

# APS Environment News

APS Public Interest - Dr Susie Burke - s.burke@psychology.org.au

February 2013

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## QUOTE

*"Preventing climate breakdown – the four, five or six degrees of warming now predicted for this century by green extremists like, the World Bank, the International Energy Agency and PriceWaterhouseCoopers – means confronting the oil, gas and coal industry. It means forcing that industry to abandon the four-fifths or more of fossil fuel reserves that we cannot afford to burn. It means cancelling the prospecting and development of new reserves – what's the point if we can't use current stocks? – and reversing the expansion of any infrastructure (such as airports) that cannot be run without them."*

**George Monbiot, December 2012**



## MEMBERSHIP OFFER

### THE 3 PILLARS NETWORK



Are you interested in exploring the newest, most innovative ideas on the sustainability agenda?

Over the past ten years our **independent conferences** have brought together sustainability professionals and global thought leaders from across the corporate, SME, government and not-for-profit sectors to do just that.

We're now offering an enhanced annual program of members only webinars and briefings to complement our key annual events.

**Annual Membership (\$495+GST) offers Members Only access to:**

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- + **Monthly Webinars** with international presenters
- + **Preferred Pricing** - 15% discount to all conferences
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**Who should join? We invite applications from:**

- + Corporate/business sustainability practitioners
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- + Members of an NGO or not-for-profit organization

Please [click here](#) for more details or contact Nerida Lennon on 02 9261 1736 or email [nerida@3pillarsnetwork.com.au](mailto:nerida@3pillarsnetwork.com.au).

[www.3pillarsnetwork.com.au/membership](http://www.3pillarsnetwork.com.au/membership)

## FEBRUARY EVENTS

### CONVERSATIONS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE



The National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility is holding an event in Canberra to hear presentations by two leading thinkers in climate change, and to launch the first in its series of policy guidance briefs on adaptation.

At this event, the NCCARF will host talk from two leading thinkers in climate change adaptation, Martin Parry and Will Steffen. They will compare and contrast their experiences working in climate change and adaptation at international and national levels. There will be ample time for discussion.

**Date:** Tuesday 26th February 2013

**Time:** 2pm to 3pm followed by refreshments

**Venue:** The Lobby Restaurant - King George Terrace, Canberra

**RSVP:**

<http://parrycanberra.eventbrite.com.au/>

## NOTIFICATIONS OF INTEREST

### WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH POST CARBON PATHWAYS



#### NEW INTERVIEWS RECENTLY UPLOADED TO THE POST CARBON PATHWAYS WEBSITE

These interviews include:

- A characteristically frank and insightful interview with Professor John Schellnhuber and Professor Ottmar Edenhofer of Germany's Potsdam Institute for Climate Impacts Research (PIK);
- Chief Economist, Adrian Gault, and senior policy analyst, Alex Kazaglis of the UK Commission on Climate Change sharing their thoughts on the climate policy situation in the UK;
- Professor Jørgen Randers explaining the thinking behind his latest global forecast 2052; and
- Jean-Philippe Denruyter of WWF International reflecting on the game-changing possibilities of solar PV.

#### PCP REPORT LAUNCH – APRIL 15, 2013 MELBOURNE

Post Carbon Pathways are excited to be launching their new Post Carbon Pathways report at the University of Melbourne on April 15, 6-8pm. The report will focus on lessons learnt about overcoming political roadblocks and driving transformational change, drawing on the amazingly rich material they have collected via interviews with leading climate change researchers, policy makers and activists in Australia, North America and Europe.

The launch will also involve a number of guest speakers focusing on the question of leadership on climate change in Australia. Further details TBC.

For more information on this report launch and to access interviews please visit the Post Carbon Pathways Website <http://www.postcarbonpathways.net.au/>.

