

# chain reaction

Issue #130  
September 2017  
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The National Magazine of Friends of the Earth Australia

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

## ANOTHER RECORD YEAR FOR RENEWABLES

Stop the Intervention

Permaculture and activism

The campaign against the environment movement

Nanoparticles in infant formula products

Pesticides and drinking water

Growing movement against nuclear weapons

Environmental defenders killed in record numbers

NT fracking pipeline construction looms

Controversial Bougainville mine hits roadblock

# INDIGENOUS STATEMENT TO THE U.N. NUCLEAR WEAPONS BAN TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

“

*For more than seven decades, nuclear weapons have posed an intolerable, ever-present danger to all peoples and the planet as a whole. Because we abhor these instruments of terror and mass destruction, we warmly welcome the United Nations negotiations for a treaty to ban them.*

*We write to remind those drafting this important new treaty about the ongoing harm caused by the use of nuclear weapons, and by more than two thousand nuclear test explosions around the globe. Indigenous communities have borne the brunt of these deadly experiments. Our land, our sea, our communities, and our physical bodies carry this legacy with us now, and for unknown generations to come.*

*Governments and colonial forces exploded nuclear bombs on our sacred lands – upon which we depend for our lives and livelihoods, and which contain places of critical cultural and spiritual significance – believing they were worthless. They saw us as expendable, offering little or no protection against the harmful effects of radioactive contamination.*

*We were told that the explosions would benefit humankind, that they would make the world safer. But we learnt that was not true. We learnt that these bombs could only ever be a source of death, misery and destruction.*

*We were never asked for, and we never gave, permission to poison our soil, food, rivers and oceans. We continue to resist inhumane acts of radioactive racism.*

*The nuclear tests permanently dislocated us from our homes and disconnected us from our traditional way of life. Future generations will never be able to enjoy and live off the land and the ocean in the way that our ancestors had done for thousands of years before the mushroom clouds descended.*

*In pursuit of ever-deadlier weapons of mass destruction, the authorities have subjected our peoples to epidemics of cancers, chronic diseases and congenital abnormalities. They have treated us as “guinea pigs”, in some cases denying us access to adequate medical care and even our own medical records.*

*The mining of uranium – the essential first step in the production of every nuclear bomb – has also taken a terrible toll on Indigenous communities in many parts of the world. Tailings and other nuclear wastes that remain toxic into eternity have been dumped on our lands and in the ocean against our will. In some countries, our Traditional lands are under ongoing pressure to be the solution to the world’s nuclear waste problem.*

*As a result, we have experienced immeasurable pain and heartache. We have lost many loved ones. We have lived with the anguish of not knowing what impact the unleashed radiation might one day have on our children and grandchildren.*

*Our suffering cannot be undone. Our lands can never be fully restored. Some of our customs will never be revived and will forever remain disrupted. But we hope that, in this new treaty to ban nuclear weapons, governments will at last acknowledge and make reparations for the harm inflicted upon Indigenous peoples, communities, lands and sea.*

*We hope, too, that governments of the day will recognise that Indigenous peoples’ rights matter, as do the rights of all victims of nuclear bombs everywhere. In solidarity with the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we insist that you do everything in your power to ensure that no one else ever suffers as we have.*”



## Endorsed by:

Australian Nuclear Free Alliance  
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Collaborative Visions  
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**Chain Reaction website**

www.foe.org.au/chain-reaction

**Chain Reaction contact details**

PO Box 222, Fitzroy, Victoria, 3065.

email: chainreaction@foe.org.au

phone: (03) 9419 8700

**Chain Reaction team**

Jim Green, Tessa Sellar

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Tessa Sellar

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# Support Friends of the Earth

1

Help ensure FoE remains a vibrant & independent voice for social and environmental justice.

Give your support by:

- Becoming an **Active Friend** by giving monthly tax-deductible donations
- Becoming a **New member**
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The donation will be by (please fill out appropriate card details below):

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A Service Agreement will be sent to you upon receipt of this form. All contributions are tax deductible with the exception of \$20 per year to cover a membership fee.

## Membership

Become a FoE member with a yearly membership payment:

- \$165 **Supporting Member** (\$100 tax deductible)
- \$95 **Organisation**    \$90 **Household**
- \$65 **Waged Person**    \$45 **Concession**
- One year**    **Ongoing** (Credit Card or Direct Debit only)

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Make a one-off donation (over \$2.00 is tax-deductible):

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3

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Request you, until further notice in writing, to debit my/our account described in the schedule below, any amounts which Friends of the Earth Inc may debit or change me/us through our direct debit system. I/We understand that 1) the bank/financial institution may in its absolute discretion determine the order of priority of payment by it of any moneys pursuant to this request or any other authority or mandate. 2) The bank/financial institution may in its discretion at any time by notice in writing to me/us terminate the request as to future debits. Bendigo Bank Direct Debit User ID no: 342785

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Friends of the Earth (FoE) Australia is a federation of independent local groups.

You can join FoE by contacting your local group – see the inside back cover of Chain Reaction for contact details or visit [foe.org.au/local-groups](http://foe.org.au/local-groups)

There is a monthly FoE Australia email newsletter – subscribe via the website: [www.foe.org.au](http://www.foe.org.au)

To financially support our work, please visit [foe.org.au/donate](http://foe.org.au/donate)

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### Here we go again!

The environment movement is under attack again – this time with a federal Treasury review. The long-running campaign kicked off by the Institute of Public Affairs and enthusiastically endorsed by conservative MPs, the right-wing media, and coal industry, is seeking to strip environmental groups of their tax-deductible donation status.

Such donations make up a large majority of Friends of the Earth's income. If the government finally succeeds in removing our DGR status, it will be the end of Friends of the Earth in its current form. This will be equally true for any environmental group which has staff and engages in advocacy and protest.

Anti-environmentalist right-wingers have launched several attacks on the environment movement and each time with your support we have staved off these ideologically driven attacks.

Please help FoE:

1. Join Friends of the Earth – find your local group at [www.foe.org.au/local\\_groups](http://www.foe.org.au/local_groups) or use the form on page 4 of Chain Reaction.
2. Small monthly donations go a long way to keeping Friends of the Earth active: [https://foe.nationbuilder.com/monthly\\_donations](https://foe.nationbuilder.com/monthly_donations)
3. More information on the attacks: [www.foe.org.au/here\\_we\\_go\\_again](http://www.foe.org.au/here_we_go_again)

### FoE Brisbane Climate Frontlines update

International discussion of climate migration has taken on a new momentum, and Climate Frontlines now has three students ready to begin significant research on the issue. One of these is student from the Sciences Po Lille University in France, who will come to Brisbane as an intern in July and August.

After a conference on “Open and Closed Borders: the Geopolitics of Migration” at Otago University in Dunedin, Ursula Rakova, the Director of Tulele Peisa, will spend a week in Brisbane. Three fundraising events are being organised for the occasion, with the goal of completing the last two family houses on the first relocation site.

Climate Frontlines is partnering with the Pacific Islands Council of Queensland to prepare for an intensive seminar on climate change for and with the Pacific diaspora community leaders and young people, including key spokespeople from the Pacific Islands, in the first half of 2018.

Fiji holds the Presidency of this year's UNFCCC COP23 and the Pacific governments and NGOs are gearing

up to make sure Pacific climate change concerns are front and centre at the conference in November. Germany is hosting the COP in Bonn, November 6–17, on behalf of the Fiji government, and a number of German NGOs are facilitating a strong preparation, presence and participation of Pacific civil society organisations and NGOs. The latter have been actively strategising for participation in a preparatory Climate Action Pacific Partnerships event scheduled for July 3–4 in Suva.

In April, FoE Brisbane Climate Frontlines worked closely with the Pacific Islands Council of Queensland to organise community events for the Oceania Ecosystem Services Conference held in Brisbane. The aim was to highlight the deep non-monetary dimensions of ecosystems in Pacific Island and Torres Strait Island cultures, and the huge impacts of climate change on ecosystems, with all the consequences for peoples' lives and livelihoods.

– Wendy Flannery,  
*Climate Frontlines, FoE Brisbane*

### Dirt Radio has a new time slot!

Dirt Radio, FoE's radio show on 3CR community radio in Melbourne keeps on keeping on -- at the new time of Tuesdays 9:30-10:00am, every week. It's a program presented by Friends of the Earth campaigners and activists that digs down into the dirt on important environmental and social justice issues - exploring the campaigns, issues and communities involved in defending the environment, locally, nationally and globally. Climate change, coal mining, fracking, indigenous land and water rights, emerging bio-technologies, militarism and the environment, nuclear energy, the transition to renewables, globalization and trade, public transport, recycling, and financial divestment are just some of the issues covered each week. Dirt Radio is presented by activists who are on the front line and at the cutting edge of the environmental movement. Each show features interviews focused on specific environmental or social justice issues that Friends of the Earth is campaigning on or affiliated to.

3CR, 855 on the AM band. Available on-line - streamed and podcast - at [www.3cr.org.au/dirtradio](http://www.3cr.org.au/dirtradio)

## 'Walk This Way' is coming to Melbourne in October

FoE Melbourne is kick-starting the launch of our new Sustainable Cities campaign with a walk across our city - highlighting the key areas of community action in the face of climate change. On Saturday October 7, we will walk Melbourne's Capital City Trail. Walk This Way will be an opportunity to highlight the key areas of community action in the face of climate change and build our vision of a sustainable city.

Getting Involved is simple!

1. Sign-up Online: head to [www.walkthisway.org.au](http://www.walkthisway.org.au) to sign up to #WalkThisWay.
2. Get Sponsored: Ask your friends, your family, your neighbours to donate to Friends of the Earth to sponsor you for your walk.
3. Spread the Word: Invite others to sign up and Walk This Way with us - a journey is always better shared!

3. Get Walking: You can be part of the whole walk or join at a number of meeting points along the trail (more information on the website!)

When you #WalkThisWay you'll be supporting our new Sustainable Cities campaign and our work for social and environmental justice!

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

[www.facebook.com/  
events/957048594435763](https://www.facebook.com/events/957048594435763)



### Protect our progress on gasfields and renewables

Since 2011, Friends of the Earth's Coal & Gasfield Free Vic campaign has worked with communities across Victoria to protect farmland and water from risky onshore gasfields. We helped secure a permanent ban on fracking here in Victoria. We also played a key role building consensus around the need for state government policies to grow renewable energy. Our Yes 2 Renewables campaign saw the Victorian Renewable Energy Target go from concept to reality. However, Federal Energy and Environment Minister Josh Frydenberg has been attacking the Victorian Renewable Energy Target and now he's escalating his call to rip up Victoria's nation-leading gas ban. We've fought side-by-side with communities for too long to have this happen. We're fired up to defend these key policies.

Please sign up for action alerts and help us respond to developments as we respond to this attack by the federal government. [www.melbournefoe.org.au/protect\\_our\\_progress](http://www.melbournefoe.org.au/protect_our_progress)

### FoE Far North Queensland roaming dogs campaign

FoE Far North Queensland, based in Kuranda, has had some success with a roaming dogs petition and campaign:

1. Every dog now must be desexed unless you have a permit to breed.
2. Every puppy sold or free to a good home must be micro-chipped with the breeder's permit number.
3. Many Regional Councils are doing education and awareness campaigns on responsible dog ownership.
4. Councils are now doing audits for animal management compliance.

But there are still problems in regional shires and more that needs to be done to stop dogs menacing and attacking native and endangered wildlife including cassowaries.

*More information:*

[www.foefnq.org.au/cassowary\\_ keystone\\_roaming\\_dogs\\_campaign](http://www.foefnq.org.au/cassowary_keystone_roaming_dogs_campaign)

[www.foefnq.org.au/cassowary\\_ keystone\\_conservation](http://www.foefnq.org.au/cassowary_keystone_conservation)

*To support the campaign:*

[www.foefnq.org.au/roaming\\_dogs\\_ volunteer](http://www.foefnq.org.au/roaming_dogs_volunteer)

### Stop the Jemena gas pipeline in the NT!

FoE is involved in a solidarity campaign to stop the Jemena pipeline which would open the Northern Territory up to fracking. We are working with Lock the Gate and the Frack Free NT Alliance to share the skills and experience of the #VicGasBan to stop this protect before it is started. Jemena intend to build a 622 km Northern Gas Pipeline that is designed to open up the NT to an onshore gas industry and will put pressure on the NT government to lift the current moratorium on fracking. The majority of pastoralists and Traditional Owners across the NT do not want their lands and waterways transformed into industrial fracking gasfields.

*Please sign the petition:*

[http://dontfracktheterritory. lockthegate.org.au/frack\\_free\\_nt\\_ petition](http://dontfracktheterritory.lockthegate.org.au/frack_free_nt_petition)

*More information:*

*See the article on p.42 of this issue of Chain Reaction*

#NoNTPL

[www.foe.org.au/jemenas\\_fracking\\_ pipeline\\_shown\\_to\\_be\\_a\\_white\\_ elephant\\_by\\_concerned\\_citizens](http://www.foe.org.au/jemenas_fracking_pipeline_shown_to_be_a_white_elephant_by_concerned_citizens)

## Earthworker working on the renewable energy transition

FoE affiliate Earthworker has been awarded an Environment and Sustainability grant from the Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund. Earthworker aims to foster and seed a network of worker-owned cooperatives providing meaningful work in sustainable industries, and already has a number of burgeoning partnerships underway.

The grant will be used to support and consolidate Earthworker's Cooperative Energy Solutions start-up in Morwell, Victoria. The cooperative plans to manufacture renewable technologies, beginning with renewable hot water systems – tanks interchangeable with solar panel, heat pump, evacuated tubes or solar panel and battery, as well as gas.

Earthworker plans to partner with government and social housing organisations to provide hot water systems to bring down energy costs in low-income households, offer union workers hot water systems through enterprise bargaining agreements, and hopes to secure sales through collective environmental and community networks. Earthworker also has a 'Voltswagon' to promote the renewable energy transition – a portable, solar-powered sodium-nickel battery on our locally manufactured trailer.

– *Laura Williams,*  
[laura.williams@foe.org.au](mailto:laura.williams@foe.org.au),  
<http://earthworkercooperative.com.au/>

## Is your health insurer investing in pollution and global warming?

Have you got private health insurance? If you do, it's likely that your premiums are being invested in coal, oil and gas companies. It makes no sense for health insurers to be investing in the industries causing climate change. Yet only HCF and Latrobe Health Services have so far responded to their customers' wishes. HCF has already divested its international shares of coal, oil and gas companies and has committed to developing a strategy for its Australian shares. Latrobe Health Services is not currently invested in fossil fuels and has pledged never to invest in them in the future.

Check out where your health fund stands and ask them to go fossil fuel free – visit [www.marketforces.org.au/campaigns/insurance/health/](http://www.marketforces.org.au/campaigns/insurance/health/) or contact Pablo Brait from FoE affiliate Market Forces to find out more, [pablo@marketforces.org.au](mailto:pablo@marketforces.org.au)

## A renewable energy park for Point Henry?

The Point Henry aluminium smelter was located near Geelong and operated for many decades prior to its closure in 2014. Since then, both Alcoa (who operated the smelter) and the state government have been considering what to do with the site. Friends of the Earth believes that the old smelter site would make an ideal location for a renewable energy park. In 2016, FoE started to meet with interested locals and organisations to discuss whether a renewable energy park could be a viable possibility for the site. You can find out about this proposal at [www.melbournefoe.org.au/a\\_renewable\\_energy\\_park\\_for\\_point\\_henry](http://www.melbournefoe.org.au/a_renewable_energy_park_for_point_henry)

## New GM-free shopping list out now!

The 2017 edition of the GM-Free Shopping List includes many brands not listed in earlier editions. The GM-Free Australia Alliance (GMFAA) – a Friends of the Earth affiliate – found growing interest from food producers this year to the demand for groceries free of genetically manipulated organisms (GMOs).

GMFAA spokesperson Jessica Harrison said: "Australians passionate about the right to choose have been voting with their wallets. Growing consumer awareness about genetic manipulation is increasing demand for both conventional and organic foods, supporting their producers and adding to market pressure on food producers to choose non-GMO suppliers. More than 50,000 Australians, New Zealanders, and Pacific Islanders have joined local and national consumer groups that explicitly seek products free of GMOs."

## FoE Sydney – Bust the Bill!

FoE Sydney has launched a campaign for more affordable and comfortable tenant housing. The Bill Busters campaign aims to fix up the worst, most expensive to run rental homes. We believe that everyone has a right to live in a home which is safe, comfortable, and doesn't cost the world to run! Fixing up tenant housing is a simple and effective way to relieve people from financial stress, improve health, cut emissions, and adapt to climate change.

*More information:*

[www.foe.org.au/tenantrights](http://www.foe.org.au/tenantrights)

[www.facebook.com/foesydney/](http://www.facebook.com/foesydney/)

*Endorse the campaign at*

[www.foe.org.au/rase\\_campaign](http://www.foe.org.au/rase_campaign)

GMFAA distributes the GM-Free Shopping List free of charge at local, regional, and national events and it is posted at [www.gmfreeaustralia.org.au/resources](http://www.gmfreeaustralia.org.au/resources)

Meanwhile, GMFAA member Gene Ethics notes that the Office of Gene Technology Regulator's GM safety rules were breached at least 32 times from 2011-16 around Australia. GM vaccines were tipped down a sink; sheep grazed on a GM trial; GM seed spilled onto 29km of highway; and GM material was stored in an unauthorised lab. Gene Ethics says tougher, proactive laws and regulations are needed on the recently invented, new GM techniques and their products. Yet the OGTR is now assessing options to deregulate them all immediately, with incomplete scientific evidence and no history of safe use.



Brands that label GM-free and support your right to know

Download your copy of the list at -  
[www.gmfreeaustralia.org.au/resources](http://www.gmfreeaustralia.org.au/resources)

### GM-Free Shopping List

Brands free of genetically manipulated organisms (GMOs)

2017

## Disinfection by-products in drinking water

For some time, disinfection by-products (DBPs) have been a concern to Friends of the Earth (FoE). In many water supplies across Australia, the number one toxicant of concern are disinfection byproducts. Disinfection byproducts are formed when chlorine reacts with organic molecules in the source water. Disinfection byproducts have been linked to increases in bladder cancer.

