

# habitat

Australia

With GreenHome and EarthKids

Volume 41 Number 3  
JULY 2013

## David vs Coliath

When good guys win

 **ACF**  
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JULY 2013

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## Your living legacy



**AUSTRALIAN  
CONSERVATION  
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Your living legacy—an exceptional gift indeed.

To leave a living legacy through your will please contact Nola Wilmot today at ACF 1800 332 510 or [bequests@acfonline.org.au](mailto:bequests@acfonline.org.au)



*habitat Australia* is published by the Australian Conservation Foundation, authorised by Don Henry CEO Inc. ABN 22 007 498 482

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ISSN 0310-2939

**Cover photograph of Don Henry:**  
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*habitat* is printed on FSC® certified paper.



# Letters and tweets to the editor

## Dear Tabatha,

Anthony Mockler shocked us when explained that he dropped an organic ice cream because he was not holding it in a plastic bag. Well, call your psychologist, Anthony. She will tell you that a plastic bag is never needed to hold ice cream, and can suggest alternatives.

Whenever you think you must be anti-environment, think again. There are green alternatives.

Valerie Yule, VIC

## Ruffle some feathers in Sydney ...

I always keep my fingers and toes crossed for the world to be a better and more sustainable place and admit that sometimes I lose faith. It is simple as this ... Any government in the world does not have the environment in mind, but merely an economy. This 'economy' however will not be able to feed us and preserve our natural surroundings. So, our hope is with ACF and many other organisations to do so and a handful of people that do know what is right. Keep up the great work!

Many thanks!

Angela Verbiest, NSW

## @ausconservation

What's your favourite national park?  
Take action ... [www.acf.action.org.au/page/speakout/places-you-love](http://www.acf.action.org.au/page/speakout/places-you-love)  
Play and climb or log and mine?

Meredith Stanton @CloudsCreek

The future is not somewhere we are going.  
It's something we are creating

Evolution Emptor @EvolutionEmptor

Please email letters to [habitat@acfonline.org.au](mailto:habitat@acfonline.org.au) and include your name and address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Join the *habitat* twitter conversation  
@AusConservation or tweet *habitat* editor  
Tabatha Fulker @tabful or like us on Facebook



## Eco giveaway!

### Forks for life, not just for lunch

To win: email [habitat@acfonline.org.au](mailto:habitat@acfonline.org.au) with 'To-Go Ware' in the subject line, include your name, address and telephone number. We will choose winners on 1 August.

**Tim Silverwood** sailed across the North Pacific to the Great Pacific Garbage Patch to see for himself the catastrophic effects of plastic rubbish. Tim has launched ReChusable, providing sustainable alternatives to disposable plastic. We have five To-Go Ware reusable bamboo cutlery kits to giveaway. Each set includes a knife, fork, spoon and chopsticks in a pouch of recycled PET plastic.

To-Go Ware cutlery kits are available at [www.shopnaturally.com.au](http://www.shopnaturally.com.au).  
For wholesale enquiries visit [www.rechusable.com](http://www.rechusable.com).



# Dauids and Goliath



Tabatha Fulker,  
habitat editor



Left to right:

Glenn Beutel,  
Jeffrey Lee,  
Don Henry

For more on these  
environmental heroes  
[www.acfonline.org.au](http://www.acfonline.org.au)

**The biblical account** of David's victory over Goliath is held to be a singular curiosity. It is not. Davids win more often than we think.

Political scientist Ivan Arreguín-Toft studied every war fought in the past 200 years between strong and weak combatants. The Goliaths, he found, won 71.5 per cent of the battles. But interestingly, even when the dominant combatant was at least 10 times as powerful as their opponent, the underdog still won almost a third of the time.

In the legendary story of David and Goliath, David donned a coat of mail and a brass helmet and girded himself with a sword to wage a conventional battle against Goliath. But he stopped: "I cannot walk in these, for I am unused to it," he said, and instead picked up five smooth stones.

Then Arreguín-Toft re-analysed his data. He studied cases of clashes where underdogs acknowledged their weakness and swapped conventional strategies for unconventional ones. In those cases, David's winning percentage went from 28.5 to 63.6.

This is the story of three Davids.

Glenn Beutel refused to sell his family home to a coal mining company. Jeffrey Lee stared down one of the world's biggest uranium miners. These two Davids are this year's ACF Peter Rawlinson Award winners. Beutel made a decision to remain in his family home at Acland, on Queensland's Darling Downs, while a coal mining company bought out his 56 of his neighbours and more than 60 local farms. Beutel's stance stalled the mine expansion and alerted many other groups to this issue.

Lee, a senior Traditional Owner of the Djok clan, has rejected pressure for over 30 years from multinational mining companies to mine a major uranium deposit on his country, Koongarra. This year he secured the long term protection of his country when it was incorporated into Kakadu National Park.

And our third David is ACF CEO Don Henry. Don Henry traded the defensive armour worn for over 30 years for the power of talk—uniting conservation, unions and business to agree to protect 504, 012 hectares of Tasmanian old growth forest from unsustainable logging.

Don Henry's extraordinary efforts have been honoured, with Henry announced UN Australia Environmentalist of the Year.

When underdogs choose not to play by Goliath's rules, they win, "even when everything we think we know about power says they shouldn't", as Arreguín-Toft concluded.

## ACF member notice

ACF members are invited to comment on the draft *Ecologically Sustainable Cities* and draft *Sustainable Transport Policy* statements.

Policies are available to view at [www.acfonline.org.au/about-us/governance/acf-policies](http://www.acfonline.org.au/about-us/governance/acf-policies)

Comments should be emailed to the ACF executive team assistant by 5pm, 30 August 2013 at [executive.support@acfonline.org.au](mailto:executive.support@acfonline.org.au)

Your feedback is appreciated.

## Tasmanians: join ACF council!

### BE AN ACF ENVIRONMENTAL LEADER

The Australian Conservation Foundation has a casual vacancy on ACF Council to represent Tasmania for the period to November 2015.

Nominees must be an ACF member and a Tasmanian resident. Nominations open 3 July 2013 and close 3 August 2013.

#### To nominate

For further information on ACF's council and to download a nomination kit visit [www.acfonline.org.au/council](http://www.acfonline.org.au/council) or email [executive.support@acfonline.org.au](mailto:executive.support@acfonline.org.au)

ACF council is extremely rewarding and exciting. You will be mixing and working closely with some of the most talented and experienced environmental activists, at a time when there is no issue of greater importance on the international stage than the environment.

# The Lowe Down

## Defaulting on our ecological debts

**Not so long ago**, a well-known US politician said, “Restoring nature ... is a cause beyond party and beyond factions. It has become a common cause of all the people of this country”.

It wasn't Al Gore, Bill Clinton or Barack Obama. The year was 1970 and the speaker was Richard Nixon, announcing the most sweeping set of environmental laws in US history—passed with strong bi-partisan support. Yet the ecological debt that Nixon recognised in 1970 has not been repaid.

We face a GEC—a Global Ecological Crisis. Our natural assets are stressed as never before. Within Australia, the signs are obvious: urban air quality, our productive soils, our inland rivers, oceans and reefs, forests and wetlands, native species and ecological communities. Globally, we have ‘maxed out’ our ecological credit card and are deeply in debt.

We're in the longest election campaign in living memory, but far from facing up to reality and developing responsible policies, most politicians are ignoring the problems. Our leaders still take advice on climate change and fossil fuel subsidies from partisan business interest groups, which support the irresponsible approach of the past. The World Bank, The International Monetary Fund and the International Energy Agency all recognise the need to phase out fossil fuel subsidies.

We need a new approach. ACF suggests three fundamental changes:

### **We should invest in smart, clean industries and infrastructure.**

Ecological destabilisation is now a more urgent threat to our security and prosperity than any military threat. Our investment in ecological security should be a higher priority than military spending, for which the government target is two per cent of GDP. Imagine the changes if we were to spend \$30 billion a year on a clean economy!



### **We should tax pollution more and productivity less.**

It would be economically more efficient and fairer to reduce taxes on productive activity, and increase taxes on activities that are harmful to society or the environment. Our environmental tax levels are among the lowest in the entire OECD. Phasing out the subsidies for fossil fuel supply and use would increase the incentive for industries to operate efficiently and use clean energy.

Modernising our economy will allow us to phase out activities that are morally indefensible, like expanding our coal exports and exporting uranium that makes the world a dirtier and more dangerous place.

### **We should measure and invest in community wellbeing.**

We need to move to more responsible measures of wellbeing than the dangerous delusion that bigger is always better, which drives the obsession with having more dollars to spend. Quality of life is not just measured in money. It is measured by time with our family, affordable housing, fulfilling work, access to natural areas with time to enjoy them, clean air and secure neighbourhoods.

We are incredibly lucky to live in this country at this time. If we can't live sustainably in Australia, the prospects for the rest of the world are truly bleak.



Ian Lowe,  
ACF President



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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## ACF is pleased to announce the creation of its first major donor club —The President's Circle

The President's Circle is more than simply a means of acknowledging the importance and impact of generous contributors. It is a way to offer an extensive range of benefits, designed to engage and inform committed supporters; on current issues, campaign priorities and ACF's larger strategic goals.

As part of a club of like-minded individuals President's Circle members receive unique insights, access to ACF's staff and resources, and invitations to special events.