This website also includes many interesting links including new research and reports relevant to post carbon transitions. Here is just two of their recent links:

#### **World Bank, PricewaterhouseCoopers and the IEA... Who's next to join the chorus for rapid climate action?**

Reports about our current global emissions pathway and its consequences have been coming thick and fast in recent months. With stark headline warnings about the global climate and energy outlook, the World Bank, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and the International Energy Agency (IEA), among others, are being increasingly blunt about the urgency of rapid transitions. [Read the full post](#)

#### **Trottier Project Review of Low Carbon Scenarios**

In a similar vein to our [review of 18 post carbon economy transition strategies](#) from around the world, a new report from Canada's [Trottier Energy Futures Project](#) is definitely worth a look. The report contains a comparative review of eight comprehensive, long range, quantitative scenario analyses of what truly low carbon futures (emissions at least 80% below current levels) might look like for rich, industrial countries. [Read the full post](#). Download the report [here](#).

## NOTIFICATIONS OF INTEREST

### WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH RENEWABLE ENERGY



#### YEAR IN REVIEW : THE TEN COOLEST THINGS THAT HAPPENED IN 2012

##### The currents now running our way

##### 1. 1.5 million solar homes, and they're flexing their political muscle

This year, the number of Australians with solar on their roof topped 1.5 million - a huge cross-section of the Australian population and a huge potential constituency.

##### 2. Renewables our cheapest source of power within a decade

We try not to get too excited about graphs here but there were some stunners released this year from the most conservative place imaginable - Martin Ferguson's Department of Energy and Resources. They showed that wind energy would be the cheapest form of new build electricity generation by 2020 and that Solar PV would overtake it shortly thereafter.

##### 3. Carbon price and renewable target eating away at coal - and emissions

With 2000 megawatts of Australian solar panels working away every day and energy efficiency catching on, total demand for electricity across the Australian network is dropping for the first time in 120 years. This has led to the mothballing or closing of five coal-fired power stations in the last 12 months.

##### 4. Climate Change Authority holds the line against fossil fuel lobbying

After delivery of your People's RET Review and major pressure from other partner groups, the Climate Change Authority recommended the government stick with a fixed Renewable Energy Target. It's a long way short of the increased 2020 target and at least 50% by 2030 target we want to see but it's a sign that going backwards on renewables is no longer an option. (well, not until we see the Coalition's policy on the RET - but that's one for next year....)

##### Some of what we all achieved together this year

##### 5. Have you ever seen Grant King look so unhappy?

Members of the campaign put the squeeze on one of Australia's latest blocker of renewables, Origin Energy's MD, Grant King when a small group of 100% Renewable campaigners took over Origin's AGM in November. Flyers, challenging questions and a huge banner unfurled in front of shareholders had King really feeling the heat.

##### 6. Hundred of calls shake politicians' offices

When politicians did their politician thing and backed fossil fuels over renewables, you were onto them. When Greg Combet announced cuts to solar programs, or Martin Ferguson reneged on his promise to shut coal-fired plants or Tony Abbott started to waver on support for the RET, hundreds of you were on the phone to their offices and to the offices of MPs in their parties to let them know we weren't happy, Jan.

##### 7. Putting big solar on the lips of the commentators and pollies

120 of you gathered at the Big Solar Boot Camp in Sydney to explore common ground and build campaigning skills. From this date on - through launches, solar polling, lobby day and more - you turned 'big solar' into a phrase, even Greg Combet has now used!

##### 8. 50 pollie big solar blitz Canberra Lobby Day

30 community leaders descended on Canberra in May to argue the case for big solar to 50 politicians, and hold leading shadow cabinet members to account on their plans to build big and small solar.

##### 9. 100,000 (media) viewers, 1000 walkers, 21 walks and 1 solar thermal station

In September you took the kick-arse local community campaign to Repower Port Augusta with solar thermal and made it into a national issue with 20 walks across the country that supported the big one from Port Augusta to Adelaide.

##### 10. A movement of solar owners and bringing the accountability back: plans for 2013

We're super excited to announce that we've got even bigger and better plans for next year. Most prominent amongst these will be the beginnings of a new 'Solar Citizens' project to give a voice to the existing 1.5 million solar homes - and all of those Australians who still hope to one day 'go solar'.

**CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT**  
**2013 Climate Adaptation Conference**



**25 - 27 June 2013**

**Hilton Hotel, Sydney**

The NCCARF Climate Adaptation 2013 knowledge & partnerships conference will bring together end users and researchers from across Australia to share experience in adaptation and showcase activities, strategies and research.

Abstract submission deadline 15 February 2013

Acceptance notification 27 March 2013

Presenter and Early Bird registrations close 11 April 2013

Applications now open for Student travel and registration grants for Conference.



## **Australia's Climate Action Summit**

Let's make sure climate change is a top issue in the coming Federal election. A team of 15 people have just started organising a Climate Summit. We would like input from as many people as possible to make it the best and most inspiring Summit ever. Let's take advantage of the news that is coming out about more and more evidence of the reality of climate change and the effects it is having on ordinary people. The summit is a great way to enthuse groups to become more active and to recruit more people. It's a place to share inspiring stories about the success of BZE, 100% Renewables and state based campaigns. And it's a powerful way to recruit people to campaigns, especially people like farmers and other people concerned about Coal Seam Gas. Please pass this message on to your contacts.

Please send us your ideas. If you want to do a workshop or help the planning team then let us know. Send ideas and suggestions to [climate-summit-2013@googlegroups.com](mailto:climate-summit-2013@googlegroups.com).

Annie Nielsen, The Climate Action Summit Planning Team, 042526516

## NEWS ARTICLES OF INTEREST

### Riding the apocalypse

**OPINION PIECE by Richard Eckersley, Independent researcher and writer**

A few years ago, I took part in a panel discussion on the future as part of the Brisbane Festival of Ideas. My two co-panellists quickly declared their optimism (although both were fully across the challenges). I'd decided that morning to "come out" and admit I was a pessimist. "Pessimist" was a pejorative term, I said, but pessimists had the consolation of being right.

I realised more than five years ago, with the evidence of the growing effects of global warming, that we'd left it too late; and we are continuing to leave it too late. As well as being a real threat, climate change is also a symbol of humanity's wider predicament.

We are now facing our fifth decadal deadline for dealing with global environmental problems such as climate change, land and water degradation, food security, peak oil, population growth, and biodiversity loss. As each deadline passes without the necessary action being taken, we defer it another 10 years. With the failures (or at least limited achievements) of the 2009 Copenhagen conference on climate change, the 2012 Rio+20 Earth Summit and the recent Doha climate change meeting, we are still waiting.

Indeed, one of the most striking things when we look back over the past 50 years is the resilience of the status quo, the persistence of a politics in Western democracies that, explicitly and implicitly, sees no need move beyond a worldview of unending material progress, despite the disenchantment of their citizens and the evident failure of material progress to deliver on its promise to keep making life better.

It is not that nothing worthwhile has been achieved with "politics as usual" approaches. And there are many good news stories - for example, the rapid growth in solar power.

But they all run up against huge-scale anomalies: the yawning gulf between the magnitude of the challenges and the scale of our responses. In addressing this chasm, we need to pay more attention to the psychosocial dynamics of our situation, not merely the geopolitical manoeuvring and the biophysical constraints and limits. In particular, we need to do more to link the debate about future threats to the current and growing costs of material progress and our high-consumption lifestyles to our health and well-being; it's not about a trade-off.

Our immediate, personal experiences count for more, psychologically, than abstract statistics and future uncertainties. People discount global threats for several reasons: a human bias towards optimism (she'll be right, we've overcome problems like this before), perceived uncertainty (there is a history of failed predictions of global collapse, and experts disagree), and system justification (a tendency to believe in and justify the way things are, and to not want to change the familiar status quo).

Surveys reveal deep social pessimism and public unease in developed nations, including Australia; pessimists outnumber optimists about our future quality of life.