In November 2016, FoE sent a submission to the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) concerning some of FoE's research on this topic. The NHMRC is currently reviewing safe levels of DBPs for the first time in 20 years. One class of DBPs, trihalomethanes, have a safe drinking water guideline set three times higher than similar guidelines in the United States. In many communities in South Australia for example, levels of trihalomethanes frequently exceed the Australian guideline of 250µg/L. Perhaps half of Australia could be exposed to drinking water at levels that exceed US guidelines.

The problem water authorities have is that they are concerned that if they lower disinfection levels, as a means of lowering DBPs, this could lead to an increase in microbiological organisms and water borne disease, which is their number one fear.

One way to lessen the impact of trihalomethanes is to supplement chlorine disinfection with ammonia, in a process called chloramination. Chlorine and ammonia react to form chloramine, which is a longer-lasting disinfectant.

In central Victoria, the local water authority Central Highlands Water was having significant issues regarding high levels of trihalomethanes, particularly during the centennial drought in the Maryborough region. A decision was made to chloramine the water supply in 2009. This decision saw an immediate drop in trihalomethanes in communities such as Maryborough, Avoca, Carisbrook and Talbot.

However, a byproduct of chloramination is NDMA (N-Nitrosodimethylamine). NDMA can also be a byproduct of several industrial processes and is a component of rocket fuel. It is also found in certain foods (particularly those that are smoked, cooked or cured), cigarette smoke and beer. NDMA is a known liver toxin and a suspected human carcinogen.

In Australia, NDMA has a guideline level in drinking water of 0.1µg/L (that's one tenth of one drop in an Olympic-sized swimming pool). In the US, the admissible concentration in drinking water is much lower at 0.007µg/L or 93% lower than the Australian guideline.

Recent information sent to FoE during multiple Freedom of Information applications to Victorian water authorities has revealed that in at least four communities in central Victoria – Avoca, Maryborough, Carisbrook and Talbot – NDMA levels in 2016–17 have been amongst the highest possibly ever recorded in Australia. The highest level of 0.45µg/L was recorded at Talbot on 1 September 2016. This is 4.5 times higher than the Australian drinking water guideline and 64 times higher than what would be accepted in the US. Levels in Avoca have also exceeded 0.4µg/L on two occasions.

What is unclear at this stage is whether these exceedingly high levels been reported to the Victorian Department of Health and whether residents in these four communities been informed by Central Highlands Water about the high levels of NDMA that have been recorded. FoE intends to write to the Department of Health and the water authority to determine what is going on.

In early 2016, FoE received complaints from Maryborough about the quality of the water in this town. It reeked of ammonia and caused body rashes after showering. Residents had no idea that they were being exposed to possibly some of the highest levels of NDMA ever recorded in Australia.

- *Anthony Amis / FoE Melbourne*

## Farewell to Avant Card

Avant Card, established in 1992 and Australia's first free postcard advertising company, closed its doors at the end of July 2017. Ground-breaking in the early 1990's, innovative, fun, unique, informative, educational, quirky, mysterious and beautiful – Avant Card was a tangible out-of-home medium that was incredibly popular with people of all ages. Avant Card founder and managing director Pat Mackle said: "It is with

sadness, tinged with immense pride, that the time has come for the very last Avant Card to grace our displays. Who would have thought that 25 years ago, as an unemployed 28-year-old, we could have come this far, placing a postcard a day into the hands of delighted people." Avant Card generously supported many Friends of the Earth campaigns over the years. Thanks Pat!

## Act on Climate push for Climate Budget

FoE Melbourne's Act on Climate team lobbied for and helped secured strong commitments to Victoria's Emissions Reductions Targets (ERT's) earlier this year, and are working towards Victoria's first 'Climate Budget'. However the Andrews government's May 2017 budget was disappointing – expenditure on climate change action was underwhelming.

With the Turnbull government stalling climate action, we need leadership at the state level now more than ever. FoE's new Act on Climate campaign is getting to work. We want to see the Andrews government deliver a climate budget in 2018. And that's in addition to FoE's work around the state coal policy, seeing the VRET through the Parliament, and pushing for deep Emissions Reduction Targets.

We're going to need your help to secure a greater level of investment in climate action in next year's budget. If you'd like to get involved in the new campaign, please reply email Leigh Ewbank, Act on Climate coordinator, leigh.ewbank@foe.org.au. And see Leigh's article on p.34 of this issue of Chain Reaction.

## FoE Australia joins the Stop Adani Alliance

FoE Australia has joined the Stop Adani Alliance and endorsed the Alliance Declaration to stop the Adani Carmichael coal mine, rail and port project. [www.stopadani.com](http://www.stopadani.com), #StopAdani

FoE Melbourne's Quit Coal organised a 'Burn Calories Not Coal Bike Rally' on July 29, cycling through marginal seats in Melbourne from Michael Danby's office in St Kilda to Bill Shorten's office in Moonee Ponds. The aim was to draw attention to plans to support that Adani coal mine with a \$1 billion loan. #BurnCaloriesNotCoal

On August 4, Quit Coal activists joined Wangan and Jagalingou people at the office of right-wing federal Labor MP David Feeney to protest his support for controversial amendments to the Native Title Act – amendments that facilitated Adani exploration and planning for the mega coal mine.

FoE affiliate Market Forces has compiled The Adani List – a guide to every company with a history of doing business with Adani or at risk of getting involved in the mega mine. The website also has an online form so you can write to the companies to encourage them to get out or stay out of the project. [www.marketforces.org.au/info/key-issues/theadanielist/](http://www.marketforces.org.au/info/key-issues/theadanielist/)



## Anti-nuclear campaign update

Sadly, the new WA Labor government has broken its promise to block uranium mine proposals that had not been approved by the former Liberal government before the March 2017 election. Thus four mines could possibly proceed – Mulga Rocks, Yeelirrie, Wiluna and Kintyre – though that won't happen for some years because the uranium market is in a protracted slump. A legal challenge has been launched against Yeelirrie by the WA Conservation Council and members of the Tjiwarl Native Title group – to find out more and donate to support the legal challenge, visit [www.ccwa.org.au/yeelirriecourt](http://www.ccwa.org.au/yeelirriecourt). Two of the uranium projects are owned by controversial Canadian mining giant Cameco (see the May 2017

FoE report, 'The Global Uranium Industry & Cameco's Troubled History', [www.foe.org.au/anti-nuclear](http://www.foe.org.au/anti-nuclear)). From August 4 to September 2, the Walkatjurra Walkabout, from Wiluna to Leonora on Wangkatja country, will help strengthen connections with communities affected by proposed uranium mines in WA (<https://walkingforcountry.com/walkatjurra-walkabout>).

South Australian Premier Jay Weatherill said in June 2017 that the plan to import vast amounts of high-level nuclear waste from around the world is 'dead'. The SA Labor government's formal position is that the proposal should be put to a referendum, but in light of the statement

by Weatherill – and the clear opposition of the SA Liberal Party, the SA Greens and Nick Xenophon's party – the project is as dead as it possibly can be. Thus two years of intense work by Traditional Owners, environment groups and many others has resulted in an amazing victory!

[www.foe.org.au/high\\_level\\_waste\\_dump\\_for\\_south\\_australia\\_declared\\_dead](http://www.foe.org.au/high_level_waste_dump_for_south_australia_declared_dead)

Unfortunately two sites in SA – near Hawker in the Flinders Ranges, and Kimba at the top of the Eyre Peninsula – are being targeted by the federal government for a national nuclear waste dump. FoE has successfully fundraised for a drone to help Adnyamathanha Traditional Owners to continue their important work documenting the ancient landscape of the Flinders Ranges, recording story lines, and protecting the country from the planned nuclear dump ([www.chuffed.org/project/flindersdrone](http://www.chuffed.org/project/flindersdrone)). FoE and the Australian Conservation Foundation wrote a joint submission opposing the plan for a nuclear dump on farming land near Kimba – but unfortunately the government has progressed to the next stage of assessing the site ([www.foe.org.au/anti-nuclear](http://www.foe.org.au/anti-nuclear)).

On August 6, FoE Melbourne's Nuclear Free Collective organised a commemoration of the atomic bombing of Japanese cities Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. The

event featured a live skype discussion with hibakusha (atomic bomb victim) Mr Norie; talks by Adnyamathanha Traditional Owner Dr Jillian Marsh and Tim Wright from the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons; a peace crane-making workshop by our new friends from Geelong; and Jessie Boylan's short film 'Maralinga Pieces' (<http://jessieboylan.com/maralinga-pieces>). About 60 people attended. Big thanks to Ayame, AC and Jemila for making this such a successful event!

[www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1184955944983760.1073741840.317031948442835](http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1184955944983760.1073741840.317031948442835)

On June 17, FoE campaigners around the country supported the National Day of Action for a ban on nuclear weapons, organised by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. Events were held in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Darwin, Hobart, Perth and Canberra and coincided with events all around the world including the Women's March to Ban the Bomb in New York. The United Nations recently negotiated a treaty to ban nuclear weapons, so now the pressure is on to force nuclear weapons states and their allies (including the Australian government – which boycotted the treaty negotiations) – to get serious about nuclear disarmament.

[www.icanw.org/day-of-action](http://www.icanw.org/day-of-action)  
[www.facebook.com/icanw.au](http://www.facebook.com/icanw.au)



March to ban the bomb,  
Melbourne, 17 June 2017

# Ten Years Too Long – Stop the Intervention

*Statement from the StandUp2017 Conference  
Mbantua, Alice Springs, 26 June 2017*

The StandUp2017 Conference in Alice Springs brought together Indigenous and non-Indigenous people from around the Northern Territory and beyond to reflect on the last 10 years of the Intervention and to discuss a way forward to improve living circumstances for our nation's First Peoples.

Topics including community governance, housing, income management, jobs, prisons, the Stolen Generation and Treaty were discussed. A range of powerful and moving speakers shared stories of what has gone wrong and how Aboriginal lives can be better.

A national day of action (NDA) will be held when the current Northern Territory Royal Commission hands down its report in September. The NDA will demand an end to the Intervention, shut youth prisons and to bring the children home.

The following is a statement made in collaboration by participants of the StandUp2017 conference which concluded with a rally in Alice Springs.

For more information and for video and audio recordings of the conference see:

Website: [rollbacktheintervention.wordpress.com](http://rollbacktheintervention.wordpress.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/InterventionRollbackActionGroup](http://www.facebook.com/InterventionRollbackActionGroup)

Youtube: [www.youtube.com/user/Alt2Intervention/videos](http://www.youtube.com/user/Alt2Intervention/videos)

Twitter: @IRAG\_NT #StandUp2017  
#stoptheintervention #NTIntervention  
#alicesprings

## Conference Statement

Rosalie Kunoth-Monks "You better believe it, when the Intervention first hit in 2007 community councils were decimated."

Matthew Ryan "Trying to get the government to listen to us, is like a brick wall."

Elaine Peckham "When the Intervention came- they took away services from homelands. No health services. I had to move back to town. I didn't want to."

Yarrentye Arltere Larapinta Valley Town Camp: "Ten years too long. Ten years of hardship, neglect and broken promises. We want Aboriginal control for Aboriginal people by Aboriginal people. Apmereke Tweye and Kwertengwerle: Traditional owners and custodians: our Law, our Way."

We need to keep our culture strong.

We need to be in control of decision making.

We want self-determination.

After ten years the Intervention has met none of its objectives. There are more people in jail, more children being taken away, there is more unemployment.

This StandUp2017 conference makes the following comments and call outs.

**Repeal Racist Intervention Laws:** Racist laws introduced through the Intervention have created apartheid and are still with us. Repeal the Stronger Futures laws. Repeal changes to social security law that allow for control over our money. End the ban on consideration of customary law in bail and sentencing. Bring back the permit system.

**Community Governance:** Ngarla Kunoth Monks: "We have our own structures, our voices have been put down and oppressed."

The conference calls for restoring community councils and transferring assets back to the communities from the shires. This is what will improve peoples' lives.

Town camps want more houses, more parks, childcare at the community centres, and control of their own money. There needs to be compensation for town camps. It's time to pay the rent.

**Homelands:** Veronica and Pamela Lynch: "Cultural and land management is real work."

Sharon Anderson: "Give us back ownership of our lands, so we can benefit our own people through our law and culture."

We need to create job opportunities on our homelands. We want to manage our own affairs through our own governance.

**Housing:** Barbara Shaw: "they took over community living areas and Aboriginal community housing rights."

We can't be healthy without proper housing as our foundation. We want to make decisions about our own housing. We want to have community control over our housing. We desperately need more houses on all communities and homelands.

**Education:** Valerie Paterson "We believe that our children learning in their first language are more confident in themselves and learn more efficiently. We have seen this with our own eyes. We know how to teach our children both ways too."

Sylvia Neale "One hour a day to teach their language, it's not enough"

The government must promote bilingual education, and schooling in first languages. Stop punishing parents with fines and Centrelink breaches.

*"Ten years too long. Ten years of hardship, neglect and broken promises. We want Aboriginal control for Aboriginal people by Aboriginal people."*

**Prison:** Rosalie Kunoth Monks: "What I call for is action line, they are our children."

Dylan Voller "If the government wants to help us they should come down to our communities and elders and see what they have to say."

There are many alternatives and improvements that could be made to the prison system. Communities can be supported to have more contact in prison and instead of prison, we need more healing spaces, Bush Mob is good.

The conference believes that children should not be transferred away from Alice Springs to Darwin. We also believe that youth prisons are not helpful, and that Don Dale needs to be closed.

We call for the closure of youth prisons, and a national day of action when the Royal Commission into protection and detention of children in the Northern Territory releases their final report.

**Jobs:** People used to have jobs in their communities - we need a new jobs program to bring this back. Now on CDP people are starving and being evicted from their houses. We need community control and ownership of community assets. Everyone who works needs at least the minimum wage. Real jobs must receive real wages and real conditions. We need a national movement. No more CDP. We support the First Nations Workers Alliance started by the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

**Income Management:** There is no evidence that compulsory income management works.

Vanessa Poulson: "I have learnt to live with basics card now but really would like to have control of my own money."

Scrap compulsory income management

**Stolen Generations:** It keeps going, and getting worse. With the money it takes to look after a stolen kid, communities could fix their problems themselves. Stop stealing our kids. Urgently bring back the many hundreds of children taken through the Intervention. We are going to set up a GMAR group here. (Grandmothers against Removals). Yingiya Mark Guyula MLA can be contacted with names of stolen children and has pledged to fight to bring them home.

**Treaty:** Rev Dr Djiniyini Gondarra OAM: "Australia is the only Commonwealth country in the world that has never entered into negotiations to establish a treaty. There needs to be diplomatic dialogue between the Australian governments and the First Nations. No more kissing the government's shoes."

There must be recognition of our sovereignty which has never been ceded, and which has been undermined by the Intervention. Our law must be recognised by the Westminster system. The governments must stop creating more policy and measures for Aboriginal people without consultation.

*Lift the ban on customary law.*

*We are ready for Makarrata.*

*Treaty now!*

*We stand together.*



Standup2017 Conference, Alice Springs, 26 June 2017.

# Permaculture and Activism

David Holmgren

Permaculture is a design system for sustainable land use and living. It articulates and applies the design principles of nature in new ways appropriate to the energy descent era of industrial civilisation. These design principles are embedded in an ethical framework derived from the commonalities of indigenous and traditional cultures of place.

Permaculture activism uses global understanding to inform local action at the personal, household and community scale to create models capable of viral proliferation.

Permaculture activists seek to create the *world we do want* by direct constructive action rather than stopping the *world we don't want* by restrictive action. Permaculture's popularity, especially with environmentally aware youth, over three generations can be partly attributed to a "good cop/bad cop" synergy with more conventional oppositional activism. Thus, those who have done their time in direct action in the forest (or shale gas blockades) are often supported by those who spend their positive energy on the *permablitz* front line.

Similarly for more mature people, being the change we want to see in the world, is far more empowering, than using all our capacity and credentials to push for policy change from the top down.

## Pushback from convention activism

While the support for permaculture and positive environmentalism in general has grown stronger in recent years, there is also a pushback from those committed to the top down and oppositional strategies. The argument is that composting your garden may be good for you but it does little to help bring about the necessary structural changes in society that, it is argued, can only come through big processes such as

1. corporate capitalism making big bucks doing good,
2. top down policy reforms driven by fearless political leaders, or
3. mass movements threatening revolution to force change at the top.

Those committed to these pathways argue theirs is the best. Often the pathway of changing the world by changing ourselves is ignored or denigrated as self-obsessed navel-gazing.

In the permaculture movement, the value of this DIY approach is taken for granted but 'permies' often have difficulty in articulating to others why this approach is at least as important as the other three in shaping a more positive future for ourselves, humanity and nature.

I want to go one step further to articulate why the DIY and DIO (doing it ourselves)

approaches of permaculture are the most efficient, resilient and empowering ways to focus our own limited power in the world.

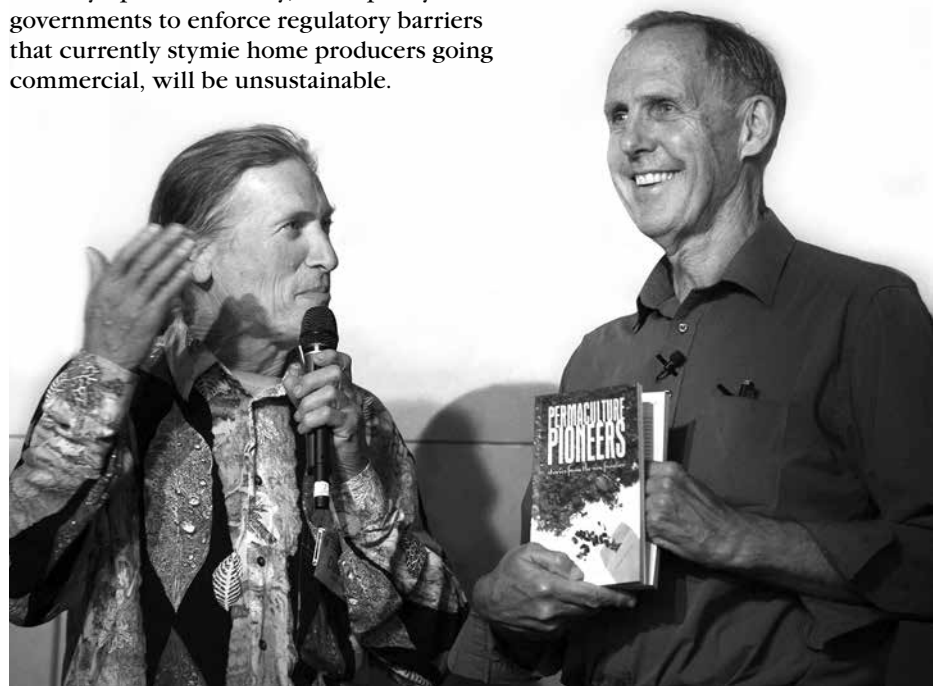
Activism that is good for our bodies and our minds, is fun and empowering and makes us more self-reliant and resilient in the face of uncertain futures, is a much easier sell than activism that involves self-sacrifice for some larger collective good. In this sense permaculture shares some common ground with green corporate capitalism's focus on rewards as a motivation even if the rewards are primarily non-monetary.

