacts on the environment. In 2007, Lomborg responded to 'overblown' accounts of the problem of climate change with his book *Cool It: A Sceptics Guide to Global Warming*.

Journalist Howard Friel was so frustrated with Lomborg's techniques, and the media's uncritical engagement with him, that he wrote *The Lomborg Deception*, a page by page refutation of the claims made in *Cool It*. The *Lomborg Deception* largely focuses on Lomborg's misuse of scientific material to back up his claims. Friel says Lomborg's techniques include selective quoting, ignoring evidence that doesn't accord with his view, overwhelming the reader with end-notes that don't actually back up his claims, and overuse of questionable sources, particularly opinion pieces, that support his views. One example – the IPCC uses a range of emissions scenarios to predict average global temperature rise. However Lomborg chooses only the lowest emissions scenario, which predicts 0.6 degrees of warming, and makes no mention of the others in his entire work.

In many respects, the ground that Friel covers in *The Lomborg Deception* is not new. Scientific organisations including the Union of Concerned Scientists, the Scientific American magazine, and the Danish Committee on Scientific Dishonesty have all challenged Lomborg's credentials, techniques and use of sources.

Recent media reports that Lomborg is calling for massive amounts of research and development funding for climate action seem to signify a shift in his thinking. But if you look a little closer, Lomborg is making similar arguments – that 'drastic carbon cuts make no sense'. He proposes investing R&D funding into quick-fix technical solutions like geoengineering. And even more frustrating, reporting of his most recent turn shows that the mainstream media's engagement with Lomborg is as superficial and enthusiastic as ever.

Lomborg's most recent shift suggests that he has moved away from focusing on disproving the seriousness of climate change itself, to challenging commonly-proposed solutions. He argues for business-as-usual plus techno-fixes. In this sense Lomborg's shift reflects that taking place more broadly amongst opponents of climate action: from denying the problem to disputing the solutions.

Lomborg's faux u-turn took place after the publication of *The Lomborg Deception*, but Friel has been prominent in recent debates. He states: "Lomborg still argues, as he has over the past decade, that it is bad policy to focus on reducing CO2 emissions. While doing much over the last decade to assist the right-wing and industry-backed campaigns against global warming and CO2 reductions, Lomborg argues today that reducing CO2 is bad policy because it has not worked in the past. This goes beyond mere cynicism." (www.commondreams.org/view/2010/09/01-5)

NO NUKES NEWS

Nuclear-free victories in the NT

Dave Sweeney

Opponents to uranium mining in the Northern Territory have welcomed developments that have seen three significant uranium projects stalled or derailed in recent months.

In August the then federal environment minister Peter Garrett committed that a re-elected Gillard government would move swiftly to protect the magnificent Koongarra region of Kakadu from the long-standing threat of uranium mining. The promise was later matched by the Coalition in the lead up to federal election.

The Koongarra area includes the popular Nourlangie Rock (Burrungui/Anbangbang) region and is important in storylines that include the Rainbow Serpent and Lightning Man. The surrounding Kakadu National Park is Australia's largest National Park and the region has very high cultural and ecological values. Expert bodies including the Fox Commission in the 1970s and a UNESCO mission in the 1990s have recommended there be no uranium mining at Koongarra.

Koongarra's Traditional Owners, the Djok people, and neighbouring clans have worked to see this area protected from mining for many years and the announcement is a credit to their tenacity and vision, and especially that of senior owner Jeffrey Lee.

In late September, the NT Chief Minister Paul Henderson ruled out any future development at the controversial Cameco-Paladin joint venture at Angela Pamela, 20 kms from Alice Springs. Henderson cited widespread community concern and opposition to the planned mine as the prime reason for the decision, which was subsequently matched by the opposition Country Liberal Party.

The joint venturers have exploration approval but do not – and have never had – any mining approval. Any application for a future Mineral Lease requires both NT and Commonwealth government approval and a bi-partisan commitment that announcement removes NT support for any future mining application means the project is effectively ended.

The third strike for the NT's uranium sector happened at the start of October when HNC (Australia) Resources, the mining company behind the troubled Brown's Oxide project at Rum Jungle near Batchelor issued a short statement announcing that it had decided to move to permanent care and maintenance due to the likely cost of the remedial works required to fix the processing plant plus the uncertainty of obtaining approval for a related development.

These decisions highlight the importance of sustained Indigenous and wider community resistance to uranium mining plans and the volatility and vulnerability of this sector. Three down, more to go.

International conference calls for an end to uranium mining.

The negative health, environmental and human rights impacts of uranium mining were high on the agenda of the bi-annual Congress of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) held in August in the Swiss city of Basel.

The prestigious Nobel Peace prize winning IPPNW facilitated a parallel event – Sacred Land, Poisoned People – examining the lived experience of Indigenous people and the uranium industry around the globe.

The event included Indigenous people's testimonies from the Pacific, North America, Eastern Europe, Australia, India and Africa. Australian delegates included Justin O'Brien and Kirsten Blair representing the Mirarr people's Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation from Kakadu, Dave Sweeney from the Australian Conservation Foundation and Kokatha woman Rebecca Bear-Wingfield, the South Australian co-chair of the Australian Nuclear Free Alliance.

The event attracted international media attention and has helped strengthen solidarity and active campaigning between Indigenous groups taking action against unwanted nuclear activities on their traditional lands.

The IPPNW Congress later passed a powerful resolution calling for a ban on uranium on human rights and public health grounds. This sends a clear and timely signal to the uranium miners and those who finance their operations – uranium is the asbestos of the 21st Century - and it faces growing community, political and legal obstacles and resistance.

Australian Nuclear Free Alliance national meeting

The 2010 meeting of the Australian Nuclear Free Alliance was held on the weekend August 13 - 15 on the land of the Undoolya people in Alice Springs. You can read the meeting statement on the ANFA website www.anfa.org.au

Formed in 1997, the Alliance brings together Aboriginal people and relevant NGOs concerned about existing or proposed nuclear developments in Australia, particularly on Aboriginal land.

2010 Nuclear Free Future Awards

The 2010 Nuclear Free Future Awards were held on September 30 in New York. The African Uranium Alliance - comprising activists from Niger, Tanzania, Namibia, Malawi, Cameroon and South Africa - was honoured for its work to stop uranium mining.

AREVA mines uranium in Niger, Rio Tinto in Namibia. The cozy relations these corporations enjoy with government authorities allow them to take land from indigenous peoples without compensation, and to continue unchecked their appalling environmental records. Desert aquifers have already been drained of billions of litres of water – a vital resource that will take millions of years to replenish.

The mission of the Alliance is not only to protest plans to open up new uranium mines, but also to educate those employed at working mines about the imminent health risks. The Alliance found that black employees, labouring for wages far less than the white workforce, often had no idea that repeated radiation exposures placed them at a higher risk than the general population to contract respiratory ailments, leukemia, and other cancers. Few miners had ever set eyes on a dosimeter, and many were not issued facial masks or shielding work clothes.

Other awards went to:

* Oleg Bodrov - a Russian scientist struggles against the nuclear mainstream.

* Bruno Barrillot - a French activist is the driving force behind a law providing some measure of compensation to the victims of French nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

* actor Martin Sheen, who said: "I act to earn my living, I do this to stay alive."

* Henry Red Cloud - a driving force behind the promotion of solar energy across Indian country.

www.nuclear-free.com/eng

Huge anti-nuclear protests in Germany

Up to 100,000 people protested in Germany on September 18 against the nuclear power plans of the conservative government of Angela Merkel. The government plans to extend the life-spans of Germany's 17 reactors by an average of 12 years. The plans overturn nuclear phase-out legislation enacted by previous Social Democrat / Greens government.

The government cannot win support for the policy in the parliament's upper house - so it plans to by-pass the upper house altogether, possibly inviting a legal challenge. A clear majority of Germans oppose the plans - 61% according to a poll in September - and thus the government has rejected proposals for a referendum on Germany's nuclear future.