Photo: **Bette Devine**  
Moondarra State Park, Victoria

Visit [www.acfonline.org.au/habitat](http://www.acfonline.org.au/habitat)  
to download proofsheets as  
your screen saver.

**Eucalyptus** is a genus that numbers almost 700 different species of trees. Eucalypts are a source of Aboriginal tools, dishes, musical instruments and canoes. More widely the trees are vital for timber, food production (including honey), and medicinal purposes — the oil of Eucalypts is deployed as a solvent, deodoriser and an antiseptic. Eucalypts aid in reducing salinity in the water table, drain swamps, and provide wind breaks as well as shading and sheltering many native Australian animals and birds.



**Paul Sinclair**

**Our minerals and dollars follow the same migratory path as shorebirds. The interconnectedness at the nature of our existence may surprise you.**

**We live in a world** where cultures and economies shadow the connections between ecosystems.

Behind the bling and spin our sophisticated economies remain dependent on increasingly fragile interconnections between soil, sun, water, wildlife and vegetation.

The vast demand for natural resources, and the associated pressure to push deeper and further into what were once the natural—or legally protected—limits of exploitation, is unprecedented.

Many of the big motors driving the pressure on Australia's environment are located beyond our continental shores.

The value of traded natural resources tripled in the past decade to about \$5 trillion annually. China and India lie at the centre of this expanded global resource trade.

Today, one in every five tonnes of natural resources exported worldwide goes to China and India.

Australia is influential in the global trade of natural resources. The production of global natural resource commodities is concentrated in the hands of eight countries.

Australia is one of the eight because of its leading role in global coal, iron ore, bauxite, zinc and nickel production.

While our trade in agricultural products doesn't put us in the international big league Australian agriculture is still a big exporter, sending around 60 per cent of its production offshore. The stated aim of Australian governments is to increase this figure.

Food and energy consumption in China, India and south-east Asia are major drivers of global natural resource commodity markets. Consumers in these countries are changing their diets and choosing to consume increasing amounts of agricultural products that take a lot of water to produce.

**Our cultures, economies and ecosystems shadow each other**

Map:  
East Asian  
Australasian  
Flyway



In particular, water-intensive dairy and meat products are increasingly replacing relatively water efficient cereals in the diets of more urbanised and affluent consumers in the main Asian markets.

Competition for fresh water in Australia grows. The agriculture, mining and industrial sectors all want more water, as do cities and towns. Access to biologically rich environments like floodplains is also highly contested. Consider the connections between our ecosystems. Shorebirds migrate each year to the Coorong at the mouth of the Murray River in South Australia.

**The flyway itself stretches across the world, but it is made up of many small parts. The health of the flyways' parts ultimately affects the health of the whole migratory route**

Each year they travel long distances from Vietnam, China, Korea and further afield.

They follow a route known as the East Asian-Australasian Flyway—a vast, cross-continental migratory route. The birds rely on healthy wetlands and estuaries throughout south-east Asia to land and replenish themselves so they can to continue their journey.

The impact of damage to wetlands in China, or biologically rich coastal zones in Indonesia—or the dismantling of the Coorong's ecosystems—reaches out across continents.

Our economy is geared to export natural resources to many of the same countries the migrating shorebirds visit.

Australia exports most of its food products to the same countries it exports its coal and other

mineral wealth. The burning of coal is a major contributor to rising global temperatures, which will further exacerbate threats to freshwater, biodiversity and food production.

The growing demand for Australia's natural resources in India, China and south-east Asia is a powerful reason why we must have strong legal protection for clean water, wildlife and important natural habitats. It's also why we must urgently protect the natural links between important wildlife habitats that take no notice of state boundaries.

In northern Australia there's a perfect storm brewing: deluded booster rhetoric about the 'undeveloped north', weak and chaotic water management regimes and a concerted effort to seriously undermine Australia's national environmental laws.

Without a strong legal foundation for protecting the environment over the next decade concerned citizens will be swamped by a tidal wave of developments in threatened areas like northern Australia and in the south-east and Western Australia, where soils, native vegetation, wildlife and rivers have been pushed to breaking point.

Good laws protecting nature are critical. So too is policy that helps link up and conserve the places we love and the ecological processes that keep our natural life support systems working.

The survival of the shorebirds' East Asian-Australasian Flyway refuelling stop at the Coorong is utterly connected to how effective Australia is in contributing to global reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, using water wisely and reconnecting the Murray River to its floodplains and estuary.

For the Coorong at least, Australia has started making the right decisions. Hard-won improvements in the way the Murray-Darling is managed show how repairing the broken connections are critical for getting the whole system to work.

There's a growing movement of farmers, environmentalists, community groups, local natural resources managers, businesses and governments that see it is time to link up the good work people are doing to conserve our country.

Sometimes these connections are called conservation corridors. But they are not constrained to land. The East Asian-Australasian Flyway is an example of one of those vast natural pathways.

Biologists understand that nature is a chain of dominoes. If you pull one piece out, the whole thing falls down. Lose the animals, lose the ecosystems. Lose the ecosystems, game over. Put another way, we have learned that everything is interdependent. There are no spare parts.

To withstand the pressures we face we need more conservation creating links across different sorts of land tenure, like farms, pastoral lands and national parks. Some of these links will make a connection across a kilometre, some across a hundred kilometres, others across a continent.

Creating connections helps animals and plants move through landscape, river systems and sky—a process that helps nature adapt to the growing negative impacts of climate change and the great threats we now face.

Exciting work is already underway to create connections across public and private lands.

The Gondwana Link aims to protect and restore ecological values from Margaret River, in south-west Western Australia to the Great Western Woodlands, bordering the Nullarbor Plain to the east. The corridor links a number of formally protected areas, including the Walpole Wilderness Area, the Stirling Ranges and Fitzgerald River National Park.

Gondwana Link stretches across extensive plains and low mountain ranges, taking in most of the remaining large habitat areas in the south-west of Western Australia. It crosses ecological, climatic and altitudinal gradients, which could prove important for ecological adaptation to climate change.

South-west Western Australia is a global biodiversity hotspot and contains some of Australia's most distinctive

flora and fauna. The region has our country's greatest diversity of plant species and encompasses coastal heath, tall temperate forests, semi-arid woodlands, mallee and shrublands.

Approximately 17 per cent of Gondwana Link is part of the National Reserve System and more than 40 per cent of the area is also recognised with National Heritage listing.

The Great Eastern Ranges initiative is working to protect and connect 3500 kilometres of the Great Dividing Range and Eastern Escarpment—from central Victoria to far north Queensland.

Almost 59 per cent of New South Wales' vulnerable and endangered fauna are found within the Great Eastern Ranges. Thirty-four per cent of the land in the region is part of the formal National Reserve System, providing a substantial base for conservation efforts.

There are other big opportunities for restoration projects in the Murray-Darling Basin, on the edge and even in the centre of



Sandpiper (right)  
Greenshank (left)  
© Dan Weller

**Our environmental laws are like the framework of a house. They should make clear which rooms developers can play in, and which areas are out of bounds**

our cities and across the landscapes of northern Australia.

Every environmental story has people at its heart. The solutions we face come back to people making successful connections between each other. The choices we make, or refuse to make, together as citizens remain a big influence of the way the world is put together.

If we're to protect our natural environment from being consumed by economic forces that have no regard for the social or environmental impacts of production and consumption, ACF and our supporters are going to have to be smart and focused in the work we do together.

We should remember the changes that are needed will be made by each other, not by some super race of enlightened environmentally-conscious aliens who are free of history, doubt or fear.

We'll make our future by building on the good in our culture, personal histories and passions—and burying the useless stuff in the back paddock.

Looking around my own community I see people volunteering to run kindergartens, schools, tree planting working bees, singing groups and sporting clubs. These small efforts make big, important things happen. They are the everyday practice of democracy. They show people making a difference.

I talk to all sorts of men and women who work daybreak to sunset on creating links between people so the places important to us are put back together, or kept strong and fertile.

I don't see people giving up.

Over the last few years Australians have made some decisions we should be very proud of.

The Murray-Darling Basin Plan; a price on pollution; Tasmanian forest agreements; the world's largest network of marine protected areas.

These are significant shifts for good. They have changed the way the world is put together.

But are these achievements enough to push back the growing appetite of the global economy for our natural resources?

No. But before you let those thoughts lead you into a puddle of inertia, consider for a moment what a shorebird weighing 30 grams would be feeling before it packs its bags in China to set off on the long, dangerous, ancient migration to the South Australian Coorong.

These birds make a journey that connects continents and ecosystems. They do it each year for 25 years, against huge odds. Most of them make it.



# Forest agreement quiets chainsaws

**Rob Blakers**

The best way to reach the Butlers Gorge forests when the access road is locked for forestry is to go cross-country.

**Styx**  
Rob Blakers

**I went there a year ago**, plunging down the precipitous slope from the Tarra-leah canal to cross a diminished Derwent River and then climb steeply up towards the plateau where the logging was happening.

Just before the top there is an unusual natural bench, a flat area about 100 metres wide

that hangs above the river and contours for several kilometres beneath the plateau edge.

On this fire-protected platform grows the most extraordinary sassafras forest, a sinuous copse of ancient trees with twisting trunks that are so buttressed with roots as to resemble small green gothic cathedrals.

Interspersed and intertwined with the sassafras are equally graceful treeferns, their long fronds creating a natural rainforest ceiling. Punctuating the rainforest canopy are giant eucalypts, their massive, sculpted trunks soaring upwards.