If our experiments in DIY self-reliance are successful, others without as much innovator tenacity can copy what we do without having to make so many mistakes. The issue of whether our solutions are scalable beyond the non-monetary household and community economies to the monetary economy, let alone corporate capitalism is less important than whether our solution can replicate virally to achieve scale in numbers.

Big solutions to big problems often recreate the problem in a new form. Small-scale solutions have the advantage of being site and situation specific and being more amenable to incremental organic adaptation with less risk that failures cause higher-order systemic failures (e.g. raw milk vs industrial milk).

In addition, there is strong evidence that many successful small businesses get started in the household and community economies of gift, exchange and reciprocity before growing into the monetary economy. In the future, two processes suggest this might be the main mechanism by which we grow a new monetary economy. Credit crunches from deflationary economics eliminate bank finance for small business so the bootstraps DIY approach is the only option. Secondly, the capacity of governments to enforce regulatory barriers that currently stymie home producers going commercial, will be unsustainable.

*Permaculture activism uses global understanding to inform local action at the personal, household and community scale to create models capable of viral proliferation.*



What we do in our own households, with our family and informal community networks is simple and small scale so that it largely can occur without the permission of the banks who through their lending determine what and what does not happen in the credit-driven monetary economy, without the knowledge of the corporate competitors who stand to lose market share, and mostly under the radar of the government regulators whose function is to secure the market for bank-financed corporate investment.

## Potential for mass adoption

The potential for mass adoption is the test that most political activists want to see before they will accept any value from DIY approaches. Can we persuade everyone to grow their own vegetables? What if everyone had a wood stove? Is there enough land in the city to grow all the food? How will it help us close down Loy Yang power station? And so on.

Mainstream political action focuses on persuading the majority because the majority is always the biggest game in town. This focus on majorities is strategically useless for smaller order players like environmental and social activists. Apart from the need to counter the massive propaganda might of the strongest lobby groups, it ignores an important trend in affluent, notionally democratic nations at least since the Thatcherite / Reaganite revolution of the early 1980s. A simple or even large majority is not enough to persuade elite power structures to roll over and implement policies that directly threaten their own power (e.g. Iraq war 2003).

On the other hand, the DIY approach has some important advantages as a political change pathway. Firstly, the DIY approach that reflects permaculture ethics and design principles behaves as a systemic strike of labour, skill and capital against the debt financing by banks, globalised production controlled by corporations and central government taxation dependent on constantly rising GDP. I have argued in my *Crash On Demand* essay, that a 50% reduction in consumption, work and investment by 10% of the global middle class could be enough to severely undermine the power of these global systems (that are already teetering due to the massive global unpayable debt burdens).

Whatever the effects on centralised systems, the experience of building the parallel systems from the bottom up will expose the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats through a rapid learning cycle. In the process we can better articulate a larger scale public policy agenda that would allow the next level of adoption and adaption as well as clarifying the design characteristics necessary for any truly useful larger scale government or corporate driven solutions.

The response of the centralised power structures to such a systemic strike might be to introduce draconic regulations and politically demonise those pursuing DIY enlightened self-interest. We should expect more of this, but there are limits to how effective such responses might be.



Firstly, the diffuse, even invisible nature of many of these personal and household strategies makes them inherently difficult to control. Attempts to control raw milk are likely to be as ineffective as drug prohibition which has failed despite massive state resources and efforts. Secondly, demonising raw milk consumers and gardeners is somewhat harder than doing the same to radical Islamists.

The alternative, more hopeful response of centralised power might be to engage in political discourse to encourage the striking minority to come back into the fold. "We need your consumption and your creativity, what would you like to be paid to be part of the Team (Australia)?" Being relatively autonomous gives us much more political leverage than being part of a mass movement of completely dependent consumers and indebted workers.

In the Brown Tech future that I believe we are increasingly locked into nationally and globally, I think there will still be some opportunities for constructive dialogue with those trying to bring about top down change, either government or corporations, but we should expect that some of these opportunities will almost inevitably turn the solution back into the problem. In the face of unfolding environmental, geological, economic and geopolitical crises, the ability to speak truth to power in defense of disposed people and voiceless nature will become more symbolic than effective in achieving resilience let alone justice.

On the other hand, the urgency in building the parallel systems on the conceptual and geographic fringes will grow and the interest from those wanting to participate with their hands and hearts will increase to a flood. The ability to replicate workable alternatives to the strictures of contracting but monopolistic centralised systems will be a challenge for permaculture activists.

At the moment, turning the tide of the majority to our way would be more of a destructive tsunami than a surfable wave. If we can prove to ourselves that we can enjoy life living more healthy and resilient lives, less dependent on centralised systems while massive reducing our ecological footprint in the process, then we provide a pattern than others can copy. At the same time, we contribute the diversity of solutions that can model whatever utility

Permacult - fun, inspiring and productive learning creating the world we do want.

*a 50% reduction in consumption, work and investment by 10% of the global middle class could be enough to severely undermine the power of these global systems*

and hope remains for system-wide reform and redesign. And if that fails at least we lived the solution and have a multiplicity of lifeboats that give the best chance of saving the useful bits and even the essence of wisdom from a failing civilization for the emergence of the next.

## DIY and DIO strategies

Zooming back from the over-the-horizon big picture to the here and now, I would like to suggest ways in which we can make the DIY and DIO strategies achieve their great potential for positive change.

DIY suggests a learning process with less than perfect results, but if we want others to copy us then the work of reviewing, debugging and refining our solutions is essential. The fact that permaculture has generated a lot of half-baked outcomes by people who are “jacks of all trades but masters of none” is to some extent an inevitable outcome of the experimental and generalist integrated nature of permaculture solutions. However, to establish any credibility let alone have others copy us, requires food gardens that are abundant, compost toilets that smell sweet and lifestyles that are attractive to at least a motivated minority. We don't need to dumb down permaculture for the masses but it does need to work at least on terms of those who are interested.

We need to admit and correct our mistakes, and avoid the error of suggesting a given permaculture technique or even strategy is applicable everywhere.

Most of all in celebrating our being Jacks and Jills of all trades, we should also aim to become masters and mistresses of one. One trade that can allow us to be truly useful members of relocalising communities where many may not recognise

permaculture understandings let alone ideology as having any value. Energy descent futures, especially of the Brown Tech variation will not necessarily see permaculture as widely appreciated.

While this first issue is about the reality and perception of effective solutions that have the power to spread, the second is about the degree to which apparently practical and effective permaculture designs are leading to substantial decoupling from the globalised economies that are now degrading humanity's future.

In the same way that it is not clear that renewable technologies can proliferate without abundant fossil fuels and debt financing, it is not clear that when we live our permaculture lifestyle we are not just diverting our participation in global degradation through more indirect pathways.

I believe the holistic nature of permaculture can allow us to progressively integrate our personal, household, enterprise and communal systems to more and more support and stimulate, first the non-monetary economies, and secondly businesses controlled by natural persons as we progressively disengage from support for and dependency on businesses run by non-natural persons (corporations) that are structurally immune to ethical influence. How to do this with one arm tied behind our back and hopping on one leg is a balancing act to say the least.

We need to demonstrate that the DIY and DIO strategies of permaculture are workable, enjoyable and empowering but most of all that they can spread, if not like wildfire, then like a cool burn (or a compost culture) that regenerates the understorey of our brittle and flammable communities.

*For David's presentation at the SLF Great Debate, and his 'Crash on Demand' essay, visit <http://permacultureprinciples.com/post/crash-on-demand/>*

*We need to demonstrate that the DIY and DIO strategies of permaculture are workable, enjoyable and empowering but most of all that they can spread, if not like wildfire, then like a cool burn (or a compost culture) that regenerates the understorey of our brittle and flammable communities.*

PermaBlitz grassroots activists make over a backyard on PermaBlitz #183 - Melbourne



# The Art of Frugal Hedonism

*The Art of Frugal Hedonism*

By Annie Raser-Rowland with Adam Grubb

2016

Order from [www.frugalhedonism.com](http://www.frugalhedonism.com) or [www.permacultureprinciples.com](http://www.permacultureprinciples.com)

Book review by Kirsten Bradley of [www.milkwood.net](http://www.milkwood.net)

*The Art of Frugal Hedonism* is like having a small firecracker in your pocket for performing guerrilla actions on everyday life that just might upend everything and put it back together in a different, cheaper, and much more interesting way. The writing is buoyant and often verges on hilarious.

And the advice is solid. Maybe not all solutions for living on less money that you think you can do just now (even though you so CAN!) – but even if it all seems a bit much, you want to keep reading anyway.

Both Annie and Adam have been doing urban frugalism rather radically for many years now, and it does certainly seem like they are having a good time.

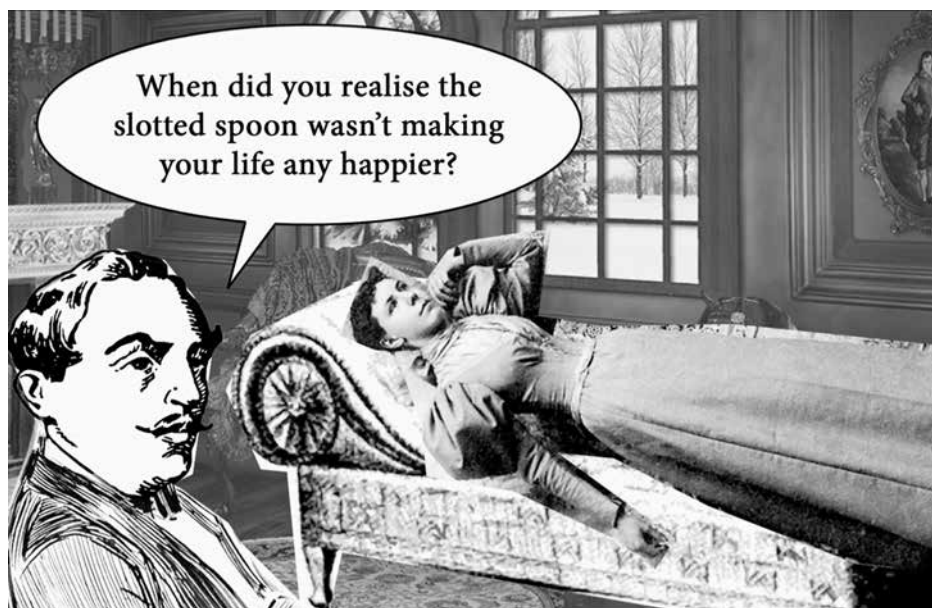
Their previous book, *The Weed Foragers Handbook*, was a well written, useful and straightforward weeds guide with plenty of twists and tips. And *The Art of Frugal Hedonism* builds strongly on that style, except this time all the stops are pulled out, the art of frugalism is evaluated in detail, and everything is on the table.

One of the things I love most about this little book (and I should say, I love a lot about this book) is the hedonism aspect. You're probably familiar with the now fairly mainstream-ized ideas of no waste, low-cost living. There's lots of jars, buying organic grains in bulk, up-cycled things made into cute tote bags and healthful breakfasts. There's good teeth and clear skin and suspicious amounts of linen aprons. This book is not those things.

*The Art of Frugal Hedonism* is the art of living (very) lightly on this planet while also having a rocking good time. Take the beginning of chapter 4, for example:

#### **"4. Have a lot of things you want to do with your freedom**

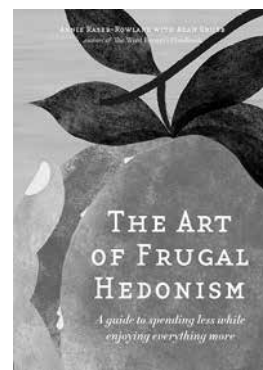
*What came first, the frugality, or the egg that had a lot of things it was excited about doing? In your authors' case, definitely the excited egg. There*



*is no better incentive for being frugal than having passions you want to chase. Let's break it down.*

1. By consuming less, you have more money to spend on doing what you really want to do.
2. By consuming less, you have the option of doing less paid work, giving you more time to do what you really want to do. (Even if that happens to be chasing the kind of paid work that you really want to do.)
3. You can do a little bit of 1 and a little bit of 2 and have both the time and money to do the things you really want to do. Cake, and eating it.

*"Back when Annie was a party-hard pop-punk, she cossetted secretive visions of herself travelling through*



Guatemala climbing volcano after volcano, or decorating a whole house with holographic wallpaper, and knew that she'd need cash to make those things happen when the urge took her by the jugular. And so she taught herself to make the clothes she wanted out of old clothes. She made a decision to religiously love cheese and tomato sandwiches every day for lunch, while everyone around her bought takeaway kebabs. Instead of going to the pub, she cajoled friends into drinking boxed wine in deckchairs on the sidewalk (illegal but lovely) and enticed strangers into sitting down to join in.

"She never made a budget, or even thought about money much, but instead forged a basic assumption that most things that people spend money on have an equally satisfying cheap or free alternative. And despite her minuscule income, the savings did slowly but surely pile up. Enough that she had the freedom to go spend a couple of mind-blowingly fantastic years climbing those volcanoes.

"Giving up regular untrammelled consumption actually feels quite easy when you have a sense that it is for the sake of a life studded with superior pleasures. Taking your kids on a month-long hiking trip perhaps, paying off your house, getting a weekly massage... or just taking time off work to think or do drawings."

But it's not just talking about the fact that we all need more time, and less clothes (though that's part of it) to live a good and happy life. This book is also packed with quirky but solid advice for ways to re-use, barter, DIY, dumpster dive, swap and generally cut down on all the everyday consumption you can think of. For the sake of limiting consumption on this one-and-only planet of ours, and also for the sake of living well, with a stronger community, and saving the money you do have, for things that actually matter.

Also, the chapter on home-grown greens opens with a picture of a tortoise munching on leaves, with a note that if you're in a tortoise-prone area, then you may need to consider a raised bed to grow some veggies. I rest my case. This book is a cult classic in waiting.

You can order *The Art of Frugal Hedonism* at [www.permacultureprinciples.com](http://www.permacultureprinciples.com) and [www.frugalhedonism.com](http://www.frugalhedonism.com)

Friends of the Earth  
invites you to join the

# active friends program

## What is the Active Friends Program?

The Active Friends Program is one of the best means to support current and future work of Friends of the Earth. It involves a regular monthly donation of a self-nominated amount.

## Where will Active Friends donations go?

Friends of the Earth is renowned for making a little money go a long way. Because our administration costs are always kept to a bare minimum, practically all Active Friends contributions directly support campaign work, publications and community engagement. Active Friends donations support

- a moratorium on coal and coal seam gas mining through our 'Quit Coal' campaign
- renewable energy through our 'yes2renewables' campaign
- our work to safeguard water for the rivers, wetlands and forests of over 14% of Australia's landscapes through the 'ourdarlingmurray.org' campaign
- FoE's Anti Nuclear & Clean Energy (ACE) campaign, which continues to highlight the dangers of nuclear power and uranium mining and to promote safe alternatives.

## Why is the Active Friends Program vital to FoE?

To remain a radical and credible voice for social and environmental justice, we need a stable financial base.

## How can you join the Active Friends Program?

To join the Active Friends program, please see the 'Support Friends of the Earth' page in this edition of Chain Reaction, or go to [www.foe.org.au](http://www.foe.org.au) and click on the donate button.. All Active Friends donations are fully tax deductible.



# The long campaign against the environment movement

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

As the environment and climate movements grow in power and influence, various conservative and anti-environmental forces have sought to damage or reduce the power of the movement.

The campaign against environmental protectors reached something of a fever pitch while Tony Abbott was the Australian Prime Minister, and has become less overt since Malcolm Turnbull became PM. But it is now clear that the agenda continues, with a new ‘review’ of tax arrangements for non-government organisations (NGOs) singling out environmental organisations for particular scrutiny.

## Who’s behind the campaign?

The political genesis of the campaign rests with the far-right Institute of Public Affairs (IPA). The IPA is a ‘deductible gift recipient’ (DGR) listed ‘think tank’, which has been crafting much of the campaign to try and take the DGR status off environmental organisations. Unlike green groups, the IPA is lacking in transparency when it comes to providing details on their income sources. While historically they have been funded by entities like pesticides and mining companies and the tobacco industry, it is not clear exactly who their main funding source is at present.

The IPA has campaigned for environmental groups to lose any financial support they may get from government for many years. More recently, this campaign has focused on the DGR status of green groups. Almost every larger environmental organisation (ENGO) and certainly all which employ staff rely on holding DGR status. To have DGR status, a group must be registered as a charity, and either be listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations or inscribed in the Taxation Act. This allows them to collect tax-deductible donations from the public and is necessary for philanthropic granting organisations to give them funds. If you can remove the DGR status, you cut the vast majority of that organisation’s funding.

When Tony Abbott was PM, there was a concerted effort to challenge the tax status of a number of groups, and some conservative MPs actively pursued a sustained campaign against those groups with DGR status. It was clear that the Coalition government was intent on trying to silence anyone who was working to protect the environment through advocacy or protest.

Some of their actions included:

- The House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment review of tax deductibility for environment groups listed on the Minister’s Register.

- The motion by the Federal Council of the Liberal Party to strip eco-charities of the same rights permitted to other charities, including tax-deductible donations.
- The push by Minister Richard Colbeck for a secondary boycott ban to apply to environmental groups.
- The ‘Re:think, Better Tax system Better Australia’ discussion paper which called for a review of the Not for Profit sector’s tax deductibility.
- The cuts to financial support for the Environment Defenders Offices (EDOs).
- The axing of the Grants to Voluntary Environment, Sustainability and Heritage Organisations to 150 groups in the 2014 budget. This program had bipartisan support since it was set up in the 1970s.