The government's Advisory Council on the Environment has stated that: "By 2050, Germany's energy needs can be supplied 100% through electricity derived from renewable energy sources," however, "the federal government must set the course for the conversion of the energy system now." The Advisory Council added "for the transition period, neither renewals for nuclear power or for new coal-fired power plants are desirable."

In recent opinion polls, opposition parties have surged ahead of the centre-right parties, propelled by their campaign against nuclear power. A September poll found 24% support for the Greens, 24% for the Social Democrats, with the conservative Christian Democrats falling to 29%.



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Big thanks to Steve Holdsworth (pictured third from left) for all his fantastic work with FoE's Anti-nuclear & Clean Energy (ACE) campaign in Melbourne since 2004. Steve has been a leading organiser of FoE's annual Radioactive Exposure Tours, and the annual Australian Nuclear Free Alliance meetings, in recent years. He's off to work with Aboriginal communities in north-west WA.

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South Melbourne Commons

Meg Ivory

South Melbourne Commons is Friends of the Earth's latest major project. Inspired by the CERES Environmental Park and Abbotsford Convent, the Commons is a unique urban development comprising public space, retail orientated 'social enterprises' and community facilities.

The Commons is housed in the beautiful heritage-listed buildings on the site of the old Galilee School (corner of Montague and Bank St, South Melbourne). Friends of the Earth, in partnership with the Father Bob Maguire Foundation, aims to return the property to the community and provide environmental and community services to the area.

The environmental impact of food production can be enormous, which is why we are creating not only food-producing gardens but also a low-impact community cafe and a fruit and vegetable co-op. It is a zero-waste site and will demonstrate many other practical steps that individuals and businesses can take to live more sustainably. These include water conservation, energy efficiency, workshops and much more.

As well as reducing the environmental impact of Port Phillip residents, the Commons will provide support for the Father Bob Maguire Foundation's program providing emergency food to the most disadvantaged members of the community.

The Commons is cooperatively run, meaning anyone can enjoy a discount by becoming a financial member or through volunteering in any part of the Commons. The enterprises operating at the Commons, all agree to invest back into the local community and the environment.

Here are just some of the enterprises and activities that will be available at the Commons:

- community cafe - delicious, nutritionally balanced, sustainable food and coffee;
- playgroups, playground and children's services - Apples and Jam are two local women with a passion for low-impact kid's parties and playgroups;
- co-op - a grocery cooperative which will carry at least 70% of the product range you would find in a regular supermarket but with a strong emphasis on sustainability;
- fun and educationally themed days - also creating opportunities for charities to generate revenues and increase their capacity;

- fashion and beauty day (second hand clothing, natural beauty, providing information about animal testing and a low footprint approach to fashion);
- house and garden renovation days (where people can learn about grey water systems, solar power and hot water etc.);
- farmers market day (promoting organics); and
- boot sales (promoting re-use).

Our volunteers are hard at work putting the finishing touches on the site and getting ready for our launch the Sustainable Food Festival, December 4-5 at the Commons.



If you are in Melbourne and would like to volunteer, or even if you're not in Melbourne and you would like to support the project, please email Meg Ivory meg.ivory@foe.org.au

www.melbourne.foe.org.au?q=rflsmc
www.fatherbob.com.au

The case against more war memorials

If all goes according to current plan, a stroll around Lake Burley Griffin for Canberrans and their visitors will soon be changed forever, as will the view from Parliament House across the lake to the Australian War Memorial. And the notion that warfare plays a central role in defining us as a nation will be strengthened.

According to plans under development since 2004, largely away from public scrutiny, a significant new war memorial is to be built beside the lake at the end of Anzac Parade, to commemorate Australian lives lost during World Wars I and II. The memorial will incorporate two large towers, each twenty metres high, joined by a continuous broad granite pavement, plus twelve battlefield walls of mixed concrete and granite. It will dominate the landscape.

The proponents of these new structures claim that the more than 100,000 Australians who died in the two world wars have been overlooked in our commemoration of warfare. This is an astonishing claim, particularly as the Australian War Memorial (AWM) contains large sections devoted to these wars (and has just opened new WWII galleries). The AWM Roll of Honour lists all Australians who died fighting in all wars in which we have been involved since the war in the Sudan, with the exception of those killed in armed conflict between Aboriginal and white Australians. Since the AWM opened in 1941, at least thirty-six more military memorials have been built in Canberra.

Indeed, the existence of such a large and increasing number of memorials raises the troubling question of how many war memorials is enough before we risk being seen – by ourselves and others – as an overly militaristic nation, to the exclusion of other aspects of our national life.

What would it say about us, as a nation, if the view from our national parliament was to contain not one but three significant monuments to Australia's involvement in war? Is this the overriding ethos we want instilled each day in our politicians, and in all the visitors and future generations of schoolchildren who will visit Parliament House and take in that view? Will such a vista prompt visions of a peaceful world? Or might it support a militaristic frame of mind and help lead to repetitions of horrors past?

The lack of public input into this proposal is alarming. The site has already been approved, a design competition conducted, and the winning entry selected, and yet, despite some meetings with select groups and individuals, "consultation" with the wider public is not planned until next year. It all looks like a fait accompli in the making. The issue of funding raises additional concern. In the Canberra

Times on 14 March 2009, historian Ken Inglis stated that the funding, estimated at \$21 million, will come largely from firms supplying our present armed forces – that is, those who profit from warfare. It is highly offensive that an industry that profits from war's carnage should help commemorate that carnage.

We must ask ourselves: How would those whose lives were taken on so many battlefields have us commemorate their sacrifices? At the opening of the AWM, on Armistice Day 1941, then Governor-General, Lord Gowrie, anticipated how future visitors would respond to the galleries and the commemorative area: "Every one of them I am firmly convinced will declare, and will declare with no uncertain voice, never again, never again." Would our war dead be more pleased by a nation that erects endless grand memorials or by a nation that uses its public spaces, its schools and universities, its public discourse and its parliaments to promote peace? If it is the latter, then how can we best do that?

The most appropriate way to mark the lives lost and shattered during the two greatest wars of the last century would be to ensure that 'never again, never again' do we sink into such an abyss. To do this we must promote a culture of peace, with public monuments that celebrate humanity's finest achievements, and invite us to recommit ourselves to our shared human future. That would be the ultimate mark of respect for our war dead.

*Paul Barratt, former Secretary, Department of Defence
Professor Joseph Camilleri OAM, Centre for Dialogue, La Trobe University*

Professor Bob Douglas AO, Futurist

Professor John Langmore, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne

Dr Ann Moyal AM, Historian

Brett Odgers, Walter Burley Griffin Society

Professor Stuart Rees AM, Sydney Peace Foundation

Professor Henry Reynolds, Historian

Dr Peter Stanley, Historian

Dr Sue Wareham OAM, Medical Association for Prevention of War

This is an abridged version of an article published in the Canberra Times. The issues are discussed further in a September 2010 paper written by Sue Wareham and Michelle Fahy, posted at www.mapw.org.au

Engaging the Community with Corporate Greenwash

Review by Sharon Beder



David Pope / The Canberra Times / www.scratch.com.au

Engaging the Community is a guide book aimed at helping government authorities and private companies to gain community trust and acceptance for any plans they might have for dealing with contaminated land: “These practical tools are intended to facilitate understanding and approval of proposed developments within the community” (p.2).

It would be wrong to assume the book is meant to assist communities by ensuring that contaminated land is made safe and environmentally benign, or to enable local residents to have a voice in proposals that will affect them. Engaging the Community is essentially a public relations manual on how to persuade local communities and other interested parties in ways that will not enrage them but will soothe and reassure them.

Whilst much lip service is given to “participatory decision making” in the book, there is little substance behind this. The aim of understanding community concerns is not so much so those concerns can be addressed, but rather so that a good risk communications plan can be developed (p.10). The authors point out that it is important to let people express their concerns otherwise they may become outraged, but the issue of whether or not these concerns are genuinely addressed seems to be of little interest.