But environmental and resource issues are not the main reasons. The concerns are more immediate and personal; more social, cultural and economic; more about the quality of relationships than material conditions. We need to show these are all part of the same predicament.

Dealing with this situation means going well beyond specific issues and policies. The magnitude of the necessary transformation will be akin to that from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment, from the mediaeval mind to the modern mind.

## NEWS ARTICLES OF INTEREST

### Riding the apocalypse

**OPINION PIECE by Richard Eckersley, Independent researcher and writer**

#### Continued...

The seeds of the Enlightenment were sown in the Middle Ages, including the turmoil of the 14th century and the devastation of the Black Death. So, too, are the seeds of a new consciousness being sown in the chaos of modern times. While the earlier revolution spanned centuries, the advances in education and communication could allow a new cultural revolution to happen in decades.

Christianity provided "the matrix and law of mediaeval life, omnipresent, indeed compulsory", the historian Barbara Tuchman has said. Its insistent principle was that "the life of the spirit and of the afterworld was superior to the here and now, to material life on earth ... The rupture of this principle and its replacement by belief in the worth of the individual and of an active life not necessarily focused on God is, in fact, what created the modern world and ended the Middle Ages."

We now face another rupture or discontinuity in our view of ourselves, in what it is to be human, that will change profoundly how we live: one that will renounce the present excessive emphasis on the material and individual, and better acknowledge the importance of the communal and spiritual. There are signs this process has begun, although its direction is not yet established, and it remains largely invisible in politics and public affairs.

The emergence and growth of a new "human story" will not - now - spare us from troubled and turbulent times. Rather, such events will powerfully influence the course the transformation takes, the shape of things to emerge from the turmoil. They could help or hinder: provide the moral force for urgent action, or preoccupy us with crisis management. Several writers have described the revelatory, and potentially revolutionary, nature of disasters.

Not only can they bring out the best in us, and connect and empower us, but they also lay bare the social conditions and choices that often cause or contribute to disasters, delivering a societal shock that makes change possible.

As Junot Diaz says, apocalyptic catastrophes give us "a chance to see aspects of our world that we as a society seek to run from, that we hide behind veils of denial". Apocalypses are also opportunities: "chances for us to see ourselves, to take responsibility for what we see, to change." Creating a new human story, a different awareness of ourselves, represents a "no regrets" strategy. It might no longer allow us to avoid global mayhem, but it would mitigate the effects by enhancing our personal and social resilience and preparedness.

But even in the absence of the threat of catastrophes, it would improve our quality of life. Even if we did not confront social, environmental, and economic limits and breakdowns, optimising our health and happiness requires transformational change. We may no longer be able to get out of the mess we're creating for ourselves, but we can still get through it.

Sourced from: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/opinion/riding-the-apocalypse-20130130-2dld6.html#ixzz2KZF8Bl1d>

## NEWS ARTICLES OF INTEREST

### Hospitals can save by reducing waste, increasing recycling

By Jeremy Carroll

CHICAGO (Dec. 12, 10:50 a.m. ET) -- Recycling and reducing common wasteful practices can save hospitals money -- lots of it, according to a recently released study.

Susan Kaplan, research assistant professor at the University of Illinois-Chicago's school of public health, was the lead author of the report, which says the industry as a whole could save \$5.4 billion in five years and up to \$15 billion in 10 years if it adopts sustainable practices.

The study considered several hospitals that recently went through various sustainable measures and extrapolated their findings out to the general hospital and health care system.

Among the areas for potential savings, according to the study: reduce medical waste through better segregation; reduce landfilled waste through recycling; more efficient purchase of operating room supplies; and the switch to reprocessed devices in the operating room over single-use devices.

Among the simple waste reduction efforts, the hospitals studied showed a range of 50 cents per patient per day in savings to more than \$2.50 per patient per day. Changes in the operating room were as high as \$57 per operation.

"We had seen some anecdotal evidence that was very suggestive and showed potentially some very significant [cost savings in a more sustainable model]," Kaplan said.