It was not hard to picture the scene above, of a wild forest being laid down in dust and mud, the homes of countless wild animals lost.

And I knew that should the then ongoing discussions fail, this sassafras forest would share that fate.

Recently Bob Annells, Chairman of Forestry Tasmania, speaking in support of the Tasmanian Forests Agreement and with regard to the handful of logging operations that continued in the WHA Extension nomination area said; “We’ll be out of there in a few weeks, and we won’t be back”.

That the Tasmanian Forests Agreement ever came to pass is nothing short of a miracle.

For both sides, bitter foes, it was an exhaustive process of compromise and extraordinary lateral thinking. But the enabling forest legislation, flawed as it is, now offers Tasmania a way forward to protect the best of the intact forest that remains, restructure a declining forestry industry and diversify regional employment.

I have photographed wild forests in Tasmania for over 30 years. I’ve walked in many, many forests that no longer exist, from the Tarkine to Cockle Creek and from Wielangta to Navarre.

I’ve watched in despair as ancient forests of giant eucalypt, myrtle, sassafras, blackwood and celery-top pine were felled, the great trees crashing to earth.

In my lifetime a great portion of the finest of Tasmania’s wild forest has been lost, converted to industrial tree farms.

The chance now is to draw a line under the best of what’s left.

Without the agreement there would be no World Heritage Area extension nomination underway, which will protect magnificent and iconic forests at the North Weld, upper Florentine, Mt Rufus, Butlers Gorge, Great Western Tiers, Styx Valley and more.

Without the agreement there would be no chance for new reserves over the balance of the 500,012 ha agreed for protection, including Bruny Island, Wielangta, West Wellington, Reedy Marsh, the North East highlands and the Tarkine.

This agreement gives the forestry industry and its workers support to restructure and to move towards Forest Stewardship Council certification, a move that will open markets and also drive improvements in the management of forestry areas.

Over coming months a markets charter will be developed, whereby customers of Tasmanian forest products will commit to not accepting material sourced from the agreed reserves.

While the state Liberals have said that they will tear up the legislation, the industry knows that such a move would not be in their interest.

## **A year ago, the sounds of chainsaws and bulldozers and the crash of falling trees carried clearly into this sanctuary**

Yes, they would again have access to the old growth forests, but would they want it?

Would their potential markets and customers want to receive non-FSC wood from areas that have already been protected for

their high conservation value and then revoked for political ends.

With the ENGOs committed to keeping markets updated, such a move would plunge industry back into collapse. This powerful inbuilt markets protection underpins and critically insulates this process from political disruption.

In the absence of the agreement, we would have a lose/lose situation with no WHA extension, continued destruction of our finest forests, intensification of the social toxicity that has characterised the forest conflict for decades and a glorious race to the bottom of the marketplace with flow on impacts to workers and contractors.

## **I’ve wandered dazed across blackened hillsides that were seared to mineral earth by the intense heat of the logging burns, where luxuriant rainforest once grew**

There would be no incentive for improved forestry practices and not the slightest possibility of reservation of any wild forests in the few years before they become so damaged and diminished as to be not worth the fight.

The ‘perfect’ can be the enemy of the ‘good’ and whilst detractors of the process and of the legislation can readily detail the shortcomings; no-one has come up with an alternative that will actually and practically work at this time, with this politics and with these players.

This legislation opens up a raft of possibilities for conservation, forest management and regional diversification that did not hitherto exist.

Despite its faults, it is our best option.

On 30 June this year, just one day short of 30 years since the Franklin River was saved, another step towards the protection of natural Tasmania was achieved, with the proclamation of the World Heritage Area extension.

The task then daunting but in the clear interests of forests, forestry and Tasmania at large will be to properly implement the remainder of the agreement.

*This article was first published at [www.themercury.com.au](http://www.themercury.com.au)  
To see more of Rob’s photographs visit [www.robblakers.com](http://www.robblakers.com)  
Read more at [www.acfonline.org.au/forests](http://www.acfonline.org.au/forests)*



# Ahead of the climate curve

**Claire Maries and Ed Butler**

The progressive Aussie businesses that are getting their hands clean by investing in green technology.

**Once there was a time** when you couldn't grow grapes for wine in Tasmania. None that people would drink, anyway. And yet somehow Tasmania's Tamar Valley now has a reputation as Australia's burgeoning wine Mecca.

Actually, it's not *somehow*. It's climate change. As temperatures over the past 50 years have risen around the world by nearly a degree, so has the fertile grape region of Australia drifted south. Now it extends across Bass Strait, where Stefano Lubiana and his wife Monique ply their trade, serving Australians with their fine riesling and pinot noir.

This awareness of the ongoing threat of climate change meant that Monique, the general manager of Stefano Lubiana Wines, was willing to take steps to lessen their environmental impact—and their energy bills. She installed an underground cellar to mature her wines in, with the support of a \$100,000 grant from the Clean Technology Food and Foundries Investment Program, which itself is funded from revenue raised from the price on pollution.

Since its inception on 1 July, 2012, the price on pollution has quietly gone about its business, raising approximately \$4 billion from Australia's dirtiest companies in order to support communities, individuals and small businesses make the shift to a cleaner, 21st century way of doing business.

Should governments take climate change seriously, they will set emissions limits designed to keep global warming well below 2 °C. This means seriously limiting the number of permits in the system. And like any first year economics student will tell you, less of a product means that it costs more. In this case, that product is pollution permits, or the right to pollute itself. The increasing cost makes it more expensive for polluters to pollute. And, like any first-year economics student will tell you, if something costs more, companies will do it less.

And that's why smart companies are getting out in front.

\*\*\*\*

The carbon pollution received a bum rap in its first year. Still in its infancy, the tax is subject to a massive level of misrepresentation, and hence enormous public confusion. Probably the greatest challenge when it comes to convincing people of its merits is the fact that, ironically enough, it is most assuredly NOT a tax. In fact, carbon pricing represents a new way of approaching the impacts of a modern economy on the environment.

In the past, the options when confronted with a looming environmental threat was to tax, regulate or outright ban the cause.

But climate change is bigger. The causes are not just across multiple industries but span the breadth of the globe (although some nations are bigger contributors than others ...). It's also almost impossible to just ban carbon pollution—that would force a global economic tsunami that would make the GFC look like the gentle ripples of Torquay front beach on a windless spring morning.

Putting a price on pollution, however, creates a powerful incentive for smart, early-adopting companies to clean up their act, and in doing so earn pollution permits that they no longer need. They can then sell them to other more polluting companies who need to hand them in if they are going to avoid a fine for their emissions.

It's a double whammy: 1. Avoid the initial price by investing in cleaner technology that is cheaper than the cost of a pollution permit. 2. Continued incentive to lower emissions further by being able to sell on your excess pollution permits. Actually, it's sort of a triple whammy: 3. Reinvest revenue raised from companies paying the pollution price into other companies that are implementing clean ways of doing business.

This is not just a carbon price, but a new way of thinking about the problem of what economists boringly like to call 'externalities'. And externalities are everywhere, and not limited to enormous energy generators pumping smoke into the air.

\*\*\*\*

With an election looming the fate of Australia's Clean Energy Future laws is uncertain. Without getting into the endless analysis of what can and can't be changed by who and in which legislation, the short story is that a Coalition victory in both houses of parliament will likely see a total repeal of the vast majority of climate change laws.

Even in the event of a split senate, many of the laws are under threat of opposition leader Tony Abbott's 'blood pledge' to remove the carbon price at any cost. There are infinite permutations of how our parliament emerges on 15 September, and just as many possibilities that no one in their right mind would try to predict.

The more salient point is that, barring a stirring public movement to defend the price on carbon pollution and the associated support for a clean, 21st century economy it provides, Australia could well be looking at a future of the Coalition's Direct Action plan.

So what is this direct action, beyond a slogan?

The details remain hazy, but in simple terms, it is the anti-market solution. Rather than making polluters pay for their pollution and using the revenue to invest in clean technologies, Direct Action actively gives taxpayer money to companies who volunteer to lower their pollution levels against a projection of what we thought emissions might look like in the future (economists like to call this one a baseline). It relies on government picking winners and removes all three incentives of the triple whammy on pollution.

In a program like this, there are inherent risks in attracting rent seekers (companies looking to make money off government cash, rather than actually, y'know doing business better). But by far its greatest problem is that by not providing a firm limit on carbon pollution, it cannot drive absolute emissions reductions to

the level we know we need to avoid dangerous climate change.

A price on carbon pollution may not be perfect, but based on what we know and what it is capable of in future, it sure beats the hell out of 'direct action'.

Imagine for a moment that this story features you. You have a small business that you want to make cleaner, but the cost of the technology is high and you're not up to your armpits in cash. You need to adapt to a future where carbon pollution must be limited if we're going to tackle climate change.

Would you rather the government had money that was raised from the companies that created the problem to help you invest in a clean upgrade to your own business, or that the government took your taxes and gave them to the companies that created the problem so that they could upgrade without having the impact on their (multi-million dollar) bottom line?

Australia is full of these kind of stories. The community fighting to protect Mookin-bah Reserve near Brisbane. Adelaide's largest ice manufacturer that has shifted entirely to solar. The piggery that has started properly storing the pigs' <ahem> 'leavings' and is using it to help generate cleaner energy through bio gas.

These stories are everywhere. At least 1200 of them that have been logged on the clean energy story map Australia. Urban, rural, north, south, families and young couples are quietly and confidently getting on with the job of tackling climate change.