The book contains many brief examples and short case studies. One example is of efforts to site a nuclear waste repository in the US. A public meeting revealed that the “public were more aware of the characteristics of the proposed sites than the authority” and that meeting-goers were therefore able to point out “health and safety, transportation and waste storage” issues that had not been adequately address by the authority.

The lessons to be learned from this, according to the authors, were not that the authority was remiss in its

research and preparation, nor that the public consultation was successful in that this was caught in time, but rather that the problem was the conflict that had not been avoided because of, amongst other things, “community culture and distrust towards the relevant authorities” (p.29). Yet this distrust seems to have been warranted.

Similarly, a NSW case study is given as an example of poor risk communication practices. At Port Kembla a copper smelter had been operating for 40 years with excessive emissions that exceeded national and international health standards for lead and sulphur and repeatedly breached local pollution control standards. When it stopped operating the local residents noticed a marked environmental improvement. When it was proposed that the smelter be reopened by new owners, the residents objected claiming that they had not been sufficiently consulted and that they could not be sure that the emissions from the smelter would not be polluting. The government passed special legislation to enable the smelter to be opened in 2000 despite a successful legal challenge by local residents.

The lesson to be learned from this was, according to the authors, that residents were outraged because of various factors such as their lack of power, the memory of past pollution, the perceived unfairness and the untrustworthiness of the company and government authorities: “It is not always the lack of understanding that constrains the public’s consideration of science, economic and political issues, but the lack of political framework that outlines clear choices, benefits and trade-offs in decision making” (p.45). In fact there was nothing constrained about the community’s understanding of the science, economic and political issues as evidenced by the fact that the reopened “smelter breached numerous air quality criteria” in the following two years, and it was closed again because the owners found it was not economic to meet the regulatory requirements.

The case studies of good communication practices are even more bizarre. The first is of remediation of the Homebush Bay Olympic site. This happens to be a case that I have written about myself. Success, according to the book authors, was evident in that the public accepted the remediation. They claim trust was established between government and the public by making reports and data of site investigations available to the public through local councils, libraries and local environmental groups.

However several key reports about this development were not made public. They included a multi-volume report by Dames and Moore on the site remediation that found that the most contaminated parts of the site posed potential health and safety problems to workers and site visitors

during redevelopment and that there could be public health risks to users of these areas arising from possible seepage of contaminants and gases to the surface after redevelopment was complete.

Reports by environmental consultants Inner City Fund (ICF) P/L assessing the health and environmental risks that were posed by the Homebush Bay site were also kept secret. In its report on the contamination of Haslam's Creek South, ICF concluded that risks to people using the site from breathing in contaminants were probably within acceptable limits but that "insufficient data was available for quantitative assessment". Other ICF reports were similarly equivocal.

The book authors claim that the "application of risk assessment increased the feeling of 'ownership' of the project between the government and the public". It is difficult to know how this could have been given that the risk assessments were not published. The report also applauded the project for its public consultation including a "proactive approach involved unions, residents and the public in assessment and dialogue" (p.49).

However, the mandatory requirement for an environmental impact statement to be prepared and publicly displayed for community comment was removed through an amendment to the Regional Environmental Plan. It gave the NSW Minister for Planning full authority to give consent for development of the contaminated land to occur without the normal consultation process.

Instead selected groups were consulted, ranging from Greenpeace, which had been coopted by its role in designing the Olympic village, through to a local group called Greenspace which apparently consisted of three married couples who organised exhibitions and translators for the local community. A few key people were kept informed, including a specially selected environmental committee. Selected information was provided to others through newsletters and brochures.

However many local residents did not feel there has been adequate public consultation and participation. A survey of local residents by the local group, Greens In Lowe, found that of the 100 residents surveyed, 71% said they were not getting enough information about what was to be done in the Homebush Bay area for them to be able to form an opinion on it and 75% said that they had not received enough information about the clean-up of pollution in the area to satisfy them that the area was safe for people to live and work in.

The book concludes from these case studies that risk communicators "need to interpret scientific findings to enhance the technical understanding of a range of stakeholders" (p.56). But this assumption that opposition is rooted in ignorance is not supported by their case studies. Often opposition is a rational response to what the community does know and understand.

In the section on "Raising the bar on community

consultation" the authors utilise public relations techniques for categorising the community according to their amenability to negotiation and acceptance of the proposed project. Categories, including the angry group, the uninterested group, the stubborn group and the group with positive attitudes, are meant to enable project proponents to tailor their communication strategies according to who they are talking to. It also enables individuals to be selected to be part of a forum that is met with regularly, ensuring that such meetings are kept "small and controllable" (p.63).

The authors note that at more public meetings it is important to acknowledge people's questions, for example by writing them down and responding to them as time allows. "Be empathetic and listen to their concerns. Acknowledge their preconceptions, especially if you are going to contradict them." (p.69) "Any risk communication process that lacks an effective means to listen to community concerns and a commitment to seriously seek to understand those concerns will be dismissed by the community as merely public relations" (p.76). The authors don't seem to realise that any process that fails to go beyond understanding and actually address those concerns will be dismissed as public relations!

Contaminated land practitioners are advised to explain the options "with a clear message that a decision will be made 'in the public interest'", however if the final decision "cannot honestly be justified as being 'in the public interest' then the community will lose interest in the decision makers. At this point an independent consultant specialising in community consultation may be required ... The goal is to make the community feel they have some control over their own destiny" (p.73).

In the end, it is perception that matters and this book provides guidance about how to manipulate public perception to ensure that the community feels it has been consulted and has had its say. It is not about genuinely engaging and empowering the community.

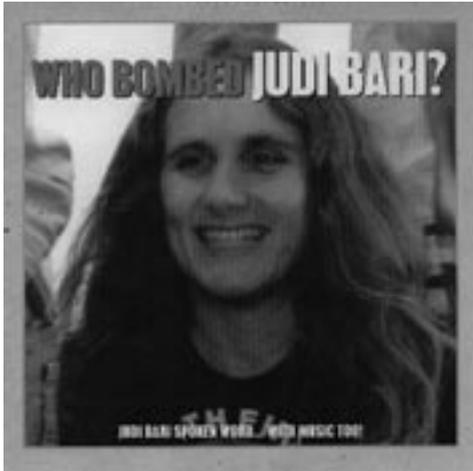
*L. Heath, S.J.T. Pollard, S.E. Hrudehy and G. Smith
Engaging the Community: A Handbook for Professionals
Managing Contaminated Land
Cooperative Research Centre for Contamination Assessment
and Remediation of the Environment
\$35, order from [www.crccare.com/working_with_industry/
contaminated_sites_handbook.html](http://www.crccare.com/working_with_industry/contaminated_sites_handbook.html)
March 2010, 90pp.*

Sharon Beder is a visiting professorial fellow in the School of Social Sciences, Media and Communication at the University of Wollongong. Her website on Business Managed Democracy can be found at <http://herinst.org/BMD>

From the Activist Vault ... Who Bombed Judi Bari?

Who Bombed Judi Bari?

Album review by Anthony Amis



This album should be mandatory listening for anyone with even a passing interest in environmental issues. Released in 1997, it features some of Judi's best talks and speeches as well as four songs.

The album is mainly spoken word full of inspirational direct action commentary from Bari. She had the rare gift of being able to articulate complex issues in a way that people could understand. I found her rallying cry in front of 6000 environmentalists at Headwaters Forest in September 1996 (America's largest ever forest protection rally) to be truly inspirational.

Bari was primarily a union organiser, before joining Earth First! and these organising skills made her a dangerous opponent to the timber bosses in Northern California. She also worked as a carpenter so related to timber issues as a person working with wood herself.

Bari and fellow activist Darryl Cherney were car bombed on May 24, 1990, the eve of Redwood Summer, a nationwide non-violent campaign calling for people to come to California to try and halt the logging of California's redwoods. The bomb exploded in their car in Oakland when Bari and Cherney were on their way to a Redwood Summer gig in Santa Cruz.

After being rushed to hospital Bari and Cherney then had to endure a sustained media campaign labelling them as terrorists who had been blown up by their own bomb.