It was clear that conservative MPs and the IPA were not acting in isolation. The agenda against green groups has been aided by the conservative press (especially parts of the Murdoch press, notably *The Australian* newspaper) and the fossil fuel and mining sectors. For instance, as noted in *The Age* newspaper, “it was the mining industry and its representative lobby groups, such as the Minerals Council, which months ago began calling for donations to environmental organisations to no longer be tax deductible”. It was this call, and a series of ‘exclusive’ stories about green groups in *The Australian* newspaper that helped create the opportunity for the Abbott government to launch its House of Reps Inquiry.

## The House of Representatives inquiry into the tax status of green groups

The then federal environment minister Greg Hunt initiated the Inquiry in 2015. The Chair was an Abbott ally, conservative MP and climate sceptic Alex Hawke. After the leadership challenge in the Coalition which saw Malcolm Turnbull become the PM, Mr Hawke was replaced as Chair by Nationals MP John Cobb. There can be little doubt about Mr Cobb’s approach to the environment movement: towards the end of the inquiry process, he said farmers should be wary of siding with “rabid left-wing protesters” in opposing gas fracking. He is also a known climate sceptic.

At the start of the Inquiry, Queensland LNP senator (and now federal Resources Minister) Matthew Canavan said a preliminary audit (of the Register) shows “eco-charities were getting tax deductibility status to engage in political rather than environmental activity”.

*The axing of the Grants to Voluntary Environment, Sustainability and Heritage Organisations to 150 groups in the 2014 budget. This program had bipartisan support since it was set up in the 1970s.*

Canavan continued: “We’ve got 100 to 150 groups that seem to have their purpose at stopping industrial development, not just mining, some of those developments include tourism developments or agricultural developments but engaging in what I would view as a political debate, not the environmental debate.”

There was a clear attempt by Coalition members of the Committee to recreate ‘environmentalism’ as being limited to tree planting and other ecological remediation. This was not accepted in the vast majority of the submissions received as part of the inquiry process.

The Committee appointed two supplementary members. One was George Christensen, the right-wing MP from Queensland, who has called environmental activists “gutless green grubs” and “terrorists” and said “the greatest terrorism threat in North Queensland, I’m sad to say, comes from the extreme green movement”. After attending an early public hearing during the Inquiry, Mr Christensen said “evidence points to them losing their tax deductibility status”, a disturbing pre-empting of the outcome of the Inquiry.

The first hearings were held in June 2015. The federal environment department and the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission (ACNC) were the first to appear. These are the entities responsible for managing environmental organisations on the Register of Environmental Organisations and the ACNC more broadly manages the not for profit sector.

Both the department and the ACNC said there were no significant problems with the current management systems. The ACNC said that it has the appropriate enforcement powers to regulate charities. This raised the question: why proceed with further hearings if both government bodies that manage the sector say there are no significant problems?

Of course, the inquiry continued, with hearings held in many cities. Many people in the community provided submissions.

Shadow Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus – Labor’s frontbench representative on the committee – said that the review was an “ideological attack by the government on political advocacy”.

The final report from the House of Reps inquiry into the tax status of green groups was released on May 4, 2016. Given that the Committee was dominated by Coalition MPs, there were few surprises in the report, which made a significant number of recommendations which would have impacted negatively on the ability of the environment movement to actually protect the natural environment. There were some dissenting comments from moderate Liberal MP Jason Woods and a dissenting minority report from the ALP members.

There was then a federal election and the Environment Minister, Greg Hunt, did not respond to the final report before the

government entered into caretaker mode. Subsequently, Josh Frydenberg became the federal Environment Minister. He has not yet issued a public response to the report.

This does not mean the threat is over. Since the House of Reps inquiry finished, conservative commentators and politicians have continued to routinely call for green groups to lose their tax status. It now appears that Treasury has taken on prosecuting the campaign against green groups.

## New threats

In late May 2017, conservative senator Eric Abetz tried to stir the pot again, claiming in Estimates that Friends of the Earth (FoE) and its affiliate member Market Forces were engaged in ‘money laundering’ and carrying out a ‘scam’ on the taxpayer. This was largely based on Mr Abetz not understanding the FoE Australia membership structure. He did not attempt to clarify his claims before making them in Estimates. MPs are provided with ‘parliamentary privilege’ when making comments in parliament which means they can make potentially libellous statements without fear of legal action. FoE has asked him to retract his claims.

In June 2017, it was announced that the federal Treasury was conducting a review of ‘potential reforms to the Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) tax arrangements’. On face value this seems benign enough (for instance, it considers a number of proposals to ‘strengthen the DGR governance arrangements, reduce administrative complexity and ensure that an organisation’s eligibility for DGR status is up to date’). However, we have to see this through the lens of the long campaign against the green movement by the Coalition government.

And sure enough, the review considers a number of the recommendations from the majority report from the House of Reps inquiry. These relate to the suggestion that:

- Environmental groups should be limited in how much advocacy they are allowed to carry out (with the suggestion that they be required to spend between 25–50% of their funds on environmental remediation (e.g. tree planting), and;
- They should be open to being ‘sanctioned’ if they are not operating ‘lawfully’. As pointed out above, during the House of Reps inquiry, relevant bodies like the ACNC confirmed that the current system allows them to ensure this is the case. So why is the government pursuing this issue?

This is a convenient development for the environment minister Josh Frydenberg as it means he is not the one who has launched yet another attack on the environment movement – which is, after all, a key part of his ministerial constituency.

*For more information and to find out the results of the Treasury process, and to support the environment movement, please visit: [www.foe.org.au/here\\_we\\_go\\_again](http://www.foe.org.au/here_we_go_again)*

*We have to see this through the lens of the long campaign against the green movement by the Coalition government*

# Making history: El Salvador becomes first country to ban metal mining

Sam Cossar-Gilbert and Riccardo Navarro

El Salvador made history in April by becoming the first country ever to ban metal mining. The success of this decades-long struggle is proof that people can take on corporate interests and win.

Mining has a dark history in El Salvador. Years of unregulated, pro-investor policies coupled with rapid industrialisation has led to the widespread contamination of rivers and surface water, poisoning people and destroying farm lands. Even boiling or filtering the water does not always make it safe to drink. An environmental study showed that the proposed Pacific Rim mine would use 10.4 litres per second, enough to provide water for thousands of people.

Mining was imposed on the Salvadoran people as a dream industry that would aid development, create jobs and taxes to pay for much-needed school and hospitals. The government developed a range of mining friendly policies together with the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) between Central American countries and the US. Signed by El Salvador in 2004, the agreement allowed transnational corporations such as Holcim, Monsanto and Pacific Rim to intensify their operations in the country.

Supported by local ruling elites, these companies began extracting El Salvador's natural resources for export. Foreign investment increased 200-fold from US\$30 million in 1992 to US\$5.9 billion in 2008. Much of this investment was in mining, despite fierce opposition from communities.

El Salvador is a small and densely populated country. Yet by 2012 the government had 22 requests for gold exploration, allowing gold mines to monopolise 4.2% of the land. The appropriation of land for mining often takes the form of land grabbing, with no proper consultation or compensation.

From the start, local communities resisted through protests, court cases, meetings and land occupation. A number of communities marched across the country to the presidential palace to demand their rights.

Friends of the Earth El Salvador / CESTA supported community resistance. In 2008 alone, 60 community leaders learned about the impacts of mining and strategies for resistance at CESTA's Political Ecology School. People started challenging corporate power.

Tragically, companies responded with violence. The President of Friends of San Isidro Cabañas (ASIC), a hub of anti-mining resistance, was murdered, followed by three more anti-mining activists, and many more were threatened and harassed. Their families are still demanding justice today.

'Water is more precious than gold' became a powerful unifying slogan as the struggle continued. Grassroots coalitions such as the Movement of People affected by Climate Change and Corporations (MOVIAC) and the National Roundtable Against Metallic Mining raised the issue of mining to a national level. Solidarity and shared learnings from movements in Costa Rica, Argentina and Colombia, where partial mining bans have been implemented, were crucial. Friends of the Earth took the El Salvador mining case to the United Nations, calling for an international treaty on corporations and human rights.

In 2008, President Antonio Saca rejected the Pacific Rim mining project. The project would have led to the use of toxic chemicals including cyanide within 65 km of the capital. Pacific Rim's response was to sue the government of El Salvador for US\$301m in a secret trade tribunal. The Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism enabled Pacific Rim to do this, on the basis that they felt their profits were negatively affected by the rejection of their mining application.

Yet in this instance, corporate bullying backfired. It garnered wide support against the mining industry. Even politicians with little environmental interest were outraged by this extortionate figure in a country struggling with poverty. El Salvador received a favourable judgment in the case, yet it still had to pay millions in legal fees.

The Catholic Church, an important institution in El Salvador, began actively advocating for a ban on mining. At Sunday masses across the country, priests preached the need to protect the natural world and collected signatures petitioning the government.

When the vote came to parliament in April, the vote was unanimous except for a few abstentions – El Salvador voted for a total ban metal mining to protect its people and environment.

As El Salvador celebrates, the fight for a more just and sustainable world is not over. But we can move forwards with hope, in the knowledge that ordinary people working together can change the world.

*Sam Cossar-Gilbert is economic justice and resisting neoliberalism coordinator at Friends of the Earth International. Riccardo Navarro from El Salvador is a former chair of Friends of the Earth International.*

*A referenced version of this article is posted at: [www.foei.org/news/making-history-el-salvador-becomes-first-country-ban-metal-mining](http://www.foei.org/news/making-history-el-salvador-becomes-first-country-ban-metal-mining)*

*More information:*

*'Water at the Heart of El Salvador's Struggle Against Neoliberalism', Meera Karunanathan and Susan Spronk, 2015, [www.blueplanetproject.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/ElSalvador-Report-0315.pdf](http://www.blueplanetproject.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/ElSalvador-Report-0315.pdf)*

*Real World Radio interview with Saúl Baños, lawyer with National Roundtable Against Metallic Mining. Saúl assesses this victory and remembers the martyrs who died fighting against mining in El Salvador. [www.radiomundoreal.fm/9707-criminal-mining-interview-with](http://www.radiomundoreal.fm/9707-criminal-mining-interview-with)*

# Put that bottle down now!

## Nanoparticles in infant formula products

Louise Sales

Independent testing<sup>1</sup> commissioned by Friends of the Earth has found illegal and potentially dangerous nanoparticles in popular Australian infant formula products.

Three of the seven samples tested contained intentionally added nano-hydroxyapatite particles. These are prohibited from use in infant formula in Australia in any form.<sup>2</sup> Nano-hydroxyapatite has been found to cause cell death in the liver and kidneys of rats.<sup>3</sup>

Two of these samples, Nestlé NAN H.A. Gold 1 and Nature's Way Kids Smart 1, were found to contain a needle like form of hydroxyapatite. The European Commission's Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety (SCCS) has concluded that this form of nano-hydroxyapatite should not be permitted in oral products such as toothpaste and mouthwash because of its potential toxicity.<sup>4</sup> If it's not safe for use in toothpaste it certainly shouldn't be in baby formula!

Babies are particularly vulnerable to food safety risks since their immune systems are still developing. Often infant formula is the only food an infant receives.<sup>5</sup>

Friends of the Earth is calling for an immediate recall of all infant formula containing nanomaterials and immediate testing of all untested infant formulas.

The needle like form of nano-hydroxyapatite that was found in two of the brands tested does not naturally occur in milk. The scientists - leading nanometrology experts at Arizona State University - concluded that it was synthetic and had likely been intentionally added.

Some commentators have attempted to dismiss the SCCS review as irrelevant since it did not look at baby formula. But it is the only comprehensive review looking at the oral toxicity of this substance that we have. Furthermore, these commentators have failed to provide any new evidence of safety. Some have insisted that that nano-hydroxyapatite will dissolve in digestive juices. However, the SCCS refer to studies which suggest that the particles could be absorbed through the gums. Furthermore, a recent study found that not all the particles are dissolved in the stomach and that they can recrystallise.<sup>6</sup>

### Regulatory failure

Friends of the Earth's position is simple. Ingredients shouldn't be used in baby formula unless they have specifically been assessed to be safe. And this isn't just our position - it's also the position of the Food Regulation Ministerial Council and is specified in FSANZ's regulation.<sup>7</sup>

It is important to note that FSANZ itself has said that nano-hydroxyapatite is not permitted in baby formula.<sup>8</sup> The agency removed this statement from its website once it became aware of the test results and is now claiming it is safe<sup>9</sup> - despite having conducted no formal safety assessment. Despite FSANZ's about face, nano-hydroxyapatite is still not permitted in baby formula and still has not been demonstrated as safe.

Babies are particularly vulnerable to food safety risks since their immune systems are still developing. Often infant formula is the only food an infant receives.

By turning a blind eye to the available evidence and the use of this ingredient in baby formula FSANZ is in clear breach of its own regulations and the guidelines set by the Food Regulation Ministerial Council. These are designed to protect babies and infants. These require pre-market assessment for any substance that doesn't have a history of safe use in baby formula.<sup>10</sup>

Simply claiming that everything is fine without testing, surveillance or monitoring is not good enough. The Parliamentary Secretary for Health David Gillespie needs to urgently intervene and to hold FSANZ to account for putting industry profit above the health of our babies.

It is clear that there is a systemic problem with FSANZ. The agency is deeply compromised by its close relations with big food multinationals. It consistently refuses to regulate, ignores legitimate health concerns and won't act for the public good except in the most extreme cases. The agency needs to be fully investigated and overhauled.

### The test results

Seven samples were sent to Arizona State University, one of the world's leading laboratories for the testing of nanomaterials.

*If it's not safe for use in toothpaste it certainly shouldn't be in baby formula!*

Infant Formula Brand	Nanoparticles found by Arizona State University	Allowed in infant formula in Australia?
Nature's Way Kids Smart 1	Nano Hydroxyapatite Needle-like form	NO SCCS has concluded this is potentially toxic
	Nanoparticles containing silicon and oxygen – most likely nano-silica (100% of particles were nano)	NO SCCS has concluded there is insufficient data to establish safety. <sup>11</sup>
Nestlé NAN H.A. Gold 1	Nano Hydroxyapatite Needle-like form	NO SCCS has concluded that this is potentially toxic. <sup>12</sup>
Heinz Nurture Original 1	Nano Hydroxyapatite rectangular form	NO SCCS has concluded there is insufficient data to establish safety. <sup>13</sup>
Aptamil Profutura 1	Calcite nanoparticles (approx. 20% of particles were nanoscale)	NO Larger particles of calcite are approved for use in infant formula but nano-calcite is untested and unregulated.
Blackmores Newborn Formula	Calcite nanoparticles (approx. 38% of particles were nanoscale)	NO Larger particles of calcite are approved for use in infant formula but nano-calcite is untested and unregulated.
Karicare Plus 1	No nanoparticles found	N/A
A2 Platinum 1	No nanoparticles found	N/A



## Take Action: join us in demanding an urgent recall

Visit [www.fedupwithfsanz.net](http://www.fedupwithfsanz.net) and ask the Assistant Minister for Health David Gillespie to intervene to keep babies safe.

*Louise Sales is the coordinator of Friends of the Earth's Emerging Tech Project.*

*[louise.sales@foe.org.au](mailto:louise.sales@foe.org.au), [www.emergingtech.foe.org.au](http://www.emergingtech.foe.org.au)*

### References:

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# FoE Melbourne's new forest campaign

Ed Hill

Friends of the Earth (FoE) Melbourne launched a new forest campaign in May that is rapidly building momentum. A new collective of volunteers working out of the Melbourne campaign centre are getting organised to protect Victoria's forests from logging.

FoE's new Victorian forest campaign is focussed on three areas:

1. The creation of the Great Forest National Park in Victoria's central highlands. The park would protect the critically endangered faunal emblem of Victoria the Leadbeater's possum; secure Melbourne's water supply; and provide fantastic recreational opportunities in a new park on Melbourne's doorstep. Logging operations within the proposed park mostly produce pulp to make Reflex paper.
2. Protection of East Gippsland's high conservation value forests. East Gippsland is the Victorian stronghold for rainforest, threatened species and old growth forests. It's the only place on mainland Australia where continuous forest ecosystems stretch from alpine environments to the coast. FoE affiliate Goongerah Environment Centre has been doing great work defending these forests from logging through their citizen science program ([www.geco.org.au](http://www.geco.org.au)).
3. Strengthening legislative protections for threatened wildlife and ecosystems.

The launch of the campaign was held at the Friends of the Earth Food Co-op and Café on May 18. Fifty people packed into the space to hear from East Gippsland and Central Highlands forest campaigners and to share ideas about the direction and work of the new collective and the FoE campaign.

## Green Building Council

FoE's forest collective held its first action at the Green Building Council (GBC) event "Pillars of Change" on June 21. Concerns were raised over the GBC's endorsement of the Australian Forestry Standard. The GBC is awarding 'green star' ratings to buildings made with timber sourced from ash forests in Victoria's Central Highlands. This forest ecosystem is listed as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation and Nature.

The Central Highlands ash forests are home to threatened wildlife, are the most carbon rich forests on earth, and some lie within Melbourne's water catchments. Timber from logging these forests cannot be considered a 'green' product, but the GBC has weakened its standards.

The FoE collective distributed information about the council endorsement of the Australian Forestry Standard and called on the GBC to reinstate its old 'sustainable timber' credit, where green star points for wood were only available to sources consisting of recycled and/or Forest Stewardship Council certified timber.

The timber industry needs to change and the GBC must be part of the solution not the problem.

For more information on the GBC, visit [www.melbournefoe.org.au/green\\_building\\_council\\_not\\_so\\_green](http://www.melbournefoe.org.au/green_building_council_not_so_green)

## Dead Koala found in logging coupe re-ignites push for new protected park

Forest survey crew Fauna and Flora Research Collective (FFRC) and the Environmental Media Foundation recently found a dead Koala in logged forest on the Acheron way, near Warburton. The forest was part of the proposed Great Forest National Park.