So perhaps, when thinking about the looming federal election, when we may see our climate policies upended, we should consider Monique and Stefano Lubiana. By tackling climate change, bottling common sense and making decisions for the future *now*, they are not only ensuring Tasmania is part of any good Aussie wine pilgrimage but that Australia has a future at all.

**A price on carbon pollution may not be perfect, but based on what we know and what it is capable of in future, it sure beats the hell out of 'direct action'**

Check out the clean energy map at:

[www.cleanenergymap.gov.au](http://www.cleanenergymap.gov.au)

More information on clean technology investment:

[www.ausindustry.gov.au/programs/cleantechnology](http://www.ausindustry.gov.au/programs/cleantechnology)

# Climate reality skillshare



Murniati Duddin struggles to get her words out in English but she refuses to let a language barrier stifle her story. If we listen, we learn more.

**Murniati**, known as Murni, is in Melbourne with 22 other teachers from India and Indonesia at the first ever Climate Educators' Skillshare. She is one of two teachers at Tanakeke Island primary, a school of 200 pupils on the southern tip of Sulawesi.

"I must be a leader," said Murni. "The mangroves are sick."

The island community is only six metres above sea level at its highest point and is extremely vulnerable to sea level rise. At the moment it is the teacher's prerogative to include sustainability in the curriculum. Murni's first hurdle is getting her students into the classroom.

"It takes two hours by boat to get to the school. It is not easy to increase the motivation of these students, since most of them are helping their parents work.

"I initiated an idea of integrating climate change into their core subjects like maths and science. I must spread my passion for increasing my community's awareness of climate change through my teaching role."

Murni's is just one of the experiences shared at the Skillshare which was made possible by ACF, AusAid and The Climate Reality Project (TCRP). TCRP is well established in India and Indonesia. Aditya Pundir and Azizah Nasution, climate leaders from these two branches, initiated the Skillshare and spent two years getting it off the ground.

As educators, Azizah and Aditya agree that in their countries there is a yawning gap in the curriculum which should be filled with education

about sustainability and climate change. Without this education at primary school level, the huge populations of both countries will be at the mercy of climate change—which has already made its mark.

"India is on the front line of climate change. We have a vast coastline which our fisheries and economic activities are dependent upon," said Aditya.

"We are worried that climate change and the rising seas may have a very detrimental effect on our country.

"We are really feeling the impact right now. People don't know what is happening and they need answers."

Delhi based teacher and climate leader Susan Thomas agrees. She thinks that it is children who have the most to lose as climate change takes a grip.

"By 2020 India will be the youngest country in the world—we will have the largest number of youth—which means that youth should be the ones living a sustainable lifestyle, otherwise it is doomsday. That is why it is very important to teach our children to make a shift now and we should inculcate it into our lifestyle."

Teachers swapped stories about energy efficiency programs with Australian climate leader and primary school headmaster Andy Best. Andy spent a day sharing some of his experiences from his 30 years of teaching, some of it in the tough urban fringes west of Sydney.

"I am inspired by the words of author John W Whitehead, that 'children are the living message we send to a time we will never see'. We are very fortunate as educators that we have the opportunity to send a message to the future. I want our message to be that we cared."

**The island community is only six metres above sea level at its highest point and is extremely vulnerable to sea level rise**

**Mim Lowe**

Photos: ACF/  
James Thomas

[www.climatereality.org.au](http://www.climatereality.org.au)

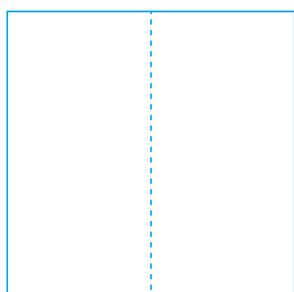
# Make your own wind mine!

Energy can be good clean fun.

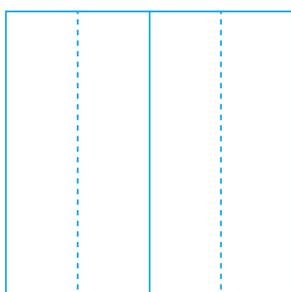
Let's show our leaders how easy it is to make clean energy.

**Make it! Blow it! Show it!**

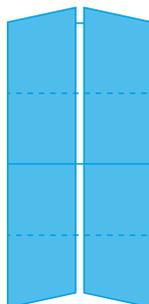
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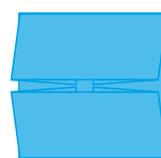
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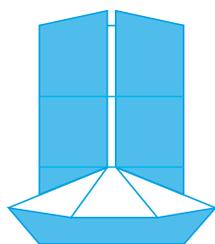
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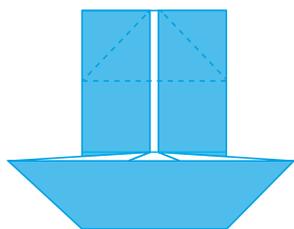
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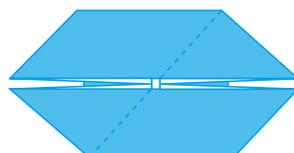
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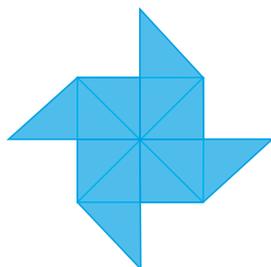
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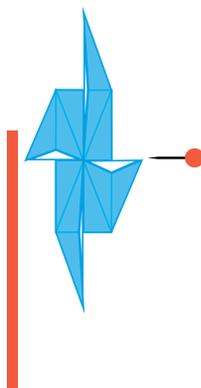
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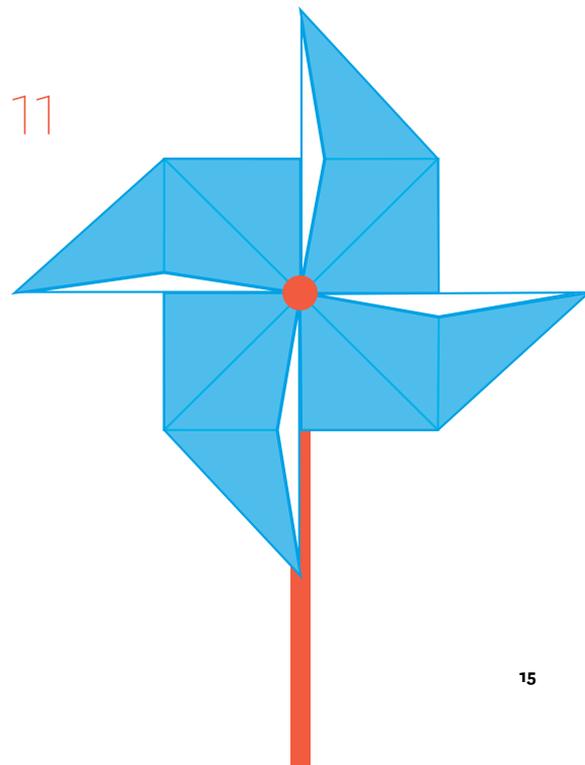
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[www.acf.to/windmine](http://www.acf.to/windmine)



# EarthKids

## Hi EarthKids!

### It's time to talk trees. Trees are amazing!

Did you know that trees help us breathe and not just us ... they help every living creature breathe.

It's like this ... we and nearly all other creatures need oxygen to live.

We breathe it in from the air around us. Our bodies use the oxygen from the air to make the energy we need to live and then we breathe out what we don't need ... including some carbon dioxide.

Here's something cool to know ... the scientific shortcut name for oxygen is O<sup>2</sup> and for carbon dioxide it's CO<sup>2</sup>.

People and creatures can't live on CO<sup>2</sup> ... if we breathe in too much CO<sup>2</sup> it can be very harmful.

So, if we breathe out CO<sup>2</sup> how come the air isn't so filled with it that we are harmed??

Well that's where the awesomeness of trees comes into it.

Guess what trees need to 'breathe in' to survive? ... CO<sup>2</sup>. And guess what trees 'breathe out'. Well luckily for us it's ... oxygen!

Basically, trees filter and clean the air that we breathe and store the carbon in their roots, wood and leaves.

Without trees we would be in big trouble.

Here's another fact ... one grown up leafy tree makes as much oxygen in a season as 10 people breathe in for a year. Amazing! When trees are cut down and we burn them to make way for other sorts of farming and housing, we unlock the carbon that is happily stored in the trees and let it back into the air. Oops! Not a great idea.

Planting trees is one sure way to look after the planet so ... Calling all EarthKids, I challenge you to plant a tree. Now is great time to plant trees.

### In fact 29 July is National Tree Day!

You can celebrate trees in lots of ways.

Plan a visit to a forest or take a walk in a park with trees.

Hug a tree.

Picnic under a tree.

Dance in the trees.

Visit and join the forest at [www.clubdirtgirlworld.com](http://www.clubdirtgirlworld.com) and you can download my 'trees' kit.

And don't forget:  
Little things can make a BIG difference.  
See you next time, love from  
Dirtgirl





## And the winner is ... dirtgirlworld ... dig it all

Earlier this year Cate (pictured) and Hewey from dirtgirlworld packed their good clothes and headed to Cannes, amazed just to be nominated for the 2013 Digital Emmy Award in the category of Children and Young People.