Many of the changes, promoted by Practice Greenhealth, Health Care Without Harm and the Healthier Hospital Initiative are very inexpensive to implement, Kaplan said.

"Many of them have virtually no upfront costs," she said. "To us, that was one of the most interesting findings."

Often hospital employees throw regular waste together with the regulated medical waste, often referred to as red bag waste. The cost of disposal of medical waste is much higher than regular waste, so adding unnecessary waste can skyrocket costs.

Simply educating employees on what is proper medical waste and what can be disposed in the solid waste stream could lead to big savings, Kaplan said.

"My impression is that perhaps there's a lack of awareness," Kaplan said as to why that practice seems common. "It seemed like the major intervention here was staff intervention and education about segregating in the right waste streams."

Operating rooms are often a place where small sustainable practices can lead to big savings too, according to the study. Many operating rooms are fraught with one-time-use devices that are tossed after the surgery, but there are multi-use products available.

Cardiac catheters, orthopedic surgical blades and ultrasound catheters are among the items that can be easily reprocessed.

"They are minimum costs to the hospital with cost savings beginning immediately," Kaplan said.

Blair Sadler, senior fellow at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, one of the authors of the study and former CEO of Rady Children's Hospital, San Diego, Calif., said the idea of saving money through environmental sustainability efforts is no longer theoretical.



## NEWS ARTICLES OF INTEREST

### Hospitals can save by reducing waste, increasing recycling

By Jeremy Carroll

Continued....

"I was struck by the significant evidence and experience that is now out there," he said. "You can really make a difference in sustainability that improves health care quality and improves the financial bottom line. It's no longer a debate, it's a matter of understanding it, accepting it and deciding which of the variety of strategies or tactics that you want to employ."

Kaplan said for a sustainability program to be successful, there has to be a buy-in from management all the way down to employees.

"Any hospital can start implementing the program. The information on how to get started is out there," she said. "But the culture of commitment can really make a difference."

## JOURNAL ARTICLES AND RESOURCES

### People on the move in a changing climate: a bibliography International Organization for Migration

Throughout history, people have moved to adjust to changes in their environment, but more recently climate change and its impacts have sparked renewed interest among academics and the international community in the relationship between migration, the environment and climate change. This bibliography is the first comprehensive collection of resources which specifically concentrates on migration, the environment and climate change.

[View article...](#)

### The human impact of heatwaves and extreme weather The Climate Institute

In the last century, Australia's average temperature rose by slightly less than one degree over the pre-industrial average. Without concerted action by all countries, including Australia, the world is on a path to exceeding 4°C by the 2060s. While some further warming is already locked in to the climate system, the worst is still avoidable.

[View article...](#)

## JOURNAL ARTICLES AND RESOURCES

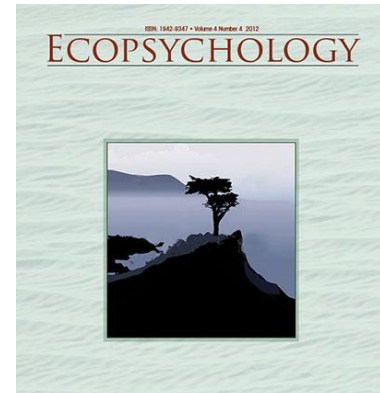
### OPEN ACCESS TO SPECIAL ISSUE OF ECOPSYCHOLOGY

#### Special Issue on Psychology and the Natural Environment: Insights from Australia and New Zealand

This special issue includes the following articles by Joseph Reser and Elizabeth (Eshana) Bragg:

- **Ecopsychology in the Antipodes: Perspectives from Australia and New Zealand**  
Elizabeth Bragg and Joseph Reser
- **An Editorial Note: Climate Change and Ecopsychology in Australia**  
Joseph Reser, Elizabeth Bragg

To see these publications as well as others included in this special issue go to <http://online.liebertpub.com/toc/eco/4/4>



## JOURNAL ARTICLES AND RESOURCES

#### Staying cool in a changing climate: Reaching vulnerable populations during heat events.

##### Global Environmental Change

Paper by: Sampson, Gronlund, Buxrton, Catalano, White-Newsome, Conlon, O'Neill, McCormick, Parker.

