

What's news? Environment, health, psychology

Compiled monthly by APS Public Interest and Environment team

July 2013

Psychology
for a Safe
Climate

Let's **speak** about climate change



YOU ARE INVITED TO THE LAUNCH!

The Psychology for a Safe Climate Writing Group have written a booklet to encourage readers to reflect on how they and those around them have responded to news of climate change. And it encourages community engagement.

COME TO OUR LAUNCH – hosted by Rod Quantock
Sunday July 14 at 11am.

Venue: North Fitzroy - [Email](#) here for directions
Morning tea and coffee, champagne and finger food.
[RSVP](#) for catering please.



BOOKS, REPORTS



Life Surfing Life Dancing Edited by Grant Blashki and Helen Sykes, *Life Surfing Life Dancing* has been published on the Future Leaders website and all the chapters are now available at http://www.futureleaders.com.au/book_chapters/index.php.

About the book: YouTube interview <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGJ39zHAANw>
Life Surfing Life Dancing is about living a healthy happy life. It brings together inspirational writers to discuss their views on wellbeing and health, based not only on their clinical and research roles, but also from their life experiences.



New paper on agnotology and scientific consensus

By John Cook

Posted on 19 June 2013 in Skeptical Science by John Cook

Agnotology is the study of ignorance and how it's produced. For example, examining how misinformation can generate misconceptions about climate change. An interesting (and influential, at least in my case) paper on this topic is [Agnotology as a teaching tool: Learning climate science by studying misinformation](#) by Daniel Bedford, a professor at Weber State University, Utah. Bedford suggests how examining and refuting misinformation is actually a powerful way to teach climate science, sharpen critical thinking skills and raise awareness of the scientific method. He then illustrates this with case studies applied in his own college classroom. This paper opened my eyes to the [educational opportunities in addressing misinformation](#) - an approach I adopted in the chapters "[Understanding Climate Change Denial](#)" and "[Rebuttals to Climate Myths](#)" in the textbook [Climate Change Science: A Modern Synthesis](#).



The Critical Decade 2013

Australia's Climate Commission [released a report](#) that issues a significant coal challenge to Australia's political and business leaders, confirming that "most fossil fuels must be left in the ground and cannot be burned" if we want to meet the goal of limiting global warming to below 2 degrees.

This is the first time an Australian Government body has come out and admitted that if Australia is to meet its stated commitment of joining the world in limiting warming to below two degrees, most of our coal must not be mined, sold and burnt.

The report found that:

- The burning of fossil fuels represents the most significant contributor to climate change.
- "From today until 2050 we can emit no more than 600 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide to have a good chance of staying within the 2°C limit."
- Based on estimates by the International Energy Agency, emissions from using all the world's fossil fuel reserves would be around **five times this budget**. Burning all fossil fuel reserves would lead to unprecedented changes in climate so severe that they will challenge the existence of our society as we know it today.

For more information, and for some Climate Commission info graphics online, go to:

Download the full report; *The Critical Decade 2013 Climate change science, risks and responses*.

Download the [Key Findings](#).

Download the summary; *The Critical Decade 2013: A summary of climate change science, risks and responses*.

Download [images](#).

Read [statements of support](#) for *The Critical Decade 2013*.

Download the [accessible version](#) of *The Critical Decade 2013*.

Link to the animation, [Critical choices in The Critical Decade](#).

If you're tweeting and promoting the Climate Commission report and its call to leave the coal in the ground, please also include the international hashtag #endcoal.

CONFERENCES

European Journal of Social Psychology

“The social psychology of climate change”

A special issue of the European Journal of Social Psychology

Editors: Kelly Fielding (University of Queensland, Australia), Matthew Hornsey (University of Queensland, Australia), and Janet Swim (Penn State University, U.S.A.)

There is broad consensus among climate scientists that the release of carbon emissions into the atmosphere is influencing our climate, and that failure to address this process will have dire consequences. Despite this, many people doubt that climate change is primarily caused by human activity, and only a small minority make personal sacrifices to respond to it. As such, climate change can be considered one of the greatest political, economic and moral challenges of our time.

The recognition that human activity is a major contributor to climate change means that social psychology is ideally placed to offer insights and solutions to address this issue. Social psychologists can play an important role in understanding climate change attitudes and beliefs, illuminating the motivation for both environmentally friendly and environmentally damaging behaviours, and identifying strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

This special issue aims to showcase the breadth and depth of social psychological approaches to climate change. We seek empirical contributions that present theoretical perspectives and data on social psychological aspects of climate change. These might include identifying the psychological foundations of climate change beliefs, the ways in which these beliefs can influence actions, and how messages about climate change can be framed to encourage more positive actions.