The FFRC survey team had documented a population of Greater Gliders in the forest in early June and called on the state government to protect the habitat from logging. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning ignored the report and allowed logging to continue. The FFRC returned to the forest weeks later to inspect the damage and found a dead Koala between fallen trees in the recently logged forest where Greater Gliders had been recorded earlier.

The Greater Glider was recently listed as a threatened species under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act. Despite formally listing the Greater Glider as a threatened species under Victorian law, the Andrews government failed to direct its logging agency VicForests to adjust its plans to ensure the habitat documented by the FFRC in the Acheron valley was not impacted on.

Earlier in June, the Goongerah Environment Centre released departmental documents to Fairfax media obtained through a Freedom of Information Request. The documents showed the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning had urged Environment Minister Lily D'Ambrosio to ignore advice from the government's Scientific Advisory Committee who called on her to protect the Greater Glider from logging.

The scientists had requested the Minister stop a logging operation in known Greater Glider habitat in the Strathbogie ranges and deploy a conservation order over critical habitat across the range of the species. These two recommendations were ignored. Logging of

*The timber industry needs to change and the GBC must be part of the solution not the problem.*

the Strathbogie forest habitat went ahead and logging in high quality Greater Glider habitat continues across the state.

The state government could have protected the Acheron Valley forest if it had not ignored the scientific advice, but logging went ahead, impacting on valuable habitat and killing a Koala.

*The Age* published photos and video of the dead Koala and the logging operation that were provided to them by FoE, as well as an amazing video produced with footage from the Environmental Media Foundation. Visit:

[www.theage.com.au/victoria/dead-koala-found-in-logging-coupe-reignites-push-for-new-protected-national-park-20170624-gwxvim.html](http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/dead-koala-found-in-logging-coupe-reignites-push-for-new-protected-national-park-20170624-gwxvim.html)

[www.theage.com.au/victoria/scientists-warn-greater-glider-faces-extinction-and-want-it-protected-from-logging-20170602-gwjbf.html](http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/scientists-warn-greater-glider-faces-extinction-and-want-it-protected-from-logging-20170602-gwjbf.html)

VicForests apologised for the Koala's death. *The Age* reported on their apology in a story that also highlighted concerns raised by FoE about ongoing logging of critically important Greater Glider habitat in the Loch Valley near Noojee also within the proposed Great Forest National Park. Visit:

[www.theage.com.au/victoria/vicforests-apologises-for-dead-koala-continues-logging-threatened-possum-area-20170701-gx2mwr](http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/vicforests-apologises-for-dead-koala-continues-logging-threatened-possum-area-20170701-gx2mwr)

Take action: Please email Premier Andrews calling on him to end the senseless slaughter of our native wildlife by creating the Great Forest National Park.

[www.melbournefoe.org.au/no\\_more\\_dead\\_koalas\\_great\\_forest\\_national\\_park\\_now](http://www.melbournefoe.org.au/no_more_dead_koalas_great_forest_national_park_now)

## Get involved in FoE Melbourne's Forest Campaign

The campaign to protect Victoria's forests and secure new parks and reserves in the lead up to the state election in 2018 is shaping up to be big and we're going to need your help.

FoE is rolling out a campaign in Melbourne to grow support for forest protection. You can get involved with the campaign by joining the FoE Forest collective. The collective meets on the first and third Thursday of each month at 6pm upstairs at the Friends of the Earth campaign centre, 312 Smith St, Collingwood.

For more information about the work of the forest collective and to get involved, email forest collective co-ordinator Sarah Day - [sarah.day@foe.org.au](mailto:sarah.day@foe.org.au)

For FoE forest campaign related enquires, email forest campaigner Ed Hill - [ed.hill@foe.org](mailto:ed.hill@foe.org)

## 50 people attend GECO's citizen science camp

Cold weather didn't deter 50 enthusiastic citizen scientists from attending the winter forest survey camp organised by the Goongerah Environment



Winter forest survey camp in Goongerah, June 2017.

Centre (GECO) in early June. GECO's 12th citizen science camp attracted a diverse crowd of people from Melbourne, Gippsland and Sydney who took part in old growth forest walks, remote fauna camera surveys, rainforest identification and mammal spotlighting surveys.

A large group joined local GECO campaigners to walk to the "Big Tree" in the Gap scenic reserve. The walk passes through old growth forest that was scheduled for logging until GECO campaigners found one of Victoria's largest trees and lobbied the state government to protect the forest.

Surveys near Bendoc explored montane woodland that is scheduled to be logged. Hollow bearing trees and potential greater glider habitat was marked in preparation for a nocturnal spotlighting survey the following night.

A smaller group helped the East Gippsland Rainforest Conservation Management Network to search for rare yellow wood rainforest trees in the Martins Creek national rainforest site of significance.

Another group walked through old growth forest on the Errinundra plateau that is earmarked for logging. The group deployed a fauna camera to capture image of threatened wildlife that may be using the forest. The camera is targeting endangered and elusive Spot tailed quolls who have suffered declines in East Gippsland but may still be present in the Errinundra area.

Sunday night was a spotlighting marathon! Forty people split into four groups and conducted four surveys in forest scheduled for logging near Bendoc. All groups recorded several greater gliders whose habitat is under imminent threat from planned logging. Two groups recorded high densities of greater gliders (more than 10) that will result in the preparation of a report to be submitted to the state government this week. This report should result in a new protection zone and prevent logging in some of the areas that were surveyed.

GECO's next citizen science camp will be held on the Melbourne Cup long weekend, November 3-7. For more information visit [www.geco.org.au](http://www.geco.org.au)

# FoE's Dirt Radio going strong in its sixth year

John Langer

Dirt Radio, Friends of the Earth's half-hour weekly live-to-air show on community radio 3CR in Melbourne, is in its sixth year of broadcasting. This kind of longevity is a considerable achievement for any community radio show.

For those not familiar with Dirt Radio, the format typically revolves around interviews, varied between extended discussions with a single guest, and programs split between two guests, each providing a different point of view on a particular topic. Live crosses to environmental actions, rallies, blockades and special events also feature regularly. One year, there was a Dirt Radio 'OB' (outside broadcast) from the Sustainable Living Festival.

When the first show went to air in August 2012, a crew of seven lined up to take on production and presentation duties, but like all volunteer based organisations, personal situations change, employment or study take more time than expected, so eventually the on-air weekly roster whittled its way back to a solid three.

Several 'streams of content' make up the weekly flow of material that goes to air.

Frontline activists from all FoE campaigns provide regular up-dates. Over the past six months Yes2Renewables, Emerging Tech, Pesticides and Drinking Water, Climate Justice, Divestment and Banks, Trade and Economic Justice, Grow FoE, Coal and Gas Free Victoria, Act on Climate have all had opportunities to speak about their work and planned events and actions.

FoE's extensive network of affiliates - CounterAct, Goongerah Environment Centre, Healthy Futures, Market Forces, Public Transport Not Traffic, Australian Student Environment Network to mention just a few - add to the roster of up-dates and information sharing.

Issues gleaned from related and relevant campaign work, research and social analysis (cybersecurity, communicating climate change, extreme weather impacts, Yarra River protection, activism in the Trump era, anti-wind farm ideologies, Green Music Australia, #Stop Adani), and live crosses to ongoing environmental actions such as the Leard Forest blockade and the peace convergence protesting Talisman Saber military exercises, offer further breadth and depth to the show.

So what kind of cultural dirt does Dirt Radio find itself planted in? Let's start with Water Benjamin's influential essay of cultural criticism, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Written all the way back in 1936,

Benjamin was trying to make sense of the way the value of works of art irrevocably change with the advance of what he called 'mechanical reproduction'. Pared down to its rudiments, Benjamin's view is that the action of mechanical reproduction - think photograph, poster, of a painting, the recording of a musical performance - diminishes and ultimately destabilises 'the aura' of the work of art, the unique aesthetic authority and authenticity of the original.

In the broadest sense, Benjamin is suggesting that mechanical reproduction disconnects and liberates culture from setting and tradition. Cultural work can be brought into the distinct life-situation of the reader, viewer or listener to be formed and reformed in endless new combinations.

Foreshadowing the era of what we experience now as digital reproduction - the culture of cut and paste, the mash-up and the meme - the seismic shifts detected by Benjamin are now happening on steroids. Every consumer can be a producer. And we are, at least most of us, everywhere, all the time. And at ever increasing speeds. The Facebook page - not in thrall of some actor on the screen, but the self-actor digitally reproducing with each post.

Benjamin is not wrong in observing that the original has been shattered and dispersed, but his view of authenticity could use some qualification, and here's where a community based radio program, run on the smell of an oily rag and the energy and determination of campaigners and activists, connects grand historical prognostication with everyday practices of contemporary resistance and struggle.

Dirt Radio is not much, in the scheme of global mediascapes and digital platforms, but what it can offer is a space of authenticity, for point of views on the environment to be locally produced and heard in voices that have both uncommon strength and familiarity.

As one of the crew who twiddles the knobs on the panel, scribbles the interview introductions and tries to ask an illuminating question or two, I can't claim to know what people I talk with are thinking about their engagement with the show.

However, on-air encounters, it could be said, 'speak volumes'. To take two recent examples. The Director at the Arid Lands Environment Centre in Alice Springs is involved in a campaign to get city folk not just to be aware of the possibility of fracking in the Northern Territory, but to take action to stop it happening. During our interview, history unfolds, obstacles and

*Dirt Radio is not much, in the scheme of global mediascapes and digital platforms, but what it can offer is a space of authenticity, for point of views on the environment to be locally produced and heard in voices that have both uncommon strength and familiarity.*



communities elaborated, actions anticipated. Pauses, backtracks, words colliding, more pauses, but inside and around all this, a mere twelve minutes, something significant unfolds – a call to act, and to participate. Despite its distance, an ‘original’ fragment of authority and authenticity in a voice, despite its distance, that’s both individually distinct and collective.

The climate emergency campaigner is different. Sitting in the studio, her background electioneering for a seat in the Victorian state parliament gives assurance, and a focused delivery. But mid-interview, a mutual, unexpected head-shaking. And we’re telling listeners that both our heads are shaking, in dismay and anger. The well-trodden flow

of argument from the practiced campaigner is disrupted, and we’re both asking, almost simultaneously, why political elites in Australia are so stupidly and illogically committed to the perpetuation of the coal industry. Not much in the scheme of things – but there it is, a communal moment for environmental campaign work.

This is the cultural dirt that Dirt Radio is planted in. In the torrent of tweets, and the churn of Facebook updates, the work of Dirt Radio in the age of digital (re)production offers a cultural methodology that can slow the media moment down, so that multiple committed community voices can pause, recount, be astonished, historicize, speak with authenticity and authority, providing, despite Benjamin’s prescient analysis, an aura for mobilisation and struggle.

# Pesticides and drinking water supplies

Anthony Amis

There is increasing concern in the community about the indiscriminate use of pesticides across the landscape. One major concern is the use of herbicides to spray road verges. Many verges also act as drainage lines and pesticides, used inappropriately, can wash into local waterways following such spraying. A quick drive around any major highway or town reveals dead grass and weeds, often light brown in colour, in contrast to unsprayed areas which are usually green. on the side of many roads and highways. Tens of thousands of kilometres of roadsides are sprayed each year in Australia. How many of these roadsides are located in domestic water supplies?

A common misconception is that only Glyphosate is sprayed on road verges. This is not the case and depending on the weeds present a whole arsenal of herbicides can be used. For example, in 2010 Friends of the Earth sent an FoI application to Vicroads. Vicroads responded listing 15 different herbicides used across Victoria on roadsides alone. These include Dicamba, Glyphosate, MCPA, Metsulfuron Methyl, Fluroxypur, Haloxyfop, Fluazifop-B-Butyl, Triclopyr, Clopyralid, Picloram, Carfentrazone-Ethyl, 2,4-D, Aminopyralid, Amitrole and Chlorsulfuron.

Also of major concern is the impact of these chemicals on the workers. Friends of the Earth has recently observed workers spraying directly out of moving vehicles with hoses wearing no protective gear. Friends of the Earth has also heard of roads near local schools being sprayed when children are walking to school nearby. Spraying can also take place in very windy conditions increasing the risk of offsite spray drift.

In 2006, 15,000 plants were killed during a spraying mishap on Yarra Boulevard in Melbourne. There have also been many incidents of crops being killed when herbicides drifted onto farms. Friends of the Earth has also recently heard about thousands of trees being killed in Western Australia due to indiscriminate use of herbicides along a railway reserve from Moora to Geraldton. Railways across the nation are regularly sprayed to stop weeds growing on tracks. Also of concern is spraying of laneways and sporting fields.

*Anthony Amis is Friends of the Earth Australia’s spokesperson on pesticides and drinking water.*

# Yami Lester

It was with great sorrow that Friends of the Earth learnt of the passing of Yami Lester in July. Yankunytjatjara Elder, atomic test survivor, Aboriginal rights activist, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, Yami's voice and support will be sorely missed.

Many Friends of the Earth anti-nuclear campaigners got to meet Yami over the decades. On occasions we would stay with him at Walatina – in the far north of SA – during our Radioactive Exposure Tours or on our way to Australian Nuclear Free Alliance meetings in Alice Springs. The last time some of us got to visit Yami at Walatina was in September 2016 – we were working with Aboriginal communities to stop the SA government's plan to dump the world's high-level nuclear waste on Aboriginal land to improve the state's economy.

Yami lost his sight as a result of one of the British atomic bomb tests in SA in 1953. Speaking on ABC radio in 2011, he said: "I was a kid. I got up early in the morning, about 7am, playing with a homemade toy. We heard the big bomb went off that morning, a loud noise and the ground shook. I don't know how long after we seen this quiet black smoke – oily and shiny – coming across from the south. Next time we had sore eyes, skin rash, diarrhea and vomiting everybody, old people too."

Along with Maralinga veteran Avon Hudson, Yami was responsible for the formation of a Royal Commission in the 1980s that shone a light on the atomic crimes of the British government, the spinelessness and culpability of state and federal governments in Australia, and the ugly racism that pervaded everything to do with the atomic bomb tests.

As a young man, Yami joined the Aboriginal Advancement League in Adelaide. He was also central to the work of the Pitjantjatjara Council that led to the grant of freehold title to traditional owners in SA.

His children have taken up the call for his lifelong battle for justice. His eldest daughter, Karina Lester, recently travelled to New York for UN negotiations on a treaty to ban nuclear weapons. The treaty recognises the disproportionate impact of nuclear weapons on Indigenous peoples around the world, and has provisions for assistance and reparations for those affected.

Yami's warmth, kindness, generosity and resolve inspired so many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and as Tjamu (grandfather) and Katja (great-grandfather) "he will be forever remembered by his loved ones, his extended family, community and by so many", a statement from his family said. "Yami leaves an incredible



legacy of better global understanding of the devastation of nuclear bombs and for the ongoing battle for recognition of the consequence of them on the rights and interests of *Anangu*."

When the No Dump Alliance formed in May 2016, to oppose plans for an international high-level nuclear waste dump in SA, Yami became the ambassador for the Alliance and, together with his daughters Karina and Rose, spoke loud and strong against nuclear waste dumping in SA.

Yami said: "In 1953, I was just ten years old when the bombs went off at Emu and Maralinga, I didn't know anything about nuclear issues back then, none of us knew what was happening. I got sick and went blind from the Totem 1 fallout from those tests, and lots of our people got sick and died also.

"Now I'm 74 years old and I know about nuclear issues. Members from the APY, Maralinga-Tjarutja and Arabunna, Kokatha lands say we don't want nuclear waste on our land. There are big concerns. And I worry because I know it is not safe for South Australia land and the people. Why does the Government keep bringing back nuclear issues when we know the problems last forever?

"It means a lot to me to be in this Alliance. I would like others to listen and join, become a member and fight together."

Four generations of the Lester family – Yami with daughter Rosemary, grand-daughter Kiah and great-grand-daughter Lucy.

# Aboriginal people do not want a nuclear waste dump in South Australia

Karina Lester

It was a huge honour to travel to New York for United Nations negotiations on a historic treaty to ban nuclear weapons — a long journey from Walatina in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands in far north west South Australia.

Our *Anangu* story is not a happy one but it was a privilege to speak up at the UN — for my family and my own people and for indigenous peoples around the world who have suffered the effects of nuclear testing since the dawn of this nuclear age. I felt a great responsibility to acknowledge the many indigenous people who had lost lives and land, and suffered other harm and sickness, including my father Yami Lester.

Dad was blinded by the British nuclear testing at Emu Field in 1953 and has never laid eyes on his Country since, nor ever on his son and two daughters, his 12 grandchildren and two great grandchildren. I shared our family's story and urged the 130 nations gathered there to produce a strong treaty that will not only ban these destructive weapons but formally recognise the disproportionate impact of nuclear weapon activities on indigenous peoples.

Yet, in the back of my mind in New York, amid all that history making and all that hope, was the knowledge that this fight is not even close to being over at home, that we never seem to be able to draw to a close this dangerous industry in South Australia.

Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara, Kokatha, Adnyamathanha and other Aboriginal people of South Australia have been fighting this nuclear problem now for decades, since my father heard a British official falsely claiming that Anangu had been consulted on the tests which sent the 'black mist' which poisoned our people and land.

Dad's campaigning helped pave the way for the Royal Commission into British Nuclear Tests in Australia in 1985. But it didn't take long for this injustice to be forgotten, for our traditional lands to once more to be seen as empty wastelands and for this struggle to become intergenerational.

In 1998 the Howard Government announced its plan to build a national radioactive waste dump in the SA Outback. This time it was the Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta, senior Aboriginal woman from Coober Pedy — among them my Kami (nana) Eileen Kampakuta Brown — who had to step up for the fight with their "Irati Wanti — the poison,



Yami Lester's daughter Rose and great-grand-daughter Lucy at the site where Yami was blinded by an atomic bomb test in 1953

leave it" campaign. It took a huge toll on those old women but they had learnt of the danger from their experience of Maralinga and Emu Field.

Then two years ago came the threat again, with the Royal Commission into the expansion of the nuclear fuel cycle in South Australia and the proposal to ship, store and bury up to one-third of the world's high-level long-lived radioactive waste. Where? Not in Adelaide, of course.

But as my Kami said, this radioactive risk is not just a problem for our mob, it's a problem for all South Australians, and the proposal was resoundingly rejected.