Not in their wildest dreams did they ever imagine standing on stage while Gene Simmons (pictured) from Kiss handed over the golden statue. But that's exactly what happened.

And they are extraordinarily proud. You see, this award is for all the content that they have created since making dirtgirlworld for TV. It's for all the cool stuff they dream up to get kids to go outside and get grubby.

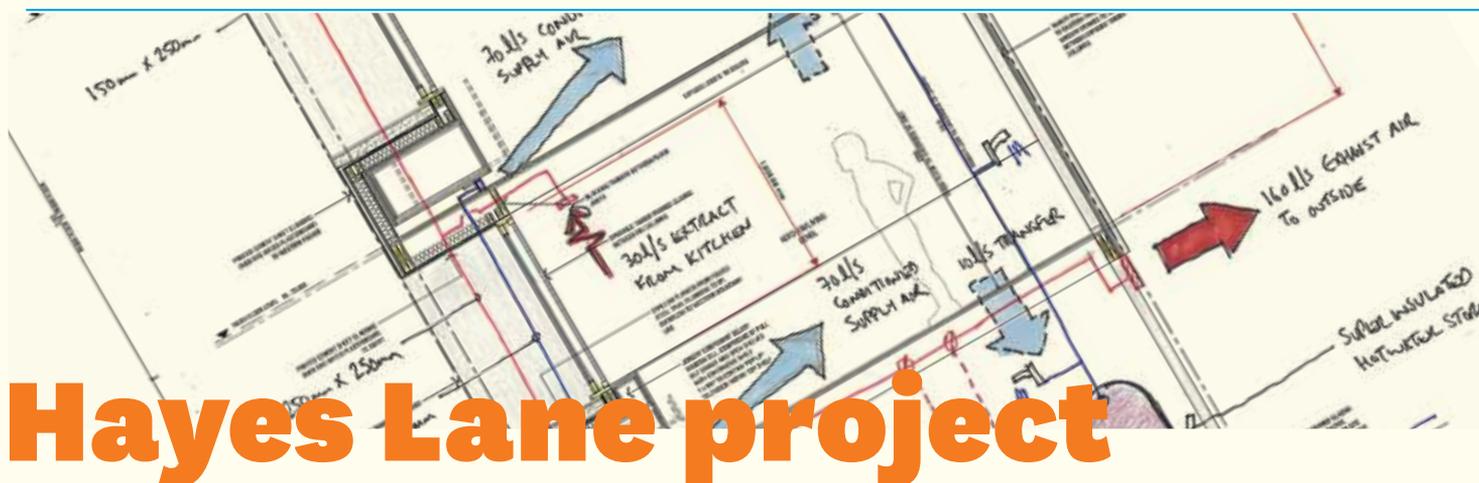
The websites, the clubsite, the games, the apps, the solstice project with the awesome lanterns, the incredible waste management project with the garbage trucks and events such as world planting day, dirtgirl invades the garden, dirtgirl rocks the planet and the eco carnivals for World Environment Day.

Of course, if you ask them, the real award is that kids are digging it big time!

No wonder they look so happy!

Check out the award presentation in Cannes with Gene Simmons at <http://bcove.me/1z1ndaqt>

# Green Home



## Hayes Lane project

Sarah Day

Ralph Alphonso has a big dream of small dimensions.

Melbourne is a national hot spot for sustainable architecture. The CBD's CH2 council house catches the eye with recycled wooden shutters and bright yellow wind cowls. ACF's 60L Green Building hides state of the art energy efficiency behind a heritage façade.

Now there's a new kid on the block with green ambitions far beyond its size — which is five metres by four metres to be exact. These are the dimensions in which Ralph Alphonso plans to build Australia's most sustainable dwelling.

As project manager and client of the 5x4 Hayes Lane Project in East Melbourne, Ralph is addressing its impact from every possible angle using the principles of embodied energy and full life cycle assessment.

In practical terms this means measuring the carbon emitted during the extraction, processing, manufacturing, transport, operational lifespan and end-use of all building materials. And that's just the bricks and mortar (or bamboo and cork). Then there are the emissions that come from using the house and Ralph's own lifestyle.

The level of research required uncovering the secret carbon life of support beams sounds like a doctoral thesis in itself. Luckily Dr Robert Crawford from Melbourne University is helping with the calculations, and they're turning up some interesting results. For example, you'd think that using recycled materials is a no-brainer for reducing embodied energy. Ralph discovered that it's more complicated.

"There's some recycled materials that are sent to China and back to be processed, so recycled isn't necessarily the best choice. But it might turn out that, because they're transported by ship, they are the most energy efficient."

Along with choosing the right materials comes designing a house that uses energy as efficiently as possible. "We're trying to use all LED lights, triple glazing for windows, geothermal heating. We're looking at a passive house standard."

This is where the sceptics jump in and say, it all sounds great, if you have bottomless pockets to buy into cutting edge technologies. But the cost problem is a major driver for Ralph who aims to encourage those who do have the funds to support the growth of sustainable technologies, he says.

Transparency is a major aspect in promoting the project. Energy use in the house will be reported online through an automation system that can control and track usage down to individual switches.

As the future tenant of the 5x4 property, Ralph has no qualms about putting himself under surveillance. "We're spoilt for space in Australia. Looking at my consumption will be a major part of reducing my carbon footprint."

The big question is, will Ralph's grand designs end up on reality TV with him doing his block? "I'm not fighting with the architects. It would be the first odd reality TV show where everyone agrees with each other, so it might be a new concept."

Building will begin on the 5x4 house in August of this year. ACF, Beyond Zero Emissions and City of Melbourne support the project.



**Manufacturers are only going to change their production patterns if there's a demand for it**



# look at a happy chook

**While the number of accredited free range and organic layers is on the rise, supermarket shelves still abound with eggs that don't live up to their happy hen labels. In search of the ethical egg, Sarah Day takes a look at what's involved in raising chickens.**

**BEFORE** the industrialisation of the humble chook in the 1920s, every self-respecting farmer — and many city dwellers too — kept a brood in their backyard.

Chickens are inexpensive to raise, require little space, provide a regular supply of a high protein food source (eggs), and are frequently hilarious. My dreams of urban agronomy began with an omelet in mind but in the end it was all about Tango and Salsa.

Chickens are down to earth, so it's easy to create a backyard wonderland for them. But there are some important things to get right that are best sorted out before bringing them home.

Inappropriate accommodation can lead to chooks becoming too hot, too cold or troubled by mites. In the worst-case scenario, it can lead to a bloodbath. Foxes are plentiful in urban areas and have made a meal out of many a defenceless chook.

The experts for birds that roam during the day consider one square metre of floor space per chook generous. Hen houses can be built from all kinds of materials; the most commonly used are wood and chicken wire.

A solid barrier around the base of the house (around 50 cm high) protects chooks from the cold, while wire covered spaces

**You can buy a ready-made poultry palace or knock one together yourself with reclaimed materials, as long as the place provides the right amount of space, ventilation, and protection**

on at least two opposing walls allow for maximum airflow. Make sure your hen house is fully enclosed to prevent the entry of party crashers like foxes and rodents.

Perches are vital and can be moved higher in summer and lower in winter so that chooks can roost in warmer or cooler air. Make sure a perch is at least 30 cm high and has space for everyone (around 30 cm each) or serious bullying will ensue. Choose the coolest darkest spot to position the nest box where hens will lay their eggs (a girl needs privacy) and make it comfy with nesting material like dried grass clippings or straw.

Floor litter in the rest of the house provides warmth and absorbs droppings. Chemical-free wood shavings, rice hulls or dried leaves are great; they only need to be topped up every couple of months and cleaned out a few times a year.

You will, however, be visiting your hen house once a day so make sure it is comfortable for you as well, easily accessible and easy to clean. Automatic feeders and water dispensers can be bought or made, but it's important to check them each day and to clean them often. Hopefully you'll be collecting lots of eggs!

Now everyone's perched and comfortable it's time to explore outside. For me, the whole point of backyard chickens was eggs from free-range hens.

No. Chickens do not go gentle into that good site; they tear your veggie patch apart. Chickens are excellent plows. Keep them in the part of your garden you would like plowed; keep them away from your prized zucchini flowers.

The lesson I learned from my quest for the good egg? It is presumptuous to put the egg before the chicken. Backyard chooks are a boon for lots of reasons — they eat scraps, create compost, reduce garden

pests and over time turn soil into brown gold. Most of all they are their own chickens, and natural comedians. I spend far more time enjoying Tango's and Salsa's antics than I do poached eggs.

There are some great resources on raising backyard chooks offering detailed information from choosing a breed to keeping hens healthy. My favourite is the Very Edible Gardens website Power of the Chook page and it includes a list of books for further reading.

Before getting started, remember to check regulations with your local council as some include specifications for hen housing, the number and sex of chooks allowed and the need for a permit.

**Chickens dawdling around the garden daintily poking at grass sheaths and bobbing their heads**

**For more information visit [www.acfonline.org.au/greenhome](http://www.acfonline.org.au/greenhome)**

# What to plant in the climatic zones of Australia



## Winter is upon us

For Australia's most southern dwellers, the day's warmth dissolves quickly into cool, dark evenings. Further north the winter months are less harsh. But for gardens everywhere, after all that harvesting, pruning and preserving, isn't winter the time to wind down? The time for gardeners to retreat inside with a mug of mulled wine, to curl up by the fire with a stack of gardening books and gather inspiration for spring? Not in the slightest.