Bari stayed eight weeks in hospital and the bomb undermined Redwood Summer in that it knocked out a lot of experienced activists who instead threw their

energies into supporting Bari and Cherney in a bid to clear their names. After eight weeks the County refused to press charges against Bari and Cherney, but the stigma of being potential terrorists still refused to go away.

A lengthy legal battle then followed with the FBI trying to get the case thrown out three times. Bari's legal team amassed 7000 pages of sworn testimony and another 7000 pages of files and police reports. Found amongst these files was the amazing fact that one month before the bomb went off, the FBI had conducted a bomb school in Eureka California where they blew up cars with pipe bombs (the same bomb that almost killed Bari and Cherney) and practiced responding. Several agents who worked on Bari's case attended the school. The school was held on Louisiana Pacific land, one of the major logging companies of the region. Several of the company's security people were also present at the bomb school.

This led Bari to the equally powerful conclusion that the bombing was the work of Cointelpro (counter intelligence program) a program set up by the FBI. The Black Panther Movement and American Indian Movement had been targeted by Cointelpro in the 1960s. As a result 32 Black Panthers were killed. Earth First! was also targeted for special attention with one of Cointelpro's main men behind the campaign to neutralise Bari.

Bari also concluded that the reason why she was targeted was because of her philosophy, Biocentrism, or deep ecology, which directly contradicts capitalism, communism and patriarchy. Her goal was to bring together a movement of radical environmentalists and the urban based social justice movement.

In her words in an excellent essay included in the CD she wrote: "But to define our movement as being concerned with "wilderness only", as Earth First! did in the 1980's, is self defeating. You cannot seriously address the destruction of wilderness without addressing the society that is destroying it. It is about time for the ecology movement (and I'm not just talking about Earth First! here) to stop considering itself as separate from the social justice movement. The same power that manifests itself as resource extraction in the countryside manifests itself as racism, classism, and human exploitation in the city. The ecology movement must recognise that we are just one front in a long, proud, history of resistance."

Judi Bari didn't live long enough to see her vision become reality. In March 1997 she died of breast cancer, leaving behind two children. On June 11 2002, a federal jury returned a \$4.4 million verdict in favour of Bari and Cherney, which unanimously found that six of the seven FBI and Oakland Police defendants framed Bari and Cherney in an effort to chill Earth First! and chill participation in Redwood Summer.

More information: <www.judibari.org>. You can order 'Who Bombed Judi Bari?' at <www.darrylcherney.com/index.htm>.

First Australians

First Australians: An Illustrated History

Edited by Rachel Perkins and Marcia Langton

2008

The Miegunyah Press, an imprint of Melbourne University Publishing

Review by Peter Burdon

First Australians is the dramatic retelling of Australia's colonial past and present. The book is part of a greater project which includes a six-part DVD, a community outreach program and a substantial website which features over 200 mini-documentaries.

First Australians chronicles the history of contemporary Australia and the violent clash of culture from the perspective of our country's first people. It draws extensively from primary sources including archival documents and pictures, as well as interpretations from historians and both indigenous and non-indigenous community leaders.

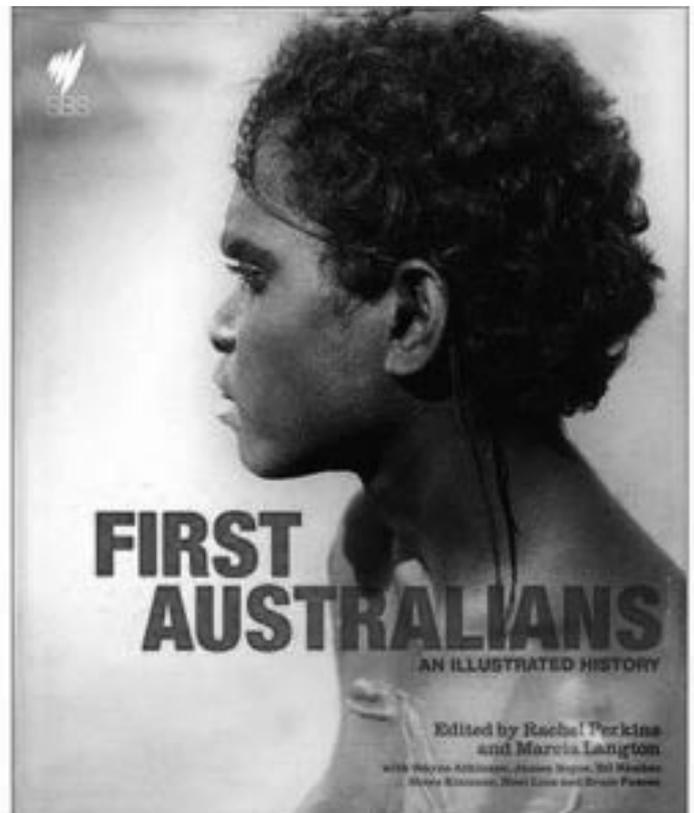
The narrative begins in 1788 in Warrane (Sydney) where an unlikely friendship is struck between Englishman, Governor Phillip and the kidnapped warrior Bennelong. From this point it moves across the states and territories of Australia.

Key points in the narrative include the NSW and Tasmania land grab; the Tasmanian wars; the establishment of mission stations in Victoria; the settlement of central Australia and the brutal conflict between Constable Willshire and the Arrernte nation; the settlement of Western Australia and the resistance of Jandamarra; the Stolen Generations and the work of Chief Protector of the Aborigines A.O.

Neville; the beginning of the Aboriginal rights movement, including the work of William Cooper in establishing the Australian Aborigines League in 1933; the Maralinga atomic tests; and finally the story of Eddie Koiki Mabo who begin a decade long fight for recognition of land rights and native title in Australian law.

There is no question that this book must be required reading for all Australian's. It explains in moving detail the violent injustices, which have been visited upon Aboriginal peoples since the beginning of European settlement. In doing so, it adds another voice to the 'great Australian silence' and aids in the important work of raising awareness and healing.

Moreover, by turning out attention to the history of Aboriginal rights it portrays an often-neglected aspect of



Aboriginal culture, one which is strong, courageous and has the ability to endure through even the most horrific of histories.

Following on from this point, whether represented in individual relationships or stories, the editors Rachel Perkins and Marcia Langton manage to include elements of great beauty and hope. This is no mean feat and testimony to the great talent both editors possess.

First Australian's is available in both illustrated hardback and text soft cover. While both editions are wonderfully presented, informative and moving, the illustrated edition is truly breathtaking and add a further dimension to the narrative.

The Battle For Tasmania's Forests

Into The Woods - The Battle For Tasmania's Forests

Anna Krien

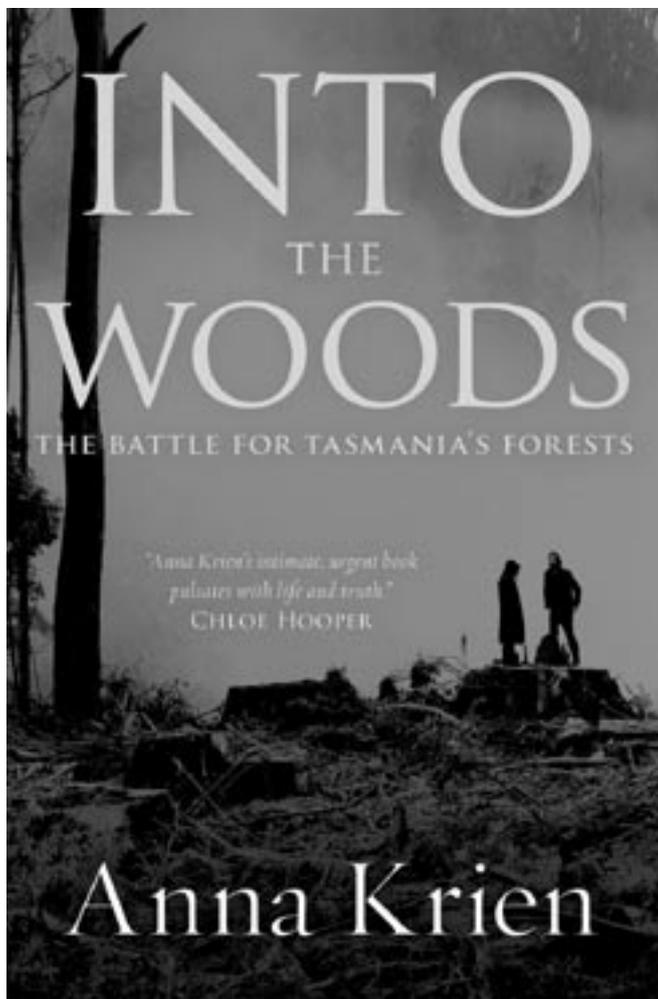
September 2010

Black Inc., www.blackincbooks.com

ISBN 978-1-86395-487-7

RRP \$29.95

Review by Anthony Amis



An excellent overview of the tragedy that is Tasmanian forestry. Krien is a talented writer who draws the reader into a sophisticated, yet intimate understanding of the complexities of this debate.