Meanwhile, the Federal Government has been looking at Adnyamathanha country in the Flinders Ranges for a national low and intermediate-level nuclear dump. Facing strong Aboriginal resistance, it is also proposing a site on the Eyre Peninsula. Aboriginal people are not the only opponents of nuclear waste, but we have borne the brunt of this industry and have intimate knowledge of its costs.

Governments have stripped Aboriginal people of land rights and heritage protections for nuclear tests and uranium mining, and we fear the same will happen with nuclear waste. At the behest of the United States, the Australian government did not even turn up for the landmark UN Treaty negotiations, though its own people — my people — still bear the impacts of nuclear testing. That is not recognition, respect nor representation.

My father lost his eyesight because of nuclear weapons testing, but he has never lost his vision of a cleaner and safer future free of nuclear threats from weapons and waste. It's time this country and this state shared that vision.

*Karina Lester is a Yankunytjatjara Anangu woman, who works with the University of Adelaide's Mobile Language Team as the Aboriginal Co-Manager and Language Worker. She is a member of the Natural Resources Management Council*

# Talisman Saber 2017 military exercises

Robin Taubenfeld

My brow is a bit more furrowed, but we have made it safely back home. Talisman Saber 2017 has only just begun on the coast of central Queensland but our biennial pilgrimage to the site of these huge US-led nuclear weapons capable military exercises has come to an end. The school holidays are over. It's time for kids to get back to school and for adults to do... whatever adults do: paying the bills, washing the uniforms, packing lunches, going to work and thinking about the military-industrial complex in our free time!

I've just spent two weeks in the Rockhampton region. Rockhampton proclaims itself to be the beef capital of Australia and is the gateway to the Shoalwater Bay region - which is both part of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and World Heritage Area and home to the Shoalwater Bay Military Training Area, where the Singapore army regularly trains and every two years the US and Australia conduct major combined land, sea and air force training operations called Talisman Saber.

With its plethora of environmentally significant sites, endemic species of birds and turtles, RAMSAR listed wetlands key to international migratory birds, critical sea grass beds, diverse flora, coastal shores and waters protected as part of a world heritage site, dugongs and migrating whales, let alone protected coral reef and all its inhabitants, it is hard to imagine how Shoalwater Bay could be designated for any military training, let alone training that involves use of nuclear powered and nuclear weapons capable vessels, ongoing noise and rumblings of low-flying planes and helicopters, "maritime surface to surface, surface to land and surface to air 'engagement'" including live firing of missiles and torpedoes, the use of sonar and experimentation with new weapons.

Seventy-two years after the first nuclear bombs were used in warfare, followed by an estimated 2056 nuclear test explosions, on 7 July 2017 the UN successfully passed a treaty to ban the use, housing and support for nuclear weapons. The following day, the live component of Talisman Saber commenced in Queensland. Australia had boycotted the nuclear weapons talks, signalling its commitment as a key part of the US nuclear weapons umbrella. Starting Talisman Saber the following day firmly entrenched Australia in US led nuclear-capable foreign policy.

While many Australians may hardly blink an eye, China and other neighbours in the region are watching.

Talisman Saber 2017 brings 33,000 military personnel (approximately 20,000 US, 13,000 Australian, with small contingents from Japan,

New Zealand and Canada) to northern Australia to engage in combined land, sea and air operations.

Much of Talisman Saber takes place at Shoalwater Bay, just north of Rockhampton - the beginning of the tropics and the southern region of the Great Barrier Reef.

In 2013, the US jettisoned four bombs on the Great Barrier Reef when they had difficulty dropping them on their intended target, Townshend Island - also part of the Great Barrier Reef, excised as a bombing range.

While this drew media attention and international condemnation, these four bombs were just the tip of the iceberg of regular bomb drops and live firing. Ecologically speaking, Townshend Island and other reefs and waters used for these and other military operations, are no less part of the Great Barrier Reef marine environment than areas that have not been designated for military use.

## Expanding military presence

There is a push to greatly expand the military presence in the region and to extend the military zone. Despite controversy surrounding this expansion, this year Talisman Saber will include manoeuvres outside the military zone, on public and private land north of Shoalwater Bay at Stanage Bay, also designated protected as part of the Great Barrier Reef. Over two weeks of the exercise, Stanage Bay and beaches between Stanage and the Shoalwater Bay Training Area will be used as amphibious landing staging grounds. Expanding military activity beyond the designated training zone is both politically and environmentally reckless.

Consulting firm AECOM noted in its Talisman Saber 'Public Environment Report', prepared for the Department of Defence:

*"The marine environment in the Stanage Bay area is recognised as an important nesting, foraging and breeding area for Flatback Turtles as well as providing known habitat for Dugong, Southern Humpback Dolphin, five of Australia's six marine turtle species, and other protected marine species. Seagrass beds are also mapped as present along a number of the beaches proposed for use..."*

*"Both the Indigenous and Historical heritage values at Stanage Bay are poorly understood generally due to a lack of systematic assessment of the area. It currently has three registered Aboriginal heritage sites in the proposed activity area but there are likely to be more due to lack of detailed archaeological*

*assessment. Camp sites, middens and stone artefact processing sites are likely to be found within the beach foredune areas and anywhere with freshwater. Burial sites can also be found in soft sand in foredunes.*

*"In addition to archaeological sites, there are a number of landforms (rocky outcrops, fossilised coral, waterholes and headlands) that are likely to have intangible cultural heritage importance to local Aboriginal people (i.e. sacred sites). These are typically associated with landform and ecological features that are unique in an area."*

Furthermore, it is clear that new amphibious landing machinery is expected to impact on sea floor and beach environments. The AECOM report states: "There may be localised scouring of seagrass habitat during beach landing events, however this will be localised in nature and avoided or minimised through operational controls."

The lack of data surrounding heritage sites in the Stanage Bay region, coupled with the understanding that heritage sites are "likely", combined with the knowledge of likely damage to beach and ocean-floor regions, makes any use of Stanage Bay for amphibious landing unacceptable.

While community opposition has halted the forced acquisition of land around Stanage Bay, the plan to expand the military zone remains intact, with the government expecting to slowly purchase the land in the region, leaving locals uncertain about their future. Clearly some have agreed to sell or to provide the military access to their land. How will this impact on others?

## Shoalwater Bay Military Training Area

The Shoalwater Bay Military Training Area was initially set up in 1965. In 1993-1994 the "Commission of Inquiry into Shoalwater Bay, Capricornia Coast, Queensland" explored the options for the region, prioritising a balance between military use and conservation - still allowing some recreational and agricultural uses. Historically, local conservationists have supported military use, considering this preferable to ongoing cattle grazing on the land. There was an understanding that the dual-uses of military training and conservation would be balanced and an expectation that significant resourcing would go in to supporting, and monitoring and protecting the local environment. Despite the fact that military activity is fundamentally incompatible with environmental protection, the military have for the most part been seen to take environmental stewardship seriously. However, the push to expand raises new concerns. With the entire



Graeme Dunstan with his Peace Bus outside the Rockhampton army barracks, July 2017.

shoreline and coast part of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, proposing land acquisition for military use without environmental review signifies a move away from prioritising environmental management or protection of this region.

In 2005, Australia made a long-term agreement with the US, turning Shoalwater Bay into a Joint Combined Training Centre and the first biennial Talisman Saber took place. Later, agreements were made to streamline environmental assessment of these military activities. Now, while glossy Public Environment Reports and fact sheets are written for each Talisman Saber, they are a public relations exercise and are not formally assessed - formal assessment is no longer required under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. Written by private consulting firms to assuage public concern, they downplay any potential environmental impacts and fail to address social, broader environmental and political impacts of US-led combined military training in the region.

The current expansion into public and private land within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area should trigger concern, and an Environmental Impact Assessment. Any change of use in the region, extension of the facility or expansion of military activity in the region should take Shoalwater Bay back to the drawing board where environmental protection befitting a World Heritage area is prioritised.

Shoalwater Bay and its surrounds are, of course, not the only areas threatened by military use and the push for militarism in our region. Talisman Saber 2017, while huge, is only one of many military training exercises. Talisman Saber does, however already impact on locations of global environmental significance, such as Saumarez Reef, the Timor, Arafura and Coral Seas, Halifax Bay (off Townsville within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park), Cowley Beach (located within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area of Queensland), and habitats for endangered species such as the Northern Quoll and Gouldian Finch (Mt Bundy, NT, near Kakadu).

These precious eco-systems are already under pressure from recent critical weather events, loss of habitat, coral bleaching etc. Partnering with the

US military can only exacerbate the problems. The US military produces 750,000 tons of toxic waste annually and is the largest single polluter of any agency or organisation in the world.

## Political alarm bells

No matter where these war games are conducted, or how they are environmentally managed, US and Australian battle fleets conducting nuclear-capable military exercises will set off political alarm bells in our region and remind the world that Australia is deeply involved and supportive of US military activity.

Australia sells uranium to the US, has sent troops to US-led conflicts around the world and allows the US to use its military and civilian infrastructure – such as communication stations, ports and airfields. Australia houses one of the US's key satellite spy stations, Pine Gap, which helps guide US weaponry in the Middle East and is part of its missile defence system. There are up to 2,500 US troops stationed in Darwin, strategically close to China and the South China Sea, Australia allows US planes deployed from Guam to fly over the Northern Territory to drop bombs. Australia allows the US to conduct troop changeovers in Western Australia, allowing US troops to deploy from Fremantle. Australia regularly conducts military exercises with the US and every two years, Australia hosts Talisman Saber.

The purpose of these exercises is to “improve training and interoperability between the Australian and US Armed Forces”. In the pre-Trump era, it was clear that China had concerns about this show of military might in the region. Now, with Australia firmly in the pro-nukes camp, the rest of the world is watching more closely.

## Talisman Saber protests

Every two years, we make the trek up to Rockhampton to express our concerns about Talisman Saber. The audience is small but we persist! In 2005, 50 people went up and blocked military traffic and joined hundreds of locals in a peace concert and march.

In 2007, 1,000 people went up to protest Bush and Howard's determination to send us into an era of endless war. There were parades, hokey-pokeys, street theatre, a Make Love Not War nude action, a lock-on, blockades, candlelight vigils, concerts, music, art, films and more.

This year we were tiny, we did some street theatre and speak-outs, joined NAIDOC, handed out peace balloons and agreed to focus on re-making connections and looking for ways to make media tell this story. This is not a Rockhampton or Shoalwater Bay issue, this is a national and international one. Are you willing to keep Australia marching down the nuclear war path? Is the environment acceptable collateral damage for continuing down that path? Is there no option to economies of war? Can Shoalwater Bay be protected from us, by us?

We decided to drive to Stanage Bay to take some images before the amphibious landings arrived. Only 175 km from Rockhampton, the estimated

travel time was between 2.5 and 4 hours due to the surface conditions. Off the side of the heavily corrugated road we could see armoured personnel vehicles and tanks. Trucks were carrying heavy machinery and equipment towards the military zone. Driving too quickly, I suddenly lost control on a bend and the car spun out and around. Two flat tyres and luckily no-one hurt. There was no mobile coverage. We were stranded.

The first vehicle stopped and out popped an army car mechanic, who promptly took control of the situation, put my spare on the worse wheel and offered to escort us slowly on wobbly flat tyres to the military zone to seek further help. Stunned, we drove behind her into Shoalwater Bay Military Training Zone and parked. She then negotiated to take me deeper inside – and up a hill – to find mobile reception to call the RACQ (auto club) for a tow truck. She waited. We talked. She could be in trouble for using her military vehicle for non-military work. I was on top of a hill inside the elusive military zone! Something was being dug and it looked like bunkers being built. And it was beautiful.

I told her that I was with Friends of the Earth and was heading up to Stanage Bay to take images before the military activity there – I didn't want her to find out later from military police and then feel deceived. We discussed politics and the environment as we drove back to the gate. She had joined the military to get a trade. I hope she didn't get in trouble.

When I was 15, I took the ASVAB test to explore options of joining the military – to travel and get a free university education. I visited Annapolis – the Naval Academy – and then decided it was too tidy and I didn't think I would like to have to maybe kill someone. Luckily, I had other options. My car mechanic rescuer who took me inside the military zone to make a phone call was lovely, human, and had joined the military to get a trade.

And that is not good enough. I dream of the world where a young woman can get a trade without having to join an organisation that kills, where Shoalwater Bay is there for Shoalwater Bay and handed back to the Darumbal People, and where peace is part of national defence.

We are at a crossroads. The world has spoken out about the use of and support for nuclear weapons. Australia can disentangle itself from “diplomacy” based on the threat of the use-of-force. It will take courage to lead for peace. Stopping Talisman Saber would be a step in the right direction.

Stop the Exercises! Close the Bases! End the Wars!  
What can you do?

Join your local anti-nuclear and/or peace group!  
Let your politicians know that you want peaceful and independent foreign policy!

Support the campaign to Ban the Bomb!  
Take peace and environmental action near you!  
Find out more: [www.peaceconvergence.org](http://www.peaceconvergence.org),  
[www.brisbane.foe.org.au](http://www.brisbane.foe.org.au)

*Robin Taubenfeld is a member of Friends of the Earth Brisbane, and a national nuclear spokesperson with FoE Australia.*

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# Boys and their toys: the growing movement against nuclear nations

Sue Wareham

July 12 – In New York at the United Nations we have just witnessed historic progress towards realising the goal of a nuclear weapons free world. Late last week, the UN adopted the new ‘Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons’, to prohibit states from developing, testing, producing, manufacturing, acquiring, possessing, stockpiling, transferring, deploying, stationing, using or threatening to use nuclear weapons, under any circumstances.

That’s a fairly comprehensive thumbs down to the weapons, the strongest collective statement yet from governments that they are totally illegitimate in every respect.

Meanwhile, in Washington DC and Pyongyang, two people – chronologically adults but in other respects displaying no signs of maturity – are squaring off at each other, each with a finger on a button that can incinerate cities.

Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un display the very reason that the new UN treaty is so critically important, because it categorically rejects any role for any nuclear weapons in anyone’s hands. As Ban Ki-Moon, former UN Secretary-General said, “There are no right hands for the wrong weapons”.

The treaty leaves no doubt that its prohibitions apply not only to actually using nuclear weapons but also to their possession. The myth of nuclear “deterrence”, which tells us that nuclear-armed nations will not go to war against each other because the response from their adversary would make it a suicidal gesture, is exposed as being not only immoral but also fraught with danger.

Enter Trump and Kim Jong-un to demonstrate the point. If the deterrence theory holds true, why all the fuss now, when these two leaders clearly have it all under control?

“Stable nuclear deterrence”, that notion so beloved of Australia and a minority of other governments, might sound comforting, but in the real world – a very messy place with some grossly deficient and unstable people – it’s a total fraud.

Australia’s position is stark. Like a drunkard preaching abstinence, our government strongly supports US nuclear weapons in keeping us “safe” (even as officials scurry to reassure the public that North Korean nuclear missiles couldn’t really reach Australia) and insists shamelessly on disarmament for others. So supportive are we of US nuclear weapons that Australia did not even show up at the UN treaty talks.

Foreign Minister Bishop disingenuously argued that, for the process to be effective, the countries with the weapons must be part of it right from the start. By that logic, we would insist on criminals helping draft any legislation that might curtail their activities.

In any event, all UN member states were strongly encouraged to attend and have input; any empty seats were not from a lack of invitation. And judging by the determined – but unsuccessful – efforts on Australia’s part to see the talks fail, one suspects that our government knows exactly how powerful an instrument this global prohibition treaty will prove to be.

Criticisms that the treaty will be a “toothless tiger” miss the whole point of it. The key to its utility was encapsulated last week by Tim Wright, the Asia-Pacific Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, an organisation which played a pivotal role in achieving the treaty. “[It] will stigmatise possession of nuclear weapons by any state, provide a source of legal, political, ethical, economic and civil society pressure on nuclear armed states to disarm, and encourage financial institutions to divest from companies that produce nuclear weapons,” Wright said.

As one example of this stigmatising effect, how different the discussion of Trident’s renewal in the UK might have been last year if the nuclear weapons submarines fell into the “illegal” category at that stage. A government voting to renew weapons that most of the world has prohibited would be one step too far, even for many of those stuck in a Cold War mindset.

In the meantime, what do we do about North Korea, or, more to the point, about North Korea and the US? There is in fact plenty that could be done. Rather than turning up the volume on our echoes of Washington, Australia could urge a reduction of tension by the cessation of provocative military exercises by both sides. The North Korean leader has called for an end to US hostility and nuclear threats. Unless we regard the current situation as stable – nuclear deterrence just giving us a little fright as it tends to do – then an end to nuclear threats by both sides is absolutely critical.

History is granting us another chance to get rid of what Indian writer Arundhati Roy called “the most anti-democratic, anti-national, anti-human, outright evil thing that man has ever made”.

A strong civil society movement and a majority of the world’s governments working through the UN have just provided the best tool we’ve had for a long time with which to do this, a tool that delegitimises every one of the world’s 15,000 nuclear weapons.

*Dr Sue Wareham is the Vice-President of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons Australia.*

*Late last week, the UN adopted the new ‘Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons’, to prohibit states from developing, testing, producing, manufacturing, acquiring, possessing, stockpiling, transferring, deploying, stationing, using or threatening to use nuclear weapons, under any circumstances.*

# Nuclear power's annus horribilis

Jim Green

This year will go down with 1979 (Three Mile Island), 1986 (Chernobyl) and 2011 (Fukushima) as one of the nuclear industry's worst ever – and there's still another six months to go. Two of the industry's worst-ever years have been in the past decade. There will be many more bad years ahead as the trickle of closures of ageing reactors becomes a flood – the International Energy Agency expects almost 200 reactor closures between 2014 and 2040. The likelihood of reactor start-ups matching closures over that time period has become vanishingly small.

Even pro-nuclear lobby groups are warning about nuclear power's "rapidly accelerating crisis", a "crisis that threatens the death of nuclear energy in the West", and noting that "the industry is on life support in the United States and other developed economies".

**USA:** The most dramatic story this year has been the bankruptcy filing of US nuclear giant Westinghouse on March 29. Westinghouse's parent company Toshiba states that there is "substantial doubt" about Toshiba's "ability to continue as a going concern". These nuclear industry giants have been brought to their knees by cost overruns – estimated at US\$13 billion – building four AP1000 power reactors in the U.S. Six reactors have been shut down over the past five years in the US, and another handful will likely close in the next five years. There are different views about how far and fast nuclear will fall in the US – but fall it will. And there is no dispute that many plants are losing money. More than half of the country's reactors are losing money, racking up losses totalling about US\$2.9 billion a year according to an analysis by Bloomberg New Energy Finance.