To see the abstract to this paper go to:

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959378013000022>



MEDIA RELEASE



**Health Groups Call for Urgent Action to Address Health Risks From Coal and Coal Seam Gas**  
**Media release 13 February 2013**

A new collaborative network of health organisations has agreed to joint action to raise awareness of the adverse health effects of Australia's current minerals and energy policy at a meeting in Canberra this week.

Hosted by five national health organisations, the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA), Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA), National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA), Climate Change Health Research Network (NCCARF-ARN), Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA), the **Health and Energy Roundtable** was attended by energy experts, community activists and health professionals, including doctors, physicians, nurses, physiotherapists and GPs, from dozen of organisations around the country.

A statement from the groups at the meeting, including the lead groups and joined by Cancer Council Australia, Heart Foundation, Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY), National Toxics Network (NTN), Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA), and New South Wales Nurses and Midwives Association (NSWNMA), signalled an intention to work together collaboratively to highlight the adverse health impacts and environmental damages associated with current minerals energy policy, particularly those relating to coal and coal seam gas.

"The risks to human health from energy and resources policy are not being well accounted for in current policy decisions," the joint statement said.

"Significant policy reform is needed to ensure health and wellbeing is not compromised by policy decisions in other sectors. Recognising the importance of the social and environmental determinants of health is an important part of that.

"The overriding concern is that climate change is being driven by energy choices and minerals policies that privilege and prioritise the extraction and combustion of fossil fuels over safer, healthier, lower emissions, renewable energy resources.

"The local health impacts from coal mining, transportation and combustion are also a significant concern, and communities living in proximity to these activities are experiencing adverse social impacts, such as loss of amenity, displacement, and loss of social capital as well as facing increased risks of respiratory disease, heart disease, and lung cancer.

"The rapid expansion of the fossil fuel (coal and unconventional gas) industries in Australia demands these issues be urgently addressed.

There were also serious concerns raised about the availability of data and support for health research on the issue. "A lack of monitoring and inadequate investment in research means there is grossly insufficient data available in Australia on health impacts to inform policy decisions. Research from international sources suggests major cause for concern in terms of exposure to pollution of water and air – these impacts need to be evaluated here in Australia.

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Health Groups Call for Urgent Action to Address Health Risks From Coal and Coal Seam Gas Continued...

"The health impacts of minerals and energy policy must be an area of research priority that is given significant levels of independent funding, and there needs to be greatly increased surveillance and monitoring to ensure sufficient data collection on which to base this research."

The meeting identified a need for education for health professionals and the community more broadly around the health implications of energy policy choices, and encouraged health professionals across all disciplines to advocate for minerals, energy and climate policies on the basis of health.

"Health professionals have an important role to play in educating decision makers and the community about the health implications of energy choices and the health implications of climate change."

The joint statement calls for precautionary approaches to policy and for the intergenerational consequences of decisions made now to be considered.

"The local and global effect of fossil fuel use on health and wellbeing is an immediate problem as well as an issue of intergenerational equity, with the exploitation of these resources causing irreversible harm to Earth's systems, compromising the health and security of future generations."

The groups have committed to work together and develop a framework for joint advocacy and announced plans for a campaign featuring health professionals calling for an urgent transition to safe, clean, renewable energy supply systems that do not contribute to global warming or harm human health and wellbeing.

The groups also announced an intention to develop a joint position statement on the health effects of Australia's minerals and energy policies to inform public discussion about balancing the benefits and harms of our mineral and energy choices, specifically issues such as unconventional gas, coal exports and renewable energy.

For further information, contact Fiona Armstrong, CAHA Convenor [convenor@caha.org.au](mailto:convenor@caha.org.au) or 0438900005.



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