Krien tries hard to give the issue a balanced journalistic overview, by interviewing ferrets, blockaders, craftsman,

timber contractors, former government employees, former Premiers and residents. What comes across is a uniquely objective account that does an admirable job of wrestling with many of the contradictions and fallacies of what would make a great Shakespearean play.

The book is extremely well written, with some personal insights which really hit home. Krien is really interested in smoking out the fundamental reasons why the forests continue to fall and the power causing these disastrous actions. She asks: "It is possible that, beyond all the carefully laid out arguments and the picking over of Gunns' financial carcass, these men are fuelled by something as simple, base and merciless - and so like a Grimms' fairytale - as hate?"

Probably the best book you'll ever read on this issue.

You can watch footage of Anna Krien talking about her book at <http://bit.ly/d90dEH>

National Day of Action on Forests, August 5, 2010.



Convincing ground: learning to fall in love with your country

Convincing ground: Learning to fall in love with your country

Bruce Pascoe

2007

Aboriginal Studies Press (ASP)

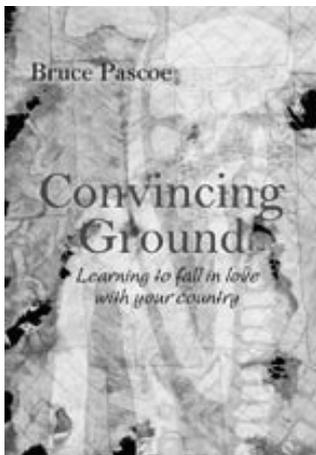
RRP \$39.95, ISBN 9780855755492, 304 pages

Available from select bookshops and online order at:

www.aiatsis.gov.au/asp/buyabook.html

www.amazon.com, www.angusrobertson.com.au, www.booktopia.com.au

Review by Dave Sweeney



Convincing Ground is a powerful and personal look at the elephant in every Australian room - the continuing resonances of European settlement/invasion.

The 'Convincing Ground' refers to the name given to a stretch of coast near Portland where a massacre in the 1830's convinced the Gundidjmarra of the power of the invader. The accessible use of primary documents enables Pascoe to vividly convey the reality of the colonisation of western Victoria and how the arrival of the white man's horse, gun, disease, greed and fear and loathing turned Indigenous nations into war zones. Bruce Pascoe's description of his work as 'not a history, it's an incitement' correctly captures the passionate nature of its content but not its scholarship and insight.

The book also explores the sometimes subtle, sometimes overt but always poisonous influence that our collective failure to acknowledge and reflect on events since 1788 exerts on contemporary Australian politics and society. In so doing Pascoe identifies two fundamental Australian truths: "One: Black people have proven they will not go away despite the exaggerated reports of their demise. Two: White people won't go away either despite what some Aboriginal people wish to believe. We're stuck with each

other and we're stuck with our land. What a magnificent prospect." And Pascoe, of Bunurong and Cornish heritage, is clearly and deeply in love and in touch with this land: "Love is when you stand before your country and your jaw drops open and your soul creeps out of your mouth and walks about the country and when it returns it whispers in your ear, pardon me but I have just visited our mother." Pascoe's book is an important and worthy read and a gutsy, clear and timely call for an honest appraisal of where we have been, where we are and where we might head.

More information on the book is posted at:

www.aiatsis.gov.au/asp/books/convground.html.

The Great Barrier Reef Book: Solar Powered

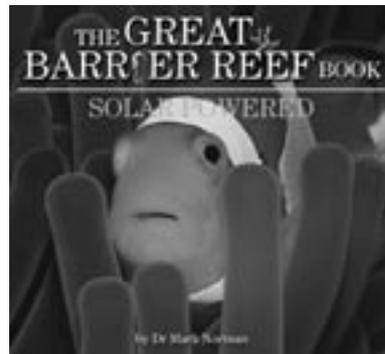
The Great Barrier Reef Book: Solar Powered

Mark Norman

Black Dog Books, Victoria

\$16.99, pb, 32pp, ISBN 9781742030319

Order from www.bdb.com.au/books/great_barrier_reef_book



This book takes a look inside one of the natural wonders of the world, introducing young readers to some of the wondrous creatures that live within it. It likens the reef to a gigantic forest powered by the sun and teeming with life, a biodiversity that is sadly threatened by global warming. The book offers suggestions on what each of us can do to help prevent this.

Dr Mark Norman is the head of Science at the Melbourne Museum and a world expert of octopuses, squids and cuttlefish. The book won the Wilderness Society's award for children's literature for promoting environmental values and a sense of caring and responsibility for the environment.

On the Front Lines of the Fight Against Coal

Climate Hope: On the Front Lines of the Fight Against Coal

Ted Nace

2009

US\$15.00, 288 pp, pb, publisher: CoalSwarm

ISBN-10: 0615314384, ISBN-13: 978-0615314389

Review by Eleanor Smith

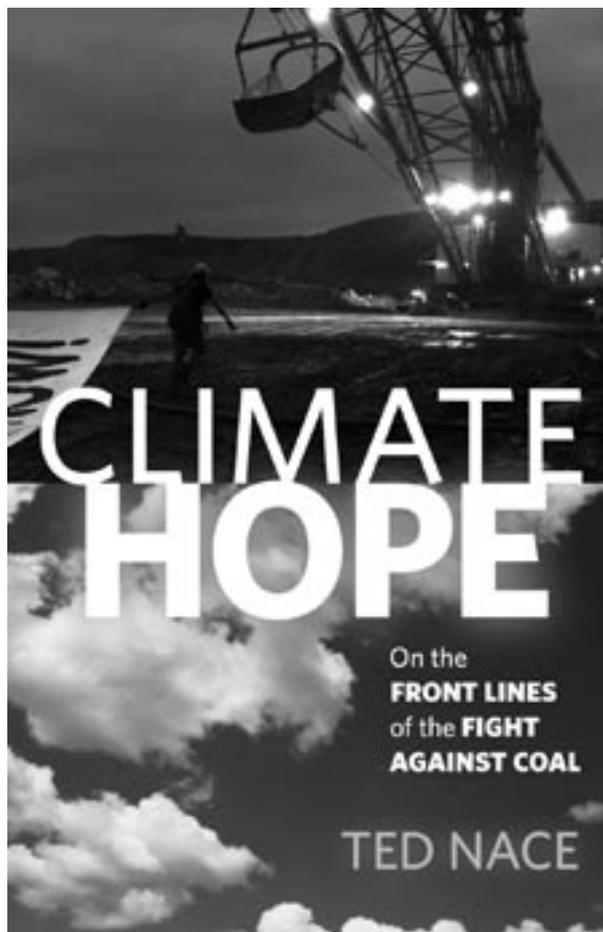
I had just spent a week in bed in the throws of burnout and was planning to do a lot more slothing when a fellow coal campaigner sent a copy of 'Climate Hope' by Ted Nace. It's been a tough couple of years battling Goliath - a.k.a. the Queensland coal industry - knowing that if we fail to phase out this entrenched industry we will rightly be blamed for exporting climate change to the world. It feels like we fail much more than we succeed and that the little pock marks we put in the industry are quickly forgotten.