From Hobart to Darwin, winter is the time to tidy up the patch, get your mulch on and chose from an array of veggies and herbs to renew

the garden bed. For people in the coldest parts, seeds can be propagated in tubes (toilet roll tubes are good) and grown indoors to give them a good start. Those living in the tropics will be asking what they *can't* plant at this time of year. But even in winter, things like celery, radish, rocket, mushrooms and strawberries can be grown in every climate zone.

## What to plant in winter

### Cool Climate

Broad beans, coriander, peas, cabbage, onions, parsnip, peas and spinach.

### Temperate Climate

Artichoke, beetroot, bok-choi, broad beans, cabbage, capsicum, coriander, eggplant, leeks, lettuce, onions, parsnip, peas, potatoes, and spinach.

### Subtropical Climate

Artichoke, asparagus, cabbage, carrots, chilli, cucumber, eggplant, garlic, lettuce, onions, parsnip, peas, potatoes, pumpkin, sweet corn, tomatoes and many herbs.

### Tropical Climate

Artichoke, asparagus, beans, beetroot, bok-choi, cabbage, capsicum, carrot, chilli, cucumber, eggplant, garlic, lettuce, onion, pumpkin, radish, rocket, silverbeet, spring onions, sweet corn, tomatoes, turnips, zucchini and many herbs.

This is an extract from the book, *The Little Veggie Patch Co's Guide to Backyard Farming*.

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## How the Black Saturday bushfires brought Jerry Grayson's lens and life into sharp focus.

**The Earth Wins** premiered in the US to rave reviews on Earth Day, April 21. It is the first IMAX film to be shot entirely from the air. It includes unique footage shot in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina; awe-inspiring footage of African wildlife; and a visceral scene depicting the aftermath of the Black Saturday bushfires.

Writer/director Jerry Grayson founded Helifilms in 1989 with his wife and Helifilm producer Sara Hine. The company's aerial cinematography has contributed to the BBC's ground-breaking series *Planet Earth* and *Frozen Planet*, and National Geographic TV's *Great Migrations*. *The Earth Wins* has been their passion project for the last seven years.

Jerry and Sara moved to Australia in 2002, settling near Heathcote in central Victoria. They had just finished building their first home when the state's most fatal bush fires swept through the region. Jerry was deeply affected by the experience and recounts it with a director's eye for detail.

"For most of us a wild fire is something we will only ever know in the form of a television news item. Australia has always been an exceptionally dry land, particularly noticeable to me after a life spent mainly in the UK. But even for drought-hardened Australians, the dreadful events of what became known as Black Saturday were a shock and a wake-up call," Jerry said.

"It was just over a month after Sara and I had finishing building our home. We left work early on a Friday afternoon to give us plenty of time to prepare for a Saturday that forecasters were already warning had the potential to be extreme. They weren't wrong.

"By mid-morning the clouds all around us had the grey/purple tinge of a sci-fi film, the thermometer on the shady wall was already climbing 40 degrees, and you had to bend to the wind and flying leaves. Somewhere around late lunchtime I nipped into Heathcote for something trivial. I took no more than 10 minutes but by the time I tried to return home I was flagged down by a policeman who said 'you won't get much further mate, there's a very big fire ahead and the road is blocked'.

"Despite the air temperature now exceeding 50 degrees, a shiver went down my spine. Sara had no car. Eventually I persuaded him to let me go on.

"The next three days were spent with a small water trailer, hoses laid out, heavy woollen clothing, torches, and one ear open to the continuous updates on the battery powered radio after the power supply failed. Our normal interest in world events had shrunk to the boundary of our small farm; our concerns were limited to whether the fire would cross that boundary. I registered with surprise how quickly my focus of attention had shifted so comprehensively from the global to the personal.

"In the end we were lucky but there are many hard-to-read accounts of personal events that day and the aftermath echoes through our home state. People argue amongst themselves about whether that was a unique event, a repetition of an event that's been happening since time immemorial, or a harbinger of things to come. I happen to believe the latter, but even if I'm wrong there is no penalty to be paid for keeping the water trailer full, an eye to the sky and a nose to the wind."

The longest single shot in the film begins high above the burnt forests of Victoria and slowly descends down to the meagre remains of a single house. Jerry hopes that the picture painted will provide a depth of experience missed by the short sound bites and fast cut images we see on the evening news.

*The Earth Wins* opens in Melbourne and Sydney IMAX cinemas August 26.

Photo: Helifilms

**Even for drought-hardened Australians, the dreadful events of what became known as Black Saturday were a shock and a wake-up call**

Screening times are available at [www.imax.com.au](http://www.imax.com.au)

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- Payroll tax

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› encourages **creative accounting** (like reducing reportable income and profits and tax avoidance)

› encourages **companies to use capital to replace workers** wherever possible, because capital is taxed at a lower rate

› **discourages** productive work and job creation

› **disempowers** you can't reduce your tax bill except by reducing income or engaging in tax avoidance

› The wealthy are meant to pay a **higher proportion**  
› But tax breaks and loopholes can **reduce the fairness of the system**

**SO UNCOOL**

% of total tax revenue derived from **productivity taxes: 58%**

% from **environmental taxes: 7.3%**

**Accelerated depreciation** is a tax break for companies that invest in certain assets.

Oil and gas drilling and refining equipment, heavy vehicles, and aircraft benefit

**SO UNCOOL PART 2**

**2001-2011 government revenue from environmental taxes fell from 7.9% to just 7.3%**

Why? **1.** The decision to stop indexation of fuel excise in 2001. **2.** Escalating cost of other tax breaks on fossil fuel use

**The official company tax rate in Australia is 30%**

**BUT** due to tax breaks and loopholes mining companies in Australia have paid effective tax rates as low as **8.7%**

Australia's effective tax rate on mining companies is lower than in many other countries with significant mining activity

**Taxing good stuff, funding bad stuff**  
What we do now...

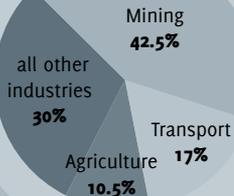
**SPENDING that rewards pollution and resource use in 2013-14:**

- **Reduced fuel excise** for aviation: **\$960 million**
- **Accelerated depreciation** for oil & gas assets, heavy vehicles and aircraft: **\$1,140 million**
- **Free carbon tax permits:** \$1,007 million
- Ending indexation on **petrol excise** in 2001: around **\$5,000 million**
- **Exemptions from the Minerals Resource Rent Tax and Petroleum Resources Rent Tax:** up to **\$700 million**

Australia's total **environment protection** expenditure = 1.3% of annual GDP

Our target level of spending for **national defense** is 2% of annual GDP

**Fuel tax credits scheme: 5,871 million**



**According to the government's 2011 energy white paper**

keeping up with electricity demand with our current polluting energy system will require \$200-240 billion

The **fuel tax credits scheme** is the **14th largest government expenditure program.**

The government spends more on subsidising fossil fuel use than helping families with childcare fees

**ENVIRONMENTAL TAX**

A tax on ecologically damaging activities, like:

- Pollution
- Use of water, fossil fuels, minerals, and other resources
- Waste
- Traffic congestion

encourages efficiency

discourages pollution and resource use

encourages companies to create jobs and reduce material inputs and pollution

When we tax pollution and resource use, it creates an incentive to pollute less and be more efficient

empowers you can reduce your tax bill by reducing pollution and resource use

encourages genuine innovation

scientists and engineers help reduce pollution and marketplace shifts

consumption to lower-impact goods and services



**Taxing bad stuff, funding good stuff**

What we could do instead...

**Taxing bad stuff, funding good stuff**

**SO COOL**

Sweden's tax on nitrogen oxide pollution led to an increased use of abatement technology from 7% to 62% of affected firms in a single year

We could increase the % from environmental taxes to 12% - and reduce the % from productivity taxes to 53% (a \$20 billion shift)

UK firms that were subject to a climate change levy filed more patent applications than those that paid a reduced levy



**SO COOL PART 3**

Other industrialised nations like Denmark, the Netherlands, and Turkey collect up to 12% or more of government revenue from environmental taxes

**SPENDING that rewards efficiency and job creation:**

Fuel tax credits could be replaced with tax rebates = invest in efficient equipment & farms rewarded for sustainable land management practices

Accelerated depreciation should be for green assets, not polluting assets

\$9 billion extra could fund major investments in public transport, clean energy, green buildings, recycling infrastructure, sustainable farming practices, and better funding for national parks and biodiversity protection



The average level of environmental protection expenditure across the European Union nations is 2.25%

If Australia spent 2% of GDP on environmental protection we'd have \$9 billion extra annually to invest

For \$219-252 billion we could have a 100% renewable electricity system



In 2013-14, the carbon tax will raise \$6.3 billion, and the minerals and petroleum resource taxes \$3.1 billion

The entire budget for the Commonwealth sustainability department for 2013-14 is \$2 billion