We invite contributions to be submitted electronically via <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ejsp>

In your cover letter, please indicate that the paper is submitted as part of the special issue on “The social psychology of climate change”. The deadline for submission of papers is October 7, 2013. The journal aims for a quick turnaround with the final version of the accepted papers due by April 30, 2014. The special section will be published as soon as possible thereafter.

For further information about the special issue please contact:
Kelly Fielding <mailto:k.fielding@uq.edu.au>



How can psychology and the social sciences help us face the reality of climate change? – Upcoming conference Melbourne, October 12th and 13th, 2013

An invitation to practising and research psychologists and those working in related fields, & climate activists.

Saturday Oct 12, (9.30am coffee) 10am to 5.30pm, & Sunday Oct 13, 2013 (9.30am coffee) 10am to 3pm
at the Community Room, Edinburgh Gardens, North Fitzroy.

Conference Dinner on Saturday evening at 7pm near to the conference venue.

Cost: Saturday \$60, \$30 concession (includes lunch), Sunday \$50, \$25 concession (includes lunch).

Calling for presentations

We are calling for brief outlines (150 words) of presentations (papers, talks, posters etc) by July 31.

Please indicate which of the following you would like to offer:

- 40 minute presentation including 10 minutes discussion time or
- 10 to 15 minute presentation including discussion time, or
- poster presentation for display and discussion during the lunch break.

Panel discussion: Should **climate messaging focus on *fear* or only be *positive***? Please let us know if you are keen to be included on the panel:

contact@psychologyforasafeclimate.org

Radical Emission Reduction Conference, London 10-11 December 2013

Today, in 2013, we face an unavoidably radical future. We either continue with rising emissions and reap the radical repercussions of severe climate change, or we acknowledge that we have a choice and pursue radical emission reductions: No longer is there a non-radical option. While there is a wealth of research and experience in delivering incremental reductions in demand, there is little cogent analysis of *non-marginal*, *step-change* and *systemic* reductions – either from a research or from a practitioner perspective.

This two-day conference, hosted at the Royal Society (London), will consider how to deliver reductions in energy consumption of at least 8% per year (~60% across a decade). It will foster an up-beat and can-do mentality. Whilst the conference is academic in format the event itself welcomes contributions from practitioners and decision makers from the public sector, business and civil-society, as well as academics and researchers across disciplines.

Please see the website for further details

<http://www.tyndall.ac.uk/radical-emission-reduction-conference-tyndall-centre-event-confronting-challenge-climate-change>

National Science Symposium - Safeguarding Human Health in Cities under Climate Pressures

Thursday 8 August 2013 9.30am - 5.30pm, refreshments and lunch provided

Finkel Theatre John Curtin School of Medical Research #131, Cnr Garran & Wards Roads, ANU

Something needs to be done to ensure that Australian cities are healthy, environmentally sustainable and enjoyable places to live. Most of Australia's population lives in urban areas. The science tells us that climate change is real, is increasing and affecting cities. Accompanying these social and environmental changes are growing levels of poor health and chronic diseases, levels which are distributed unequally across society. This Symposium will showcase new research on 'Urbanism, Climate Adaptation and Health' led by the National Centre for Epidemiology & Population Health in collaboration with leading Australian universities and funded by the CSIROs Climate Adaptation Flagship.

Keynote speakers

Professor Sharon Friel, Health Equity, Australian National University

Associate Professor Hilary Bambrick, Population Health, University Western Sydney

Dr Nigel Beebe, Senior Lecturer, Mosquito Borne Diseases, University of Queensland

Dr Peter Ryan, Program Manager, Eliminate Dengue Program, Monash University

Professor Scott Ritchie, Medical Entomologist, Queensland Health and Senior Research Fellow, Public Health, James Cook University

Professor Peter Newman, Sustainability, Curtin University

Professor Tony Capon, Head of Discipline, Public Health and Occupational Therapy, University Canberra

Panel discussion: Australian cities are killing people and the planet: what do we need to do?

The symposium will be closed by an afternoon panel discussion moderated by Paul Barclay, host of Big Ideas on ABC Radio National. This discussion will be recorded live and broadcast on Big Ideas.

Register at climatehealthandcities2013.eventbrite.com Registration is free and closes Friday 26 July 2013.

For more information, contact:

T 02 6125 2309

E ian.mcdonald@anu.edu.au

WEBSITES & RESOURCES



How behavioural science can lower your energy bill. TED Talk with Alex Laskey

What's a proven way to lower your energy costs? Would you believe: learning what your neighbor pays. Alex Laskey shows how a quirk of human behavior can make us all better, wiser energy users, with lower bills to prove it.