It was with scepticism and out of boredom that I picked up Climate Hope. For a start I thought it was a pompous title when clearly there is little to no hope for the climate as we know it. There are plenty of books around spouting climate solutions and promising to leave you skilled and inspired for action. What very few of these books do is to highlight the huge power of vested interests. Climate Hope isn't someone's vision for what 'the movement' should be doing. It's not a call to action. It is an inspiring, true story about a movement that has had some wins.

Climate Hope is a book about the anti-coal movement in the USA. In 2007, 151 new coal-fired power were slated to be built in the US. Hundreds of local groups turned their attention to stopping them, one by one.

This book is the story of that movement, its breadth and diversity. It consists of enthralling case studies of individuals, groups and circumstances that brought the coal industry's plans down. It gives inspiration to those of us working for social change.

The book tracks extreme conservative groups, out to protect their land rights, long-term social change activists seeing the strategic and moral need for a campaign against coal, and scientists who could no longer just publish papers on the causes of climate change - they realised they needed to act. The story draws together elements of society that



may not even think of themselves as a movement and looks at the impact they have had on the coal industry together.

Reading Climate Hope gave me mixed emotions. It sets out a big challenge for us in the environment movement in Australia. We haven't had anything like the success of the US anti-coal movement over the past few years but we contribute enormously to climate change through our coal exports. I found it daunting that the US anti-coal movement is made up of over 250 groups, whereas we'd be lucky to have 25 dedicated anti-coal activists in the whole of Australia! And yet the book did give me hope. It helped me see that the incremental work I'm part of might be part of something much bigger with impacts I can't possibly know, and reaffirmed my belief that we need to build that movement in Australia.

Climate Hope is available through Reverse Garbage in Brisbane and can be posted anywhere in Australia www.reversegarbage.com.au. More information on the book can be found at www.climatehopebook.com

Eleanor Smith is a campaigner with the Six Degrees coal and climate campaign of Friends of the Earth Brisbane www.sixdegrees.org.au

The Militarisation of Australian History

What's wrong with ANZAC? The Militarisation of Australian History

Marilyn Lake, Henry Reynolds, Joy Damousi, Mark McKenna, Carina Donaldson

April 2010

\$29.95

New South Books

ISBN 9781742231518

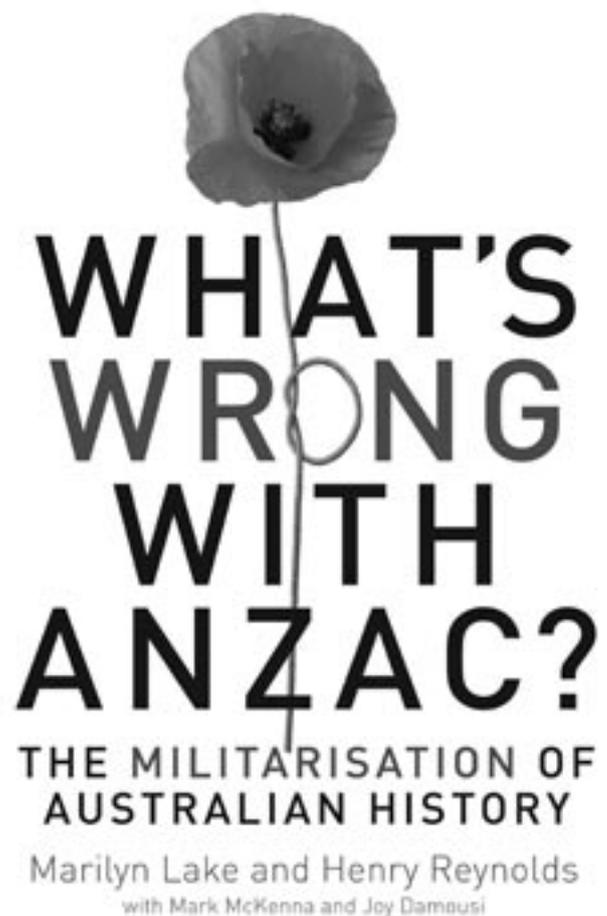
Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, lead authors of this collection of essays, believe it is time to call a halt to the relentless militarisation of Australian history that has seen “classrooms deluged by curriculum materials produced by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs.” They believe recent emphasis on our military past, and especially Gallipoli and its commemoration on Anzac Day, has distorted and devalued Australia’s true history.

Lake and Reynolds write:

“The Anzac legend perpetuates an attitude to war in general and to World War I in particular. The belief that it was a source of unique and positive national virtue sails directly into the winds of contemporary global interpretations, which portray the conflict as the prime source of the brutalisation of the 20th century that fuelled vast and terrible violence.

“Some of the Australians behaved like overbearing bullies in their dealings with the people whose countries they were occupying. Others expressed amused kindly condescension. The British authorities found this pattern of behaviour particularly useful when they used the AIF to help put down the nationalist uprising in Egypt in 1919 after the end of hostilities. ... “In explaining the historic return to Anzac in the last decade we have seen a clear relationship between the militarisation of Australian history and the controversy over Aboriginal history known as the history wars. The same political leaders who emphasise the importance of our military heritage have been demonstrably uncomfortable when asked to deal with the century-long conflict on the frontiers of settlement. Thus we show no embarrassment, indeed even feel pride, in our invasion of Turkey at the behest of the British, but great reluctance to acknowledge the British invasion of Australia. ...

“The Anzac legend has also worked to normalise the deployment of Australian forces overseas and to deflect



the critical observation that very few of the world’s other small to middle-sized powers have been so constantly engaged in conflict as Australia has been so far from its own borders. Engagement in foreign wars has been one of the most distinctive features of Australia’s 20th-century history. Many of them have been what are now commonly called wars of choice rather than wars of necessity.

“We suggest that Australians might look to alternative national traditions that gave pride of place to equality of opportunity and the pursuit of social justice: the ideals of a living wage and decent working conditions, the long struggle for sexual and racial equality. In the myth of Anzac, military achievements are exalted above civilian ones; events overseas are given priority over Australian developments; slow and patient nation-building is eclipsed by the bloody drama of battle; action is exalted above contemplation.”

The Atlas of Global Conservation

The Atlas of Global Conservation

Changes, Challenges, and Opportunities to Make a Difference

Jennifer L. Molnar (ed.)

April 2010

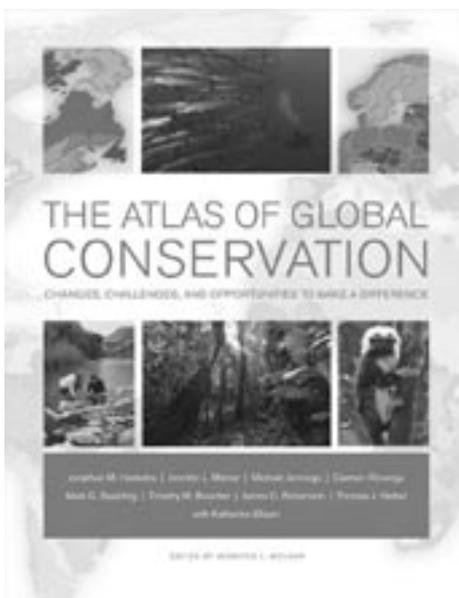
University of California Press and The Nature Conservancy

Hardcover, 272 pages

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orders@inbooks.com.au. Order online from <<http://shop.nature.org>> <<http://ucpress.edu>>, Amazon etc



The Atlas of Global Conservation is a great resource for everyone concerned about the natural world. It features 79 detailed, colour maps and discussion of major trends across the world's terrestrial, marine, and freshwater environments. The atlas includes the latest data on environmental threats, such as climate change, water use, habitat protection, deforestation and overfishing. Interspersed throughout, essays point the way forward in confronting some of our greatest conservation challenges.