**Japan:** Fukushima clean-up and compensation cost estimates have doubled and doubled again and now stand at US\$191 billion. An analysis by the Japan Institute for Economic Research estimates that the total costs for decommissioning, decontamination and compensation could be far higher at US\$443–620 billion.

Only five reactors are operating in Japan as of July 2017, compared to 54 before the March 2011 Fukushima disaster. The prospects for new reactors are bleak. Japan has given up on its Monju fast breeder reactor – successive governments wasted US\$10.6 billion on Monju and decommissioning will cost another US\$2.7 billion.

As mentioned, Toshiba is facing an existential crisis due to the crippling debts of its subsidiary Westinghouse. Toshiba announced on May 15 that it expects to report a consolidated net loss of US\$8.4 billion for the 2016–2017 financial year which ended March 31.

**France:** The French nuclear industry is in its "worst situation ever" according to former EDF

director Gérard Magnin. France has 58 operable reactors and just one under construction.

French EPR reactors under construction in France and Finland are three times over budget – the combined cost overruns for the two reactors amount to about US\$14.5 billion.

Bloomberg noted in April 2015 that Areva's EPR export ambitions are "in tatters". Now Areva itself is in tatters and is in the process of a government-led restructure and another taxpayer-funded bailout. On March 1, Areva posted a €665 million net loss for 2016. Losses in the preceding five years exceeded €10 billion.

The other giant French nuclear utility, EDF, is also in a world of pain. In February, EDF released its financial figures for 2016: earnings and income fell and EDF's debt remained steady at €37.4 billion. EDF plans to sell €10 billion of assets by 2020 to rein in its debt, and to sack up to 7,000 staff.

Costs of between €50 billion and €100 billion will need to be spent by 2030 to meet new safety requirements for reactors in France and to extend their operating lives beyond 40 years.

French Environment and Energy Minister Nicolas Hulot said on June 12 that the Government plans to close some nuclear reactors to reduce nuclear's share of the country's power mix. "We are going to close some nuclear reactors and it won't be just a symbolic move," he said.

**India:** Nuclear power accounts for just 3.4% of electricity supply in India and that figure will not rise significantly, if at all. In May, India's Cabinet approved a plan to build 10 indigenous pressurized heavy water reactors (PHWR). That decision can be read as an acknowledgement that plans for six Westinghouse AP1000 reactors and six French EPR reactors are unlikely to eventuate.

The plan for 10 new PHWRs faces major challenges. Suvrat Raju and M.V. Ramana noted: "The announcement about building 10 PHWRs fits a pattern, often seen with the current government, where it trumpets a routine decision to bolster its "bold" credentials. Most of the plants that were recently approved have been in the pipeline for years. Nevertheless, there is good reason to be sceptical of these plans given that similar plans to build large numbers of reactors have failed to meet their targets, often falling far short."

**South Africa:** An extraordinary High Court judgement on April 26 ruled that much of South Africa's nuclear new-build program is without legal foundation. The High Court set aside the Ministerial determination that South Africa required 9.6 gigawatts (GW) of new nuclear capacity, and found that numerous bilateral nuclear cooperation agreements were unconstitutional and unlawful. President Jacob

*"the industry is on life support in the United States and other developed economies"*



Zuma is trying to revive the nuclear program, but it will most likely be shelved when Zuma leaves office in 2019 (if he isn't removed earlier). Energy Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi said on June 21 that South Africa will review its nuclear plans as part of its response to economic recession.

**South Korea:** South Korea's new President Moon Jae-in said on June 19 that his government will halt plans to build new nuclear power plants and will not extend the lifespan of existing plants beyond 40 years. President Moon said: «We will completely re-examine the existing policies on nuclear power. We will scrap the nuclear-centred policies and move toward a nuclear-free era. We will eliminate all plans to build new nuclear plants.»

Since the presidential election on May 9, the ageing Kori-1 reactor has been permanently shut down, work on two partially-built reactors (Shin Kori 5 and 6) has been suspended pending a review, and work on two planned reactors (Shin-Hanul 3 and 4) has been stopped.

**Taiwan:** Taiwan's Cabinet reiterated on June 12 the government's resolve to phase out nuclear power. The government remains committed to the goal of decommissioning the three operational nuclear power plants as scheduled and making Taiwan nuclear-free by 2025, Cabinet spokesperson Hsu Kuo-yung said.

**UK:** Tim Yeo, a former Conservative politician and now a nuclear industry lobbyist, said the compounding problems facing nuclear developers in the UK «add up to something of a crisis for the UK's nuclear new-build programme.»

The only reactor project with any momentum in the UK is Hinkley Point, based on the French EPR reactor design. The head of one of Britain's top utilities said on June 19 that Hinkley Point is likely to be the only nuclear project to go ahead in the UK. Alistair Phillips-Davies, chief executive officer of SSE, an energy supplier and former investor in new nuclear plants, said: "The

bottom line in nuclear is that it looks like only Hinkley Point will get built."

**Switzerland:** Voters in Switzerland supported a May 21 referendum on a package of energy policy measures including a ban on new nuclear power reactors. Thus Switzerland has opted for a gradual nuclear phase out and all reactors will probably be closed by the early 2030s, if not earlier.

**Germany** will close its last reactor much sooner than Switzerland, in 2022.

**Sweden:** Unit 1 of the Oskarshamn nuclear power plant in Sweden was permanently shut down in June. Unit 2 at the same plant was permanently shut down in 2015. Ringhals 1 and 2 are expected to be shut down in 2019–2020, after which Sweden will have just six operating power reactors.

**Russia:** Rosatom deputy general director Vyacheslav Pershukov said in mid-June that the world market for the construction of new nuclear power plants is shrinking, and the possibilities for building new large reactors abroad are almost exhausted. He said Rosatom expects to be able to find customers for new reactors until 2020–2025 but «it will be hard to continue.»

**China:** With 36 power reactors and another 22 under construction, China is the only country with a significant nuclear expansion program. However nuclear growth could take a big hit in the event of economic downturn. And nuclear growth could be derailed by a serious accident, which is all the more likely because of China's inadequate nuclear safety standards, inadequate regulation, lack of transparency, repression of whistleblowers, world's worst insurance and liability arrangements, security risks, and widespread corruption.

*Dr Jim Green is the national nuclear campaigner with Friends of the Earth Australia. A longer, referenced version of this article is posted at [www.theecologist.org/News/news\\_analysis/2989112/nuclear\\_powers\\_annus\\_horribilis.html](http://www.theecologist.org/News/news_analysis/2989112/nuclear_powers_annus_horribilis.html)*



# The case for a climate budget: It's time for Victoria to invest in climate action

Leigh Ewbank

*Friends of the Earth Melbourne's Act on Climate collective has kicked off its campaign for the Andrews government to deliver Victoria's first ever climate budget. RenewEconomy published the following opinion article by coordinator Leigh Ewbank on the eve of the Victorian Labor party's 2017 state conference.*

The Federal Coalition's refusal to tackle climate change means we need to see more political leadership from state governments such as Victoria. Despite alarming melting of the polar icecaps and unprecedented bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef, federal Treasurer Scott Morrison didn't even mention climate change in his 2017 Budget address.

While it's convenient for the Liberal and National parties to ignore the problem, their inaction leaves communities exposed to climate impacts. In contrast to his Federal counterpart, Victorian Treasurer Tim Pallas noted in his budget speech that "climate change is a genuine threat." It is. New research from ABARES shows climate change is already hitting the agricultural sector. And communities across the state have experienced extreme events such as bushfires, droughts, heatwaves, and floods. These events are set to get worse and will hit the elderly and the poor hardest.

The Victorian Treasurer isn't afraid to mention climate change because the Labor government has shown leadership during its three years of office. Earlier in 2017 the Andrews government strengthened the Climate Change Act and legislated a permanent ban on onshore gasfields. It will soon enshrine in legislation a Victorian Renewable Energy Target that will build 5,400MW of new wind and solar farms by 2025. In addition to reducing our state's contribution to global warming, more renewables will place downward pressure on electricity prices - this is good news for Victorian consumers and manufacturers.

With global warming accelerating, these respectable policy outcomes must be seen as foundation stones upon which the Andrews government can continue climate policy leadership. The Victorian budget is the logical next step to advance climate policy. The budget process has evolved over decades to adapt to new challenges. Victorian Labor has an opportunity to

bring it into the 21st century to accounting for climate change - an issue that will have budgetary implications for decades to come.

The most obvious way for Labor to show leadership in the budget is to increase the level of investment in climate action. After all, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. The Andrews government's third budget delivers on many fronts, particularly for family violence (the state's number one law-and-order issue) and long-needed upgrades to the regional rail network. Yet when it comes to expenditure on climate change, Victoria is coming off a low base.

Of the \$798 million allocated towards the environment in the 2017-18 budget, \$153 million could arguably be considered climate-related expenditure. As for direct investment in climate change, there's \$12.8 million to deliver the Climate Change Act and \$12.6 million for climate adaptation planning over four years. Investment in climate action will have to be ramped up significantly to for the government to meet its Emissions Reduction Target of 15-20 percent by 2020.

The second aspect of modernising the budget relates to transparency and good accounting. While the government has a clear grasp of the dynamics affecting education, health, and infrastructure expenditure, it's unclear how climate is impacting the budget and what's allocated towards climate change prevention, resilience to impacts, and disaster response.

Bringing greater transparency to climate change in the budget will allow for its impact on state finances to be understood and tracked over time. If we don't track the costs, how can we plan for future impacts?

Leading energy policy expert Alan Pears has an elegant solution for the government to account for climate change. Pears recommends the government adopt a 'shadow carbon price.'

"The reality as I understand it," Alan Pears says, "is that many major companies are incorporating shadow carbon prices of up to \$20 per-tonne into decision making. If it's good enough for many companies, it should be good enough for the Victorian government as well."

Pears warns that failure to account for climate change leaves governments and the community exposed to carbon liabilities. "Factoring carbon prices into the budget would make it clear that the Victorian government is acting responsibly on climate change."

The Cain government modernised the Victorian budget in the 1980s. It brought greater transparency to the process by linking expenditure to a broader economic strategy and later including social justice thinking. What legacy will Premier Andrews and Treasurer Pallas leave? Modernising the budget for 21st Century challenges will deliver better outcomes for Victoria for decades to come.

To get involved in the Act on Climate campaign:

- Updates about the push for Victoria's first climate budget are posted at [www.melbournefoe.org.au/join\\_climate\\_budget\\_push](http://www.melbournefoe.org.au/join_climate_budget_push)
- The Act on Climate collective meets at Friends of the Earth in Collingwood each Monday night. Email Leigh Ewbank for more info: [leigh.ewbank@foe.org.au](mailto:leigh.ewbank@foe.org.au)
- Follow Act on Climate on Twitter: @ActOnClimateVic

# 2016 another record year for renewables

A new report by the International Renewable Energy Agency, *Renewable Energy Capacity Statistics 2017*, states that global renewable electricity generation capacity (including hydro) increased by 161 gigawatts (GW) in 2016, making it the strongest year ever for new capacity additions.<sup>1</sup>

Renewable electricity capacity grew by 8.7% in 2016, and renewables accounted for 60% of new capacity from all sources (55% if large hydro is excluded). Solar led the way with a record 71 GW of new capacity, along with 51 GW of wind, 30 GW of hydro, 9 GW of bioenergy (also a record), and just under 1 GW of geothermal energy capacity.

Global renewable electricity capacity has doubled over the past decade, from 989 GW in 2007 to 2,006 GW in 2016. Each year over the past decade, growth has been stronger than the year before: 69 GW was added in 2008, 118 GW in 2012 and 161 GW in 2016.

The 2,006 GW of renewable capacity is 5.1 times greater than nuclear power capacity of 392 GW (including idle reactors in Japan).<sup>2</sup> Actual electricity generation from renewables (23.5% of global generation<sup>3</sup>) is more than double that from nuclear power (10.7%<sup>4</sup>)

The renewable electricity capacity mix is as follows: hydro 58%, wind 22%, solar 13.9%, bioenergy 5.1%, geothermal and marine energy both <1%.

This year's edition of IRENA's *Renewable Energy Capacity Statistics* series also contains data for off-grid renewables. Off-grid renewable electricity capacity reached a modest 2.8 GW by the end of 2016, with solar contributing almost half of the total.

**Investment falls:** A separate report by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and Bloomberg New Energy Finance (BNEF) states that the strong growth of renewables occurred despite an 23% drop in investment (excluding large hydro).<sup>5</sup> A separate BNEF report finds that investment in 2016 - including all hydro - fell by 18%.<sup>6</sup>

The fall in investment last year was partly due to falling costs, with the average cost of solar photovoltaics and wind dropping by more than 10% compared to 2015.<sup>7</sup> Solar provides the most striking illustration: investment in 2016 was down 34% yet solar capacity growth was 34% higher than the previous year.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the drop, investment in renewables in 2016 was still roughly double that of fossil fuel generation.

**Employment** in the renewable energy sector (excluding large hydro) increased from 5.7 million in 2012 to 8.1 million in 2015 - an increase of 42%.<sup>9</sup>

**Future Growth:** IRENA Director-General Adnan Amin said in July 2016 that he believes the Agency's REMAP scenario - a doubling of renewable electricity energy by 2030 - is realistic.<sup>10</sup> IRENA's REMAP scenario is consistent with the projections of the International Energy Agency (IEA). The IEA's 2016 *Renewable Energy Medium-Term Market Report* predicts 825 GW of new renewable capacity from 2016-21, a 45% increase on the 2015 figure.<sup>11</sup> Growth of 161 GW in 2016 is consistent with that five-year projection. The IEA report notes that there is potential for more rapid growth than it projects, and identifies additional policy initiatives which would result in growth 29% higher than the projection of 825 GW.

## Coal

A new report by Greenpeace, the Sierra Club and CoalSwarm notes that the amount of new coal power capacity starting construction fell by 62% in 2016 compared to the previous year.<sup>12</sup> In 2016, 65GW of new coal-fired units started construction, compared to 170GW in 2015. Last year's coal decline was overwhelmingly due to decline in China and India.

Paul Massara, the former CEO of RWE Npower and now head of a green energy company, North Star Solar, said: "The decline in new coal plants in Asian countries is truly dramatic, and shows how a perfect storm of factors are simply making coal a bad investment."<sup>13</sup>

A record-breaking 64 GW of coal capacity was shut down over the past two years, the report notes, mostly in the US and EU.

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# What's behind the Finkel Review on energy security?

Ben Courtrice

Many environmentalists were disappointed, if not outraged, at Chief Scientist Alan Finkel's *Independent Review into the Future Security of the National Electricity Market*, released on June 9, which sought to stabilise the existing electricity market.

At the same time, the failure of the privatised and deregulated electricity grid led NSW Greens MP Jeremy Buckingham to call for its nationalisation as the only way to solve its intractable problems.

Four large national environment organisations – The Australian Conservation Foundation, Friends of the Earth, GetUp!, and Solar Citizens – released a joint statement saying: “Finkel was given an impossible task: design an energy system that would tackle global warming but still keep Tony Abbott and the climate deniers happy. The result of Finkel's mission impossible is a clean energy target that is actually very, very dirty. Climate science tells us there is no room for new coal and gas, and our Chief Scientist missed an opportunity to make that clear to the Turnbull government.”

Environment Victoria's Dr Nicholas Aberle said: “The entire Finkel report is predicated on changing the energy market to reach the Coalition's weak emissions targets of 26–28% reductions by 2030, which are much weaker than Australia's fair share of emissions reductions to limit global warming to less than 2°C.”

Environmentalists have singled out the long lifetime that the review assumes for existing coal-fired power stations, with coal still expected to provide a quarter of the nation's electricity as late as 2050.

Some other environment organisations and commentators have been less damning, singling out other aspects of the review's 50 recommendations that are more positive.

It is fair to note that Finkel was given an impossible juggling act to perform. The review had to deliver on not just Turnbull's climate targets and keeping the climate deniers in the Liberal caucus pacified, but to not upset the electricity industry too much, while maintaining electricity supply reliability and keeping prices down.

Not all of these requirements were stated. Officially, as Andrea Bunting pointed out in *Green Left Weekly*: “The review was actually about repairing the dysfunctional National Electricity Market (NEM)” not about slashing carbon emissions.

A different view is that the review is about restoring the federal government's authority to run the NEM as it sees fit. Even this level of intervention has some on the right fretting.

David Blowers of the centre-right Grattan Institute think tank has criticised the government's response to the Review recommendations as a “reversion to central planning” – damning words if you're a free marketeer.

Restoring its authority is on the federal government's political agenda. Labor state governments have angered the government with renewable energy targets in excess of the federal target and, in some states (principally Victoria), restrictions on gas industry fracking and new unconventional gasfields.

Emphasising these fears, nationwide anti-fracking campaign group Lock the Gate said the review's “criticism of government moratoriums on unconventional gas ignores observed evidence of the damage it inflicts on our food-producing land and local water resources and the unsustainably high cost of unconventional gas as a source of energy.”

Friends of the Earth also suggested the review “appears to be a Trojan horse to undermine state and territory leadership on energy policy”.

Keeping the grid reliable and keeping costs down are of course laudable targets, but appeasing the rent-seeking oligopoly of energy companies that own most of the NEM is not; nor is appeasing the climate deniers in the federal government.

Even on face value, repairing the business-as-usual NEM is hardly a desirable outcome. A rapid transition to a renewable energy grid has been found to be feasible in so many studies now, it would be hard to deny its credibility.

Going to 100% renewables is a lot more complex than just building more wind farms and bolting more solar panels onto roofs. But patching up the existing, coal-centred grid is not a practical road to it either.

When faced with the challenge of a Gordian knot, Alexander the Great (as the story goes) simply cut through it instead of trying to untie it.

Calls are being made to bring the energy sector back into public ownership, which could represent the equivalent course of action in our predicament.

In March, progressive economist John Quiggin called for “renationalising Australia's electricity grid” and in February South Australian premier Jay Weatherill also threatened to in response to the blackouts.