Alex Laskey helps power companies to help their customers cut down -- using data analysis, marketing and a pinch of psychology. Opower works with more than 80 utilities on three continents, and serves over 15 million customers. Since its launch in 2008, it has cumulatively saved utility customers more than \$200 million and 2 terawatt hours (TWh) of energy - enough to power a city of more than a quarter million people. It's all through a powerful combination of behavioral science, data analytics and good marketing.

In the next twelve months, Opower is on track to save another 1 TWh, equivalent to more than one half the generation of the entire US solar power plant industry in 2011.

Listen to Alex Laskey on this TED talk:

[Alex Laskey: How behavioral science can lower your energy bill](#)



Gender and Climate change

Women in developing countries particularly feel the impacts of climate change but also hold the solutions to taking effective action. Watch this [video](#) on how climate change is affecting Bangladesh and how women are being empowered to take action.

[One Million Women campaign](#) – aims to get 1 million women to each save a tonne of carbon dioxide, lots of ideas for personal action.

Have a look at the [Gender and Climate change](#) website - lots of resources on gender and climate change



Australian Government

Department of Industry, Innovation,
Climate Change, Science, Research
and Tertiary Education

Australian Government Strategic Research Priorities -

A set of new priorities for strategic research investment were announced on the 21 June 2013 by the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research Dr Craig Emerson, the Minister for Science and Research Senator Don Farrell, and Australia's Chief Scientist Professor Ian Chubb.

The challenges that Australia faces over the forthcoming decade are complex, multifaceted, to some extent unpredictable, and ultimately have no single solution.

The five most important challenges facing Australia are outlined below to ensure that Australia maintains its position in the global research landscape and retains and builds on its capacity to contribute to the global research effort. The challenges provide the overarching framework within which the strategic research priorities have been developed to support strategic effort in the national interest.

These challenges were developed considering the global picture, including Australia's position in the Asia Pacific region, and in consideration of the principles of research investment as defined in the [2012 National Research Investment Plan](#) (the Investment Plan).

The societal challenges are:

1. Living in a changing environment
2. Promoting population health and wellbeing
3. Managing our food and water assets
4. Securing Australia's place in a changing world
5. Lifting productivity and economic growth

The strategic research priorities will drive investment in areas that are of immediate and critical importance to Australia and its place in the world. They will catalyse focused investments in areas for which Australia must maintain a strong research and innovation capability.

Addressing the priorities and implementing solutions of national significance will lead to a major impact by building critical mass and scale in areas vital to Australia's future.

CAMPAIGNS TO CONSIDER



Millenium Alliance for Humanity and the Biosphere

The Millenium Alliance for Humanity and the Biosphere was established in 2012 by Paul Ehrlich. Its mission is to create a global network of social scientists, humanists, and scholars in related fields whose collective knowledge can be harnessed to support global civil society in shifting human cultures and institutions toward sustainable practices and an equitable and satisfying future.

They have written a 'Scientific Consensus on Maintaining Humanity's Life Support Systems in the 21st Century: Information for Policy Makers' which has been endorsed by scientists around the world.

To Join the MAHB in endorsing the Scientific Consensus on Maintaining Humanity's Life Support Systems, go to: <http://mahb.stanford.edu/whats-happening/consensus-statement-from-global-scientists-3/>



Go Fossil Free Australia – new campaign launched

In the wake of the Bill McKibben's 'Do the Math' tour, a new campaign has been launched in Australia - **a campaign to divest Australia's economy from fossil fuels. Check out the campaign by visiting gofossilfree.org/australia.**

It's time to move our money out of fossil fuels and into the clean energy economy. As members, beneficiaries, and customers of super funds, banks, governments, educational and religious institutions, each of us can play a powerful role in divesting Australia's economy from fossil fuels.

There are tools on the website there to get you started in taking personal action, and joining together with the movement into action. Over the coming months we'll be adding more tools and resources - but the effectiveness of this campaign is down to you and the people around you. Together we can bring forward a safer climate and a brighter, more renewable future for Australia.



URGENT: FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT

“Market Forces and 350.org have launched an open letter to the big four banks, initiated by over 60 prominent Australians! The letter doesn't muck about - it calls for an end to investment, and the start of divestment, in the fossil fuel industry, in order to avoid runaway climate change.

The letter is here - <http://openletter.marketforces.org.au> - and we would really appreciate it you'd be able to help us out by signing it and encouraging others to sign and share it.

There is some pretty darn good talent on the letter, including scientists, academics, health professionals, writers, artists, musicians, religious leaders and environmentalists. Even the two-time Booker Prize winner Peter Carey, Nobel Laureate in Literature John Coetzee, and two-time Olympic rower Victoria Roberts is on board!”

Julien Vincent, Lead Campaigner - MARKET FORCES