Supporting data is available on an accompanying website:
www.nature.org/tncscience/maps

An excerpt is posted at:
www.ucpress.edu/book.php?isbn=9780520262560

Lyrics by Shane Howard

'Lyrics', Shane Howard, 2010

Book

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Order online at www.shanehoward.com.au/shop

Or post cheque or money order made payable to Shane Howard to Goanna Arts, PO Box 102, Koroit, Vic, 3282.

This book contains Shane Howard's considerable body of lyrics, illustrated with his own paintings and drawings, from his journals of journeys over the past thirty years. From a profound and moving experience at an inma at Uluru in 1981, Howard created the song Solid Rock that passed into folklore and the Australian psyche. Musician Troy Cassar Daley says: "The light was on and he invited me in, as a brother would. His descriptions of our country rang true to me and resonated deeply with me and my family. As young Aboriginal kids running around Grafton his songs gave us a sense of belonging.

There is no bigger gift to give someone than to make them feel they belong." Professor Aziz Choudry, a journalist and Director of the Global Justice Ecology Project, wrote of Howard's writing, "While his songs are deeply evocative of Australia, a 'spirit of place', they also have a global reach.. there are few contemporary musicians who have made such an enduring impact. We need the music of people like Shane Howard to feed our souls and keep our hopes alive for a better future."

Driftwood - Rare and Unreleased

Shane Howard, 2009

CD

\$30.00 plus \$2.50 postage and handling

Order online at www.shanehoward.com.au/shop

Or post cheque or money order made payable to Shane Howard to Goanna Arts, PO Box 102, Koroit, Vic, 3282.

Driftwood is a compilation of rare and unreleased songs that Shane Howard has recorded that didn't find a home on released albums. Most of the tracks date back 20 or 30 years, some were demos, some never made it for technical or personal reasons, but all these years later, they give a different picture, fill some gaps and have a unique story to tell as a collection.

The collection also includes tracks from recent years, songs like 'What's For You Wont Go By You', written with Mary Black in early 2002, and 'Carry Me' which was written in the aftermath of the Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria. Howard wrote this song on the way to a bushfire benefit in Churchill, shortly after the fires, driving through some of the scorched country. A new studio album by Shane Howard is expected in 2010.

Ordinary Courage - My journey to Bagdad as a human shield

Ordinary Courage- My journey to Bagdad as a human shield

Donna Mulhearn

2010

Available in book stores and online order.

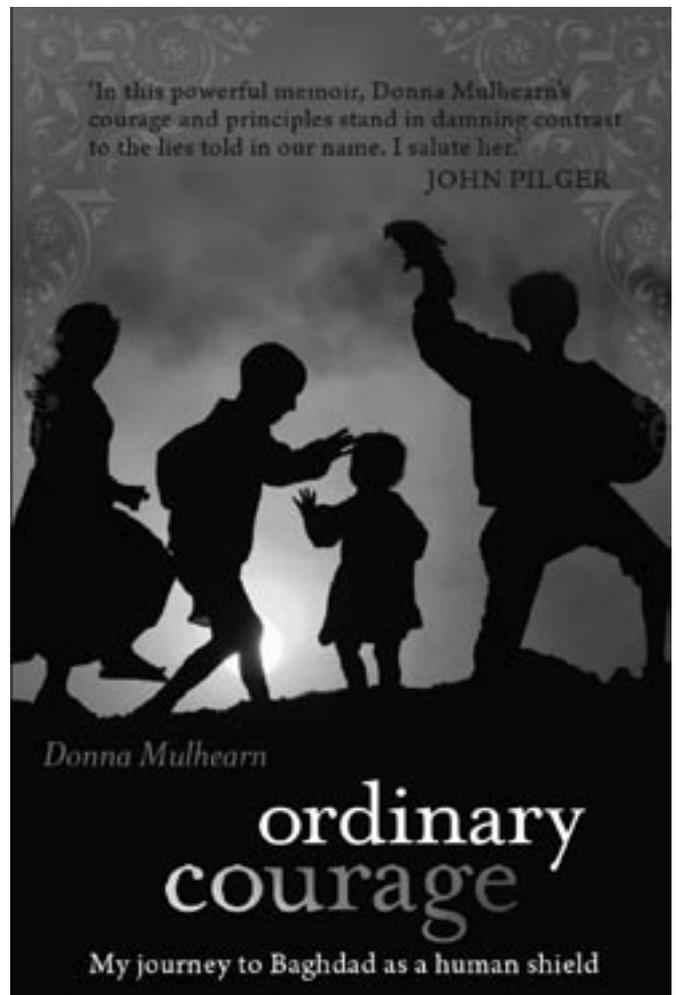
Ordinary Courage is Donna Mulhearn's memoir about her experience as a human shield in the war in Iraq in 2003. At the age of 34, Donna had become disillusioned by her career as a journalist and political adviser and set off on a journey of self-discovery. One day she heard something radical, a call to action. A man on the radio was appealing for human shields in Iraq – volunteers to deter the 'Coalition of the Willing' from attacking Bagdad. Donna was already against the war – she was a firm believer in the power of non-violent action. She knew immediately what she had to do.

Despite protests from concerned family and friends, Donna soon found herself travelling from Sydney to Bagdad. There she joined hundreds of shields from all over the world who formed small teams to protect major sites – power stations, water treatment plants, communication centres – that were crucial to the life of innocent people.

With Bush's deadline for attack looming, businesses closed their doors for perhaps the last time and the streets became eerily silent as people prepared for the worst. Donna and her team took up position at a water treatment plant, where they endured night after night of harrowing missile attacks, while during the day, in a show of support and solidarity, they visited hospitals and areas that had been bombed. Donna became the key media contact, and at the same time as supplying vital information to the outside world, she found she had to defend herself against accusations of being a traitor. Even when Saddam's statue toppled and the Coalition claimed victory, her challenges did not end.

This is a story of exceptional bravery and conviction. John Pilger writes: "In this powerful memoir, Donna Mulhearn's courage and principles stand in damning contrast to the lies told in our name. I salute her."

More information: www.ordinarycourage.org



Soulcraft

Soulcraft: Crossing into the Mysteries of Nature & Psyche.

Bill Plotkin, forward by Thomas Berry

ISBN 978-1-57731-422-6, pp.368

New World Library

Review by Peter Burdon

Author Bill Plotkin is a depth psychologist, ecotherapist, wilderness guide and founding director of the Animas Valley Institute. Reflecting these diverse interests, Soulcraft aims to provide guidance on how we as individuals and as a culture can reconnect with the Earth and heal the badly damaged relationship which have created.

This aim reflects a growing realisation in environmental philosophy, that the root of the present environmental crisis is fundamentally a crisis of culture and the way we perceive nature. Rather than continuing this destructive trajectory, Plotkin establishes an Ecocentric (or earth centered) framework to both challenge and shift the present human centered worldview of western culture. In undertaking this task, Plotkin focuses specifically on modern psychotherapy and spiritual traditions. He argues that there are two distinct realms of spirituality.

The first turns upward toward the light and aids us in transcending our ego-based reality. The second turns downward toward the center of our individual selves and into the fruitful mysteries of nature. Importantly, Plotkin argues that we must foster and nurture both parts and understand self and nature as two distinct parts of the one coin.

In making this claim, Plotkin is keenly aware that such a unity must be understood first in the head and then internalized through specific practice. To this end, Soulcraft presents a nature-based map and 40 practices that facilitate a “ceremonial descent to soul, to uncover and retrieve our original wilderness.” Included are Ecocentric approaches to dream analysis, nature immersion, storytelling and many other arts.

Importantly, Soulcraft does not seek to imitate or appropriate indigenous knowledge of connection to place. Inspiration drawn from indigenous practices (specifically the indigenous peoples of the American Southwest) is done respectfully and with specific attention to place-based learning.