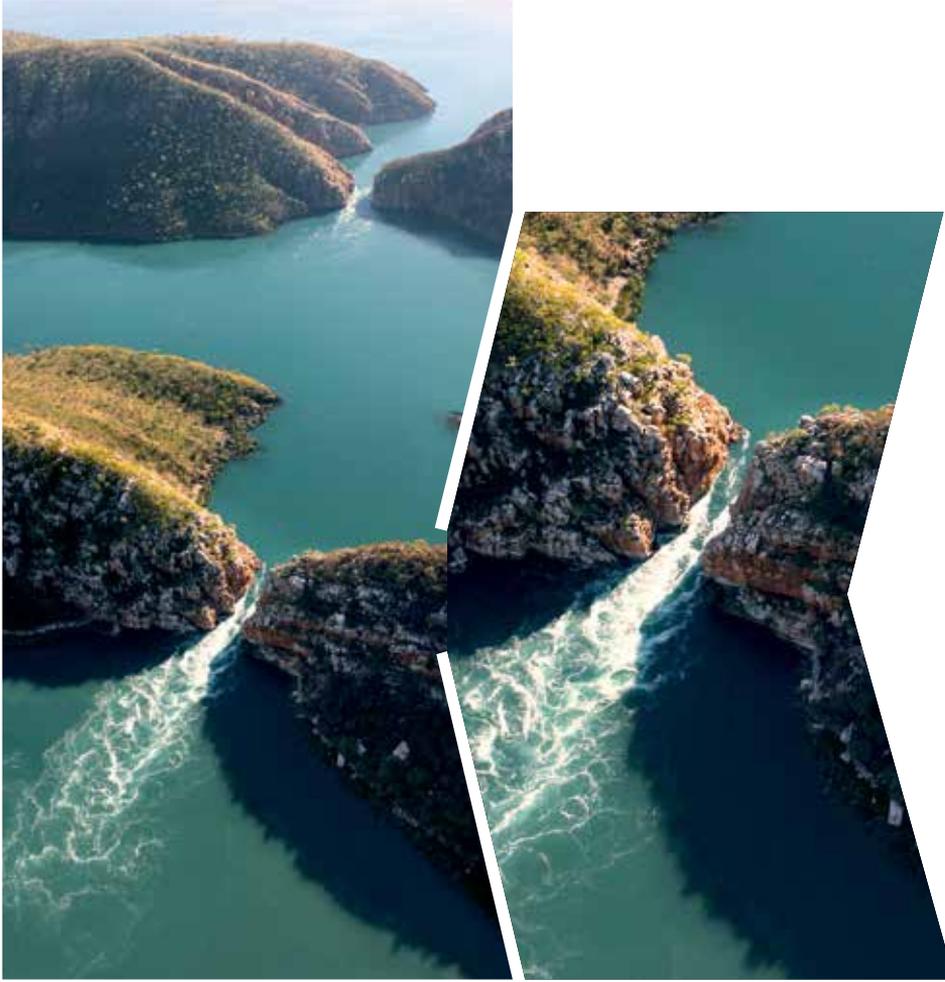
Renewable energy and recycling facilities and building efficiency upgrades don't receive the accelerated depreciation tax break!

The Commonwealth dropped plans to offer accelerated depreciation for green buildings in 2011



**SO UNCOOL PART 2**

1 AEMO, (2013) "100 Per Cent Renewables Study - Draft Modelling Outcomes", Draft for Stakeholder Briefing, Canberra, Australian Energy Market Operator, 24 April, 111 pp. <http://www.climatechange.gov.au/reducing-carbon/australian-energy-market-operator>



# kimberley

## not out of woods

**Wade Freeman  
and James Norman**

Is Premier Barnett missing the last opportunity to bow out of his plans to industrialise the Kimberley with any semblance of dignity?

[www.acfonline.org.au/kimberley](http://www.acfonline.org.au/kimberley)

**The announcement** that Woodside and its joint venture partners will not proceed with a LNG processing hub at James Price Point came as relief, but little surprise to those watching the project's rising costs, controversy and opposition over the past year.

Woodside's April announcement to develop the project instead using Shell's floating LNG technology appeared to deal the final blow to WA Premier Colin Barnett's dream of processing Browse Basin gas onshore.

Yet even before celebrations were underway the Barnett government restated its plans to industrialise the pristine Kimberley coast. Premier Barnett is doggedly going ahead with his compulsory acquisition plans for James Price Point, even without Woodside.

Compulsory acquisition has become the new battle front and Premier Barnett is leading the charge.

As it currently stands, the terms of the compulsory acquisition of the land can only be used for Browse gas as a condition of the state agreement with Traditional Owners. So in order for the site to be used for unconventional gas, a whole new agreement has to be made. This involves re-negotiating with the Traditional Owner community.

The WA government has determined it will pay \$30 million to acquire the land and confirmed its aim to see Canning Basin gas flow through a processing hub at James Price Point.

The Canning Basin's unconventional gas resources are about 229 trillion cubic feet; approximately one and a half times WA's currently identified offshore resources.

Buru Energy has been exploring for gas and oil in the Canning Basin, alongside Mitsubishi, Conocco Phillips and PetroChina.

Barnett is pushing for the Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke to approve the Browse strategic plan, to smooth the way and avoid further environmental accountability.

Thus far, it appears Minister Burke is keen to know exactly what he is signing off on. And so he should.

The window for the Barnett government to change their course for the Kimberley is fast closing. The state needs to rescind approval for a development at JPP, respecting its people, the place and the voice of so many Australians.

Photo:  
Horizontal falls



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**“Shouldn’t we wait until times are better and we’re more certain about climate change before we take action?”**

## Question

**This argument** for delay ignores two things: the scale of the threat and the urgency of the threat — and both are critical for responsible risk management.

The International Energy Agency warned last year that our current path could result in average temperatures of 6°C above pre-industrial levels by 2100 — temperatures the world has not seen for around 50 million years. Our civilizations and ecosystems could not possibly adapt.

There is only a narrow window of opportunity to prevent this disaster. Imagine you are driving a semi-trailer down a mountain road. You see a sharp bend coming up. When do you start to brake? If you want to live, well before the bend! If you wait too long, the laws of physics will carry you over the cliff and there’ll be nothing you can do about it. The climate works in a similar way. There is a momentum to the climate system, and a delay between cause and effect.

We’ve experienced about 0.8°C of warming, but we have around 0.6°C more guaranteed from past emissions. Why the delay? Much is to do with the way heat is absorbed into the oceans. What this means is that we have only a narrow window of time to seriously ramp down our emissions.

In Australia we have bipartisan support for a 5 per cent emissions reduction below 2000 levels by 2020. Scientists say it needs to be more like 40 per cent by 2020 and 0 per cent by 2050 — and we agree.

Critics cry that this will ruin our economy. We say that is fear-mongering nonsense parroted by vested interests. In 1942 Australia was throwing 40 per cent of our national income at the war. Claiming we can’t do better is like saying we shouldn’t hose down our burning house because the water is too expensive. It’s a crazy false economy that totally ignores the scale and urgency of the threat we are facing. It will devastate Australia’s ecosystems and will leave our children and future generations with unimaginable costs.

**Brett Parris**

**EMAIL YOUR QUESTIONS TO THE ECONOMIST:**

[habitat@acfonline.org.au](mailto:habitat@acfonline.org.au)

**HAVE YOUR SAY AT FACEBOOK**  
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It is now five years since the formal adoption of the United Nation's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIP). James Anaya, the UN's special rapporteur on Indigenous Rights, was a keynote speaker at the recent World Indigenous Network conference in Darwin. Dave Sweeney takes a look at the Declaration and at whether a DRIP can make a difference.

**It may not be immediately obvious** walking down a city street and it certainly isn't reflected in our mainstream media or political discourse but Australia is home to the world's oldest continuing culture. For at least 60,000 years, possibly far longer, Aboriginal people have shaped, shared and sung this ancient land.

Against such a lengthy backdrop 225 years seems no time at all. But the short period since white settlement in Australia has seen profound impact. Lives, lands and laws have been changed forever—too often at the cost of the First Australians.

Aboriginal and Islander people have a long, proud and continuing record of action and advocacy for recognition and rights, and an important part of this has been international efforts and initiatives. In recent years much attention has focused around the opportunities provided by the United Nation's Declaration.

Formal talks around a mechanism for advancing Indigenous rights began in 1982 and

the DRIP came into effect in September 2008 after decades of discussion and debate between UN member nation states and Indigenous communities, nations and representatives. The Declaration attempts to outline 'the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the Indigenous peoples of the world' by identifying and promoting Indigenous rights across a broad range of issues and areas including cultural practise, consent, resource development, access to country, health, education, language and identity.

Under the Howard government Australia joined the USA, New Zealand and Canada as one of only four nations to oppose the DRIP with the then Indigenous Affairs Minister Mal

Brough banging the drum of 'one law for all Australians', a position condemned by human rights group Survival International as shameful and hypocritical. To its credit the Rudd government dropped this hostile position and endorsed the Declaration in April 2009.

James Anaya describes the DRIP as the "way forward for engagement with Indigenous peoples in a succession of steps in the process of shedding the legacies of colonisation". Given

**For at least 60,000 years, possibly far longer, Aboriginal people have shaped, shared and sung this ancient land**

Tennant Creek Traditional Owners and community members protest the radioactive waste dump slated for Muckaty in the Northern Territory.

the profound and continuing disadvantage faced by Indigenous people in Australia and around the world this is a big task—and one that would seem more to require a flood than a drip.

The gap between the ideal and the application of the DRIP is significant: the Northern Territory intervention, the continuing federal push for a radioactive waste dump at Muckaty in Central Australia, the lack of constitutional recognition, the unchecked loss of languages, cavalier threats to compulsorily acquire Aboriginal land for development projects and the continuing tragedy of incarceration and deaths in custody are often cited as just some of the indicators of the distance we have yet to travel.