Cultural historian and geologist Thomas Berry presents a pertinent and moving foreword and his words capture my own feelings toward this book: “In this work, Plotkin gives us an authentic masterwork. In the substance

of what he has written, in the clarity of his presentation, and in the historical urgency of the subject, he has guided us far into the new world that is opening up before us. We will not soon again receive a work of this significance.”

Evolving Governance Across a Stressed Planet

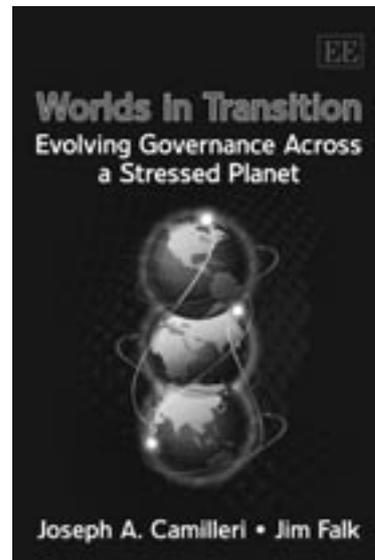
Worlds in Transition: Evolving Governance Across a Stressed Planet

Joseph Camilleri and Jim Falk

2009, 704 pp

Edward Elgar Publishing, UK

Order online www.e-elgar.co.uk, www.e-elgar.com



Set against a broader evolutionary canvas, with the emphasis on the evolution of governance, Worlds in Transition provides detailed analysis of five strategic sectors (economy, environment, health, information and security) Despite competing trends and countertrends the authors discern the slow, at times ambiguous, often contentious but unmistakable emergence over the last several decades of a new governance regime, one which is striving for a leap in human reflexivity in response to the challenges of a stressed world.

The argument, and supporting studies, are built around the concept that over the sweep of human history, ever more potent flows generated and shaped by ever more complex and sophisticated human activity, have increasingly developed across the boundaries around which prior governance institutions and processes have been erected. In this context the authors consider the growth of flows of finance, atmospheric pollutants, information, pathogens, and security threats, the challenges they pose, and the transformations to governance at all levels under way.

More information: <http://worlds-in-transition.com>

Adventures Among Ants

Adventures Among Ants

A Global Safari with a Cast of Trillions

Mark W. Moffett

May 2010

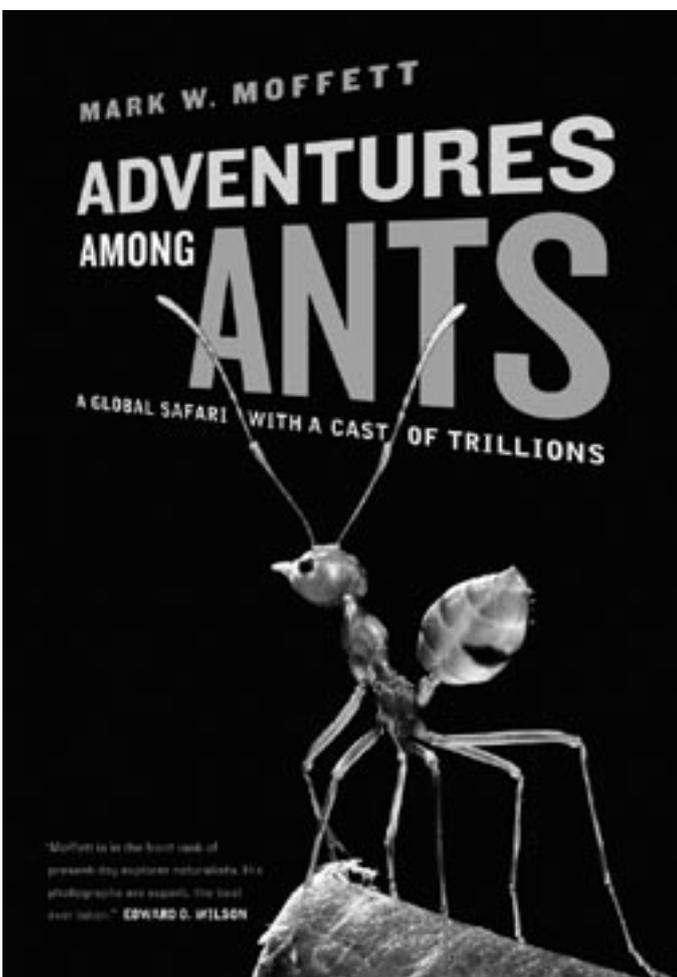
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their own crops, how they attack and how they defend.

Moffett's close-up photographs shrink us down to size, so that we can observe ants in familiar roles: warriors, builders, big-game hunters, and slave owners. We find them creating marketplaces and assembly lines and dealing with issues we think of as uniquely human – including hygiene, recycling, and warfare.

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Did you know:

- Ants are world-class road builders, handling traffic problems on thoroughfares that dwarf our highway systems in their complexity.
- Ants with the largest societies often deploy complicated military tactics.
- Some ants have evolved from hunter-gatherers into farmers, domesticating other insects and growing crops for food.

More information: www.adventuresamongants.com



Explorer, biologist, and photographer Mark Moffett – known as the Jane Goodall of ants or the Indiana Jones of entomology – takes us around the globe on a journey in search of the hidden world of ants.

In tales from Nigeria, Indonesia, the Amazon, Australia, California, and elsewhere, Moffett recounts his entomological exploits and provides fascinating details on how ants mate and breed, how they search for food or grow

If you can't stand the heat

If you can't stand the heat

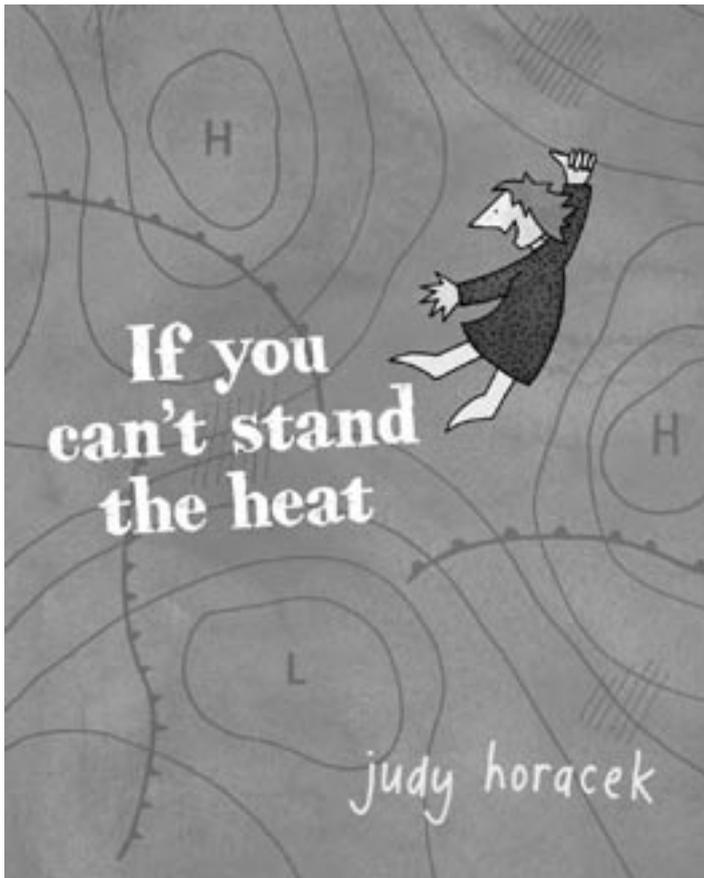
Cartoon collection by Judy Horacek

\$29.95, pb, 133pp

October 2010

ISBN 9781921640025

Scribe Publications www.scribepublications.com.au



Judy Horacek is an Australian freelance cartoonist, printmaker, writer, and illustrator. *If You Can't Stand the Heat* is her seventh cartoon collection.

Her observations are modern icons distilling the absurdities, foibles and the dilemmas of contemporary life. Ranging from the minutiae of daily living to larger scale global and environmental issues, her cartoons celebrate human creativity and resilience and are permeated with a concern for justice and a desire for laughter.

Visit www.horacek.com.au



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