As a declaration the DRIP does not enjoy the same legal weight as a convention or international treaty. However, it does serve to clearly signal an expectation that any nation's laws, policies and programs will be consistent with the Declaration's foundation principles and obligations, providing an important platform to amplify and advance Indigenous rights and aspirations.

One of the great challenges now facing Indigenous people and all people working to see clean country and healthy communities is how to best address years of institutionalised Indigenous disadvantage.

Some view the resource industry as the primary way to empower Indigenous communities. This is a dangerous and fraught path, with the heavy footprint of the mining sector compounded by the legal limitations of the native title regime and the often controversial, divisive and secretive nature of mining 'agreements'.

As Murrandoo Yanner, the chair of the Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation recently stated, "mining is here to stay in northern Australia, but it's no silver bullet. Mining jobs are limited and all booms eventually bust".

The cards are heavily stacked against Aboriginal people who are concerned about or would prefer to see no mining on their country and, as highlighted in a recent study by Oxfam, the

majority of Australian mining companies still fail to adopt and reflect the key principles of free, prior and informed consent.

And underpinning all is a more fundamental question: why should Indigenous communities have to trade away their land for basic citizenship entitlements that other Australians take for granted?

In this context one very important role of the UN DRIP is the signal that it sends to the wider non-Indigenous community, including to civil society groups like ACF. Instruments like DRIP act as beacons as we attempt to navigate towards sustainable environments and livelihoods.

Across Australia, and particularly in the north, there are an increasing number of collaborations between Indigenous Australians and environmentalists. We have long recognised that the best way to protect the environment in this country is in partnership with those who have done this effectively for thousands of years.

ACF holds that better conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of natural resources results in improved social cohesion and economic opportunities for Indigenous communities. Environmental outcomes are best realised and sustained with Indigenous participation and ownership. And this realisation is driving a different way of doing business and measuring success.

Our shared and fragile planet has been actively shaped by natural forces with the movement of wind and water sculpting landscapes and lives. The DRIP has played an important role in this process but much more is needed to erode the institutional, political and other barriers standing in the way of the world's Indigenous peoples. As we advance further into the 21st century a key challenge and test will be how the current dominant culture relates and responds to those that have existed longer.

How we answer this challenge is of far more than academic interest.

*Find out more about our work on Indigenous rights, culture and sustainable development at [www.acfonline.org.au/nap](http://www.acfonline.org.au/nap)*

### Why should Indigenous communities have to trade away their land for basic citizenship entitlements that other Australians take for granted?

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**Jonathan La Nauze**  
*Healthy ecosystems  
program manager*

**As I write this update**, the Queensland government is busy releasing cattle into national parks and over in NSW they're toying with allowing logging and shooting in their public reserves. All around the country state governments are flinging open parks gates to destructive industries, threatening to unwind decades of careful conservation in our most precious places.

To keep the states in check we need to bring national parks under the protection of national environment law. As we count down to the last two weeks of federal parliament thousands of ACF members have contacted their federal representatives calling for federal oversight. By the time habitat is in print, we'll know whether or not they listened.

Down in Tasmania, the Forest Agreement is now being implemented, with the Tasmanian parliament signing its core elements into law. Frustratingly, the upper house insisted on amendments that do not reflect the spirit or the letter of the agreement. Our proposal for immediate interim protection of high conservation value forests survived, however, the pathway to permanent protection has been slowed and made contingent on additional requirements. Principal amongst these is that the remaining native forest logging must achieve the international 'green tick' from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). All in all, ACF believes that permanent protection remains achievable, and along with our environmental signatories judged it better to proceed than walk away.

In good news, the Federal Budget committed to funding FSC to adapt its global forest management principles to reflect Australia's unique ecology. Official recognition from government that FSC is the only global standard that consumers can truly trust was long overdue.

**FOR UPDATES VISIT:**  
[www.acfonline.org.au/protect-national-parks](http://www.acfonline.org.au/protect-national-parks)



**Tony Mohr**  
*Climate change  
program manager*

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**I'm looking forward** to the dawn of big solar in our big backyard. It's been a long time coming. Back in 2005, solar thermal guru David Mills gave up on Australia and went to California in search of a government focused on the future, not the past. In 2013 I'm hoping we can lure him back. I reckon the \$10 billion dollars sitting with the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) just might do it.

Like anything worthwhile, this ground breaking new approach to renewable energy is the product of a lot of hard work. Years ago our economist met with renewable energy innovators, investors, generators and buyers and they all said the same thing—cutting edge technology was getting stuck in 'the valley of death'. They weren't talking about a renewable energy zombie movie, but it was devastating. Big solar, hot rocks and wave power were emerging from Australian R&D labs, floundering, then falling flat.

So months and months were spent developing the proposal for the CEFC and pitching it to politicians, and on 1 July, it started pumping money into commercialising cutting edge clean tech projects. At the time of writing I don't know if David Mills is finally going to get the leg-up he should have got 10 years ago. But I am looking forward to the rise of big solar in Australia, and I'm sure you are too.



**Andrew Picone**  
*Northern Australia  
program officer*

**FOR UPDATES VISIT:**  
[www.acfonline.org.au/nap](http://www.acfonline.org.au/nap)

**Around Australia** there is a growing trend for state, territory and national governments to seek corporate gratitude through the promise of certainty. The idea of certainty for industry has become central to modern neo-liberal governments globally.

As citizens, we're supposed to oblige our various governments' certainty-driven-agendas so we can continue to enjoy the world's best living standards in the lucky country.

But something is wrong; the more certainty industry demands from our elected governments, the less certainty we seem to have

about our rights as citizens, and about environmental health and quality of life.

So whose best interests are being served here—industry or those of all Australians?

Increasingly we are witnessing the rollback of environmental regulation, the threat of compulsory acquisition of Aboriginal land, and excessive corporate handouts—all arisen from industry influenced governments and their certainty-driven agendas.

In Queensland, the Newman government wants to normalise the economy of Cape York Peninsula. To this end they are actively seeking investment in massive new bauxite mines, watering down laws that prevent broad acre clearing and plan on repealing river protection laws. The goal is land use certainty, jobs, services and basic infrastructure.

But should communities really need to sign up for a massive mine for these basics?

As Indigenous leader Peter Yu wrote in *The West Australian* in April after Woodside dropped its plans for a contentious gas hub at James Price Point, delivering basic community requirements on resource developments is a reckless approach that creates division and uncertainty.

While industry often gets all the certainty government can deliver, no reciprocal certainty is provided to communities for social, cultural and environmental values.

Certainty for business and the economy should be a good thing. But we need to get some back from both government and industry; certainty that prioritises people, place and culture over short-term corporate profits.



**Angela Rutter**  
Social cultural  
change manager

If you would like to participate in a conversation on social and cultural change please comment on my blog  
[www.acfonline.org.au/blog-social-change](http://www.acfonline.org.au/blog-social-change)

**Nearly** a year ago I was in the Kimberly walking the Lurujarri Trail songline. We walked with the Goolarabooloo families as one mob as they have for a long, long time. Our nine days were made up of big and little walks along beaches, through forests and scrambling cliffs.

It is 25 years since Paddy Roe OAM, senior law man, initiated the Lurujarri Trail. His vision was to encourage the Goolarabooloo community to walk their country and non-Aboriginal people to connect to country, beauty and tradition.

The Lurujarri Trail is part of the ancient song cycle running along the west coast. This song cycle protects other song cycles travelling from the west coast through Uluru to sunrise country, the east coast. We walked the 90 kilometres from Broome to Bindingankun and camped in places which have been used for

millennia. We camped overnight in the dunes at Walmadan, or James Price Point. Along the way we learnt about the dream-time, bush foods and how our country has been sustained for thousands of years. This is not a hike. It's an experience of living country, culture and an ancient, beautiful home.

We offered ACF members the opportunity to walk the trail with Goolarabooloo families. We have been overwhelmed with your response! So many of you want to take this walk with us. A group of members will meet in Broome next month to walk the Lurujarri Trail, to take part in tradition and connection to country.

Thank you for your enthusiasm and taking this journey with us.



**Charles Berger**  
Director of strategic ideas

**Once a year**, Australia comes together to decide what we would like to achieve collectively as a nation, and how we will fund it. That glorious event is called budget night. For most people, it's utterly boring, and yet there is nothing more important in shaping our future as a society.

Our new economist Brett Parris and I attended this year's budget night lockup in Canberra. We emerged four hours later, wired on Treasury-supplied bikkies and instant coffee, and sorely disappointed that our political leaders still think it's a good idea to spend billions of dollars every year subsidising pollution-intensive industries.

There was some good news in the budget: for the most part, environmental programs escaped the razor, including funding for the Great Barrier Reef, the Murray-Darling Basin, and innovative new programs like the Clean Energy Finance Corporation.

Yet it was hard to be enthusiastic, when big polluting companies retained nearly all of their lucrative tax breaks. Why should purchasing an oil rig or a heavy truck get accelerated depreciation tax breaks, when building a wind farm or a green building does not? Why should there be special tax concessions for mining exploration, when there aren't for recycling? Why should we spend more every year subsidising fuel use by mining and transport giants than we do helping families with the cost of child care?

The budget provided no answers. We're determined to step up our efforts to knock off these bad tax policies, and get investment moving into clean industries and clean infrastructure. (See page 25–26 for more detail on our plan to get Australia's tax and spending policies on to a smarter, cleaner foundation.)

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