Buckingham called for nationalisation of the electricity grid on June 23, noting first that privatisation and deregulation have “led to a massive increase in wholesale electricity prices”.

“Households and the economy are now being punished for three catastrophic policy failures: the unregulated move into LNG exports; the privatisation and deregulation of the energy sector; and the failure to have a serious policy for the transition of the energy sector to renewable energy,” he said.

“Privatising essential services that are monopolies, or at best oligopolies, has failed with Australian households paying some of the highest prices for energy anywhere in the world ... We should look seriously at re-nationalising the energy sector to end the profiteering and to ensure a swift transition to clean energy to deal with climate change.”

Federal and state Coalition politicians were quick to blame renewables for South Australia's blackouts, even without significant evidence, and are using that as a tool to push back against Labor's modest ambitions for renewable energy and to rein in the gas fracking industry.

Whatever the useful points among the many recommendations of the Finkel Review, we should not be blind to its political context and the ends to which it will be bent by Coalition politicians. It's time to amplify the calls for public ownership and a move to 100% renewable energy, not to keep fiddling with the status quo.

*Reprinted from Green Left Weekly, [www.greenleft.org.au/content/what%E2%80%99s-behind-finkel-review-energy-security](http://www.greenleft.org.au/content/what%E2%80%99s-behind-finkel-review-energy-security)*

# What does Finkel mean for community power?

Kim Shore

The Finkel review did not explicitly put community power on the agenda. But community energy entrepreneurship could help deliver Finkel's recommendations – especially distributed and independent power systems.

Everyone seems to have a view about the review of Australia's energy market by Australia's chief scientist, Alan Finkel. Dr Finkel's policy recommendations attempt to pragmatically balance the interests of large, influential fossil fuel industry players with the necessary rapid transition to renewable energy.

But most who are concerned about global warming agree that Dr Finkel's policy recommendations lack the ambition needed for Australia to become a responsible global leader on climate change.

Luckily for the planet, our transition to renewables is inevitable. And the Finkel recommendations, if adopted, will at least help people get on with the job and drive the transition. The question is, who will benefit from this transition?

Community power is about ensuring people and planet benefit. When I talk about community power I mean enterprises and systems that are owned by locals and designed with the community and the environment in mind.

Community power puts local values at the centre of the design process. That means procurement arrangements that create local jobs, local investment schemes that create dividends for local people, responsible business models that mandate emission reductions and enterprises that create energy citizens – who are the consumers and producers of energy.

So will Finkel's recommendations help or hinder the growth of community power? Finkel's recommendations aim to fulfil four objectives: increased security, reliability, rewarding consumers and lower emissions. Some recommendations may hinder small scale community power projects. For example, recommendation 2.1 imposes a general obligation on new generators to demonstrate capacity of "dispatchable power", meaning an ability to quickly generate power when needed. An extra expense and approval barrier may pose obstacles to smaller renewable energy project developers.

Similarly, recommendation 2.3, requiring all generators to have technical requirements, including frequency control, voltage and reactive power control, may restrict smaller community power groups without such technological capacity.

But the good news is the Finkel review may also open doors to new and exciting opportunities for community power, even if the review does not explicitly support them. For example, the recommendation for greater policy attention to independent power systems and micro-grids could help bolster the body of evidence that is developing about the power and efficiency of distributed and independent power systems. Micro-grids provide a host of efficiency, collaboration and emissions reduction benefits – a group of 30 households using shared infrastructure can achieve 90% energy independence at half the cost of a single household.

Other ideas, such as orchestrated energy networks and demand management services offer lots of scope for entrepreneurship, because of the technology and services required to ramp up these new energy services. The question for community power is who will own the next energy platforms and software services? Will the platforms be locally owned and designed, or will an Uber of the energy sector transform the system, exporting profits overseas?

Innovative governance structures, missions, legal structures and ownership schemes can all help make sure new enterprises are built for people and planet instead of only institutional investors merely seeking profit.

While the Finkel review is no silver bullet, the outcomes should open up the entrepreneurial and policy space to allow governance structures and energy systems to create shared benefits and a fairer, cleaner energy system.

*Kim Shore is a lawyer at the Sustainability Law Lab, a project of Environmental Justice Australia ([www.envirojustice.org.au](http://www.envirojustice.org.au)).*

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# A climate solution that also lifts indigenous rights

Douglas Fischer

Bonn - May 2017: Addressing climate change has always involved far more than simply trimming emissions or promoting renewable energy. Deep questions about justice run through these United Nations negotiations underway here in Bonn. And few run deeper than what role the world's indigenous peoples need to play at these talks.

"Bigger than the climate crisis are the shocks to the social systems of indigenous people," said Cándido Mezúa Salazar, an Embera leader from Panama who represents indigenous and other traditional forest peoples from the Yucatan to Panama's Darien Forest. "Governments are making decisions for people without consulting the people, even the people living in the forest."

Panama, for instance, sees hydropower as a way to ramp up development. But that means flooding valleys and displacing communities. "As you force people out of their homes," Salazar said through a translator, "there is a very real danger those people will go extinct as an indigenous people."

Three tribal members have died protesting the government's policies; many more have been blinded or injured. The strife - and risk - is global: 65 indigenous protestors were killed in Brazil last year; 35 died in Colombia, Salazar said. In the past 30 years, some 3,000 indigenous people fighting to hold on to their land and way of life have been killed. Thousands more have been harassed, incarcerated, injured.

Salazar spent time last year with the Standing Rock Sioux in North Dakota, protesting the Enbridge pipeline. But he didn't go to stand in solidarity. He went, he said, because the land and water called. "The connection (the Sioux) have to the land is very similar to the connection we have to our land," he said. "It's a familiar story and lament: Talking to the grandfathers and grandmothers in Standing Rock, we hear the same sad story."

Every treaty renegotiation, Salazar said, stems from violence. "The whole arc is punctuated by conflict." While bathing and praying on the riverbank at Standing Rock, Salazar said he looked across the water and saw tanks, guards, guns, armament. "Very effective intimidation of the community," he recalled.

How to break that arc? A study published recently in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* by researchers with the InterAmerican Development Bank and Stanford University points to stronger indigenous rights as a way to not just strengthen communities, but also solve thorny



issues around emissions and deforestation ([www.pnas.org/content/114/16/4123.abstract](http://www.pnas.org/content/114/16/4123.abstract)).

The researchers looked at what happens after indigenous people gain strong land rights over their forests. The results, based on satellite data, were almost immediate: Within two years of gaining title to the land, clear-cutting dropped by more than three quarters and forest disturbances by two thirds, on average.

"All we ask is that countries grant us rights over our forests, stop the criminalization of our leaders, invest in us as a climate solution and provide us with free, prior and informed consent before starting any development project," said Edwin Vazquez, an Amazon leader here in Bonn to meet with climate negotiators. "We can take care of the rest."

Reprinted from *The Daily Climate*, [www.dailyclimate.org/tdc-newsroom/2017/may/indigenous-tribal-climate-rights](http://www.dailyclimate.org/tdc-newsroom/2017/may/indigenous-tribal-climate-rights)

# Around the world, environmental laws are under attack

Bill Laurance – Research Professor, James Cook University

As President Donald Trump mulled over whether to pull out of the Paris climate agreement, it is hard to imagine that he was listening to the experts. US climate researchers are being so stifled, ignored or blackballed that France has now offered sanctuary to these misunderstood souls.<sup>1</sup> One might prefer to think of Trump as an outlier in an otherwise environmentally sane world. But alarmingly, there's just too much evidence to the contrary.

A recent analysis, led by Guillaume Chapron of Sweden's Agricultural University, reveals a rising tide of assaults on environmental safeguards worldwide.<sup>2</sup> If nothing else, it illustrates the sheer range and creativity of tactics used by those who seek to profit at the expense of nature.

The assaults on environmental protections are so diverse that Chapron and his colleagues had to devise a new "taxonomy" to categorise them all. They have even set up a public database to track these efforts, giving us a laundry list of environmental rollbacks from around the world.<sup>3</sup>

One might perhaps hope that species staring extinction in the face would be afforded special protection. Not in the western US states of Idaho and Montana, where endangered gray wolves have been taken off the endangered species list, meaning they can be shot if they stray outside designated wilderness or management areas.<sup>4</sup>

In Western Australia, an endangered species can be legally driven to extinction if the state's environment minister orders it and parliament approves.<sup>5</sup>

Think diverse ecosystems are important? In Canada, not so much. There, native fish species with no economic, recreational or indigenous value don't get any legal protection from harm.<sup>6</sup>

And in France – a crucial flyway for Eurasian and African birds – killing migratory birds

is technically illegal. But migrating birds could be shot out of the sky anyway because the environment minister ordered a delay in the law's enforcement.<sup>7</sup>

In South Africa, the environment minister formerly had authority to limit environmental damage and oversee ecological restoration at the nation's many mining sites. But that power has now been handed over to the mining minister, raising fears of conflict between industry and environmental interests.<sup>8</sup>

In Brazil, the famous Forest Code that has helped to reduce deforestation rates in the Amazon has been seriously watered down.<sup>9</sup> Safeguards for forests along waterways and on hillsides have been weakened, and landowners who illegally fell forests no longer need to replant them.

And in Indonesia, it's illegal to carry out destructive open-pit mining in protected forest areas. But aggressive mining firms are forcing the government to let them break the law anyway, or else face spending public money on legal battles.<sup>10</sup>

Campaigners should also beware. Under new legislation proposed in the UK, conservation groups that lose lawsuits will be hit with heavy financial penalties.<sup>11</sup>

In many parts of the world, those who criticise environmentally destructive corporations are getting hit with so-called "strategic lawsuits against public participation", or SLAPP suits.<sup>12</sup> In Peru, for instance, a corporation that was mowing down native rainforest to grow "sustainable" cacao for chocolate routinely used lawsuits and legal threats to intimidate critics.<sup>13</sup>

That's before we've even discussed climate change, which you might not be allowed to do in the US anyway. Proposed legislation would prohibit the government from considering climate change as a threat to any species. No wonder researchers want to move overseas.<sup>14</sup>

As the above examples show, essential environmental safeguards are being conveniently downsized, diminished, ignored or swept under the carpet all over the world. Viewed in isolation, each of these actions might be rationalised or defended – a small compromise made in the name of progress, jobs or the economy. But in a natural world threatened with "death by a thousand cuts", no single wound can be judged in isolation.

Without our hard-won environmental protections, we would all already be breathing polluted air, drinking befouled water, and living in a world with much less wildlife.

*Reprinted from: <https://theconversation.com/around-the-world-environmental-laws-are-under-attack-in-all-sorts-of-ways-77590>*

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# Environmental defenders being killed in record numbers globally, new research reveals

Jonathan Watts and John Vidal – The Guardian

Activists, wildlife rangers and indigenous leaders are dying violently at the rate of about four a week, with a growing sense around the world that ‘anyone can kill environmental defenders without repercussions’.

Last year was the most perilous ever for people defending their community’s land, natural resources or wildlife, with new research showing that environmental defenders are being killed at the rate of almost four a week across the world.<sup>1</sup>

Two hundred environmental activists, wildlife rangers and indigenous leaders trying to protect their land were killed in 2016, according to the watchdog group Global Witness – more than double the number killed five years ago.<sup>2</sup>

And the frequency of killings is only increasing as 2017 ticks by, according to data provided exclusively to the *Guardian*, with 98 killings identified in the first five months of this year.<sup>1</sup>

John Knox, UN special rapporteur on human rights and the environment, said: “Human rights are being jettisoned as a culture of impunity is developing. There is now an overwhelming incentive to wreck the environment for economic reasons. The people most at risk are people who are already marginalised and excluded from politics and judicial redress, and are dependent on the environment. The countries do not respect the rule of law. Everywhere in the world, defenders are facing threats. There is an epidemic now, a culture of impunity, a sense that anyone can kill environmental defenders without repercussions, eliminate anyone who stands in the way. It [comes from] mining, agribusiness, illegal logging and dam building.”

Mexican indigenous leader and opponent of illegal logging Isidro Baldenegro López was killed in January.<sup>3</sup> In May, farmers in Brazil’s Maranhão state attacked an indigenous settlement, hacking with machetes at the hands of their victims in another land conflict that left more than a dozen in hospital.<sup>4</sup> There have also been killings of environmental defenders and attacks on others in Colombia, Honduras, Mexico and many other countries since the new year.

Most environmental defenders die in remote forests or villages affected by mining, dams, illegal logging, and agribusiness. Many of the killers are reportedly hired by corporations or state forces. Very few are ever arrested or identified.

This is why the *Guardian* has launched a project<sup>5</sup>, in collaboration with Global Witness, to attempt to record the deaths of everyone who dies over the next year in defence of the environment. We will

be reporting from the world’s last wildernesses, as well as from the most industrialised countries on the planet, on the work of environmental defenders and the assaults upon them.

Billy Kyte, campaign leader on this issue at Global Witness, said that the killings that make the list are just the tip of an epidemic of violence. “Communities that take a stand against environmental destruction are now in the firing line of companies’ private security guards, state forces<sup>6</sup> and contract killers,” he said. “For every land and environmental defender who is killed, many more are threatened with death, eviction and destruction of their resources. These are not isolated incidents. They are symptomatic of a systematic assault on remote and indigenous communities by state and corporate actors.”

Around the world, the number and intensity of environmental conflicts is growing, say researchers. An EU-funded atlas of environmental conflict academics at 23 universities has identified more than 2,000, ranging over water, land, pollution, evictions and mining.

“These are just the reported ones. There could be three times as many. There is much more violence now,” said Cass business school researcher Bobby Banerjee who has studied resistance to global development projects for 15 years. “The conflicts are happening worldwide now because of globalisation. Capitalism is violent and global corporations are looking to poor countries for access to land and resources. Poor countries are more corruptible and have weaker law enforcement. Companies and governments now work together to kill people,” he said.

The 2016 Global Witness data shows that the industries at the heart of conflict were mining and oil, which were linked to 33 killings. Logging was in second place worldwide – with 23 deaths, up from 15 the previous year – followed by agriculture. That ranking could change. In the first five months of this year, the most striking trend is that for the first time, agribusiness is rivalling mining as the deadliest sector, with 22 deaths worldwide – just one short of the total for the whole of last year.

The situation in Colombia in particular has gone from bad to worse in 2017. Brazil and the Philippines are also on course to hit new highs and indigenous groups continue to suffer disproportionately.

In terms of country rankings, in 2016 Brazil was once again the deadliest country in absolute terms with 49 killings, many of them in the Amazon rainforest. Timber production was



implicated in 16 of those cases as the country's deforestation rate surged by 29%.

More broadly, Latin America remained the most dangerous region for anyone wanting to protect rivers, forests, mountains and oceans, accounting for 60 of the global total of killings of environmental defenders even though it is home to less than a tenth of the world's population.

With major economic interests at stake, state security forces were behind at least 43 killings globally – 33 by the police and 10 by the military – while private actors such as security guards and hitmen were responsible for 52 deaths.

The human cost of all this is terrible, said Laura Cáceres, one of the daughters of Honduran indigenous Lenca leader Berta Cáceres, who was murdered in 2016 after resisting the Agua Zarca hydroelectric dam on the Gualcarque river.<sup>6,7</sup> Now in exile following death threats, Cáceres was recently in Oxford, in the UK, at a conference organised by Not1More (N1M – [www.not1more.org](http://www.not1more.org)), a group founded in 2016 in response to the violence facing environmental defenders.

“Berta Cáceres was a hindrance to the system,” Laura Cáceres said. “[Honduras] is so battered; 30% of the land has been granted to transnational corporations. Companies are taking over ancestral territories. Forests are being privatised. My mother was passionate about her land, her roots, and she was horrified by the sinister and violent forms with which imperialism acts.”

Shortly after the conference the *Guardian* reported that another of Cáceres' children, Berta Zúñiga had survived an armed attack soon after being named leader of the indigenous rights organisation formerly led by her mother.<sup>8</sup>

Defenders frequently say they get no help from government, indeed corrupt governments are often implicated in the violence.

One west African anti-illegal logging activist, who asked not to be named for fear of reprisals, said: “I am subject to pressure and threats. Millions [of dollars] are coming out of the forests and yet people have nothing – no schools, no health centres. Money is not going to the state but to private people. We are working without resources. My family has been threatened with death. We have had anonymous calls. I keep working with the help of my colleagues. We gave information to the UN, and asked for help. We got nowhere. We could be killed any moment.”

Wildlife defenders are also being increasingly

targeted. More than 800 park rangers have been killed by commercial poachers and armed militia groups in the past 10 years, according to US group Global Conservation.

“Rangers face high levels of violence and are being [killed] at an alarming pace,” says Sean Willmore, president of the International Ranger Federation.<sup>9</sup> “Almost 60% of those killed in 2016 were from Asia, with the majority from India.”

US writer Olesia Plokhii, who witnessed the murder of Cambodian illegal logging activist Chut Wutty in 2012<sup>10</sup>, wrote in the *Ecologist* last month: “Wutty ran his own environmental organisation, had Western financial backers, the support of high-ranking Cambodian military officials, hundreds of local supporters who watched out for him and tools – multiple cell phones, a GPS tracker. He was still murdered. Much less organised and prepared defenders, people who might be forced unexpectedly into protecting their lands due to evictions or enormous infrastructure developments, are up against the same violence.”<sup>11</sup>

The 2016 Global Witness report also notes that environmental protest is being clamped down on across the board – even in the richest countries – citing the case of the Standing Rock campaign<sup>12</sup> against the construction of an oil pipeline under Lake Oahe in the US, and noting North Dakota legislators only narrowly defeated a bill that would have allowed drivers to run over and kill protesters without being jailed.<sup>13</sup>

N1M co-founder Fran Lambrick told the *Guardian*: “Frontline environmental defenders are critical in fighting climate change, protecting our natural resources and upholding human rights and cultural identity. Yet they face violent reprisals, threats and criminalisation.”

“We are defenders of life,” said Laura Cáceres. “We are willing to do anything to allow life to continue. We don't want to lose our lives and lose our mamas and families. But we assume that risk. If they can murder someone with high recognition like my mother Berta, then they can murder anyone.”

*You can read more about the Guardian and Global Witness' year-long collaboration, The defenders, at [www.theguardian.com/environment/series/the-defenders](http://www.theguardian.com/environment/series/the-defenders)*

*See the names of all defenders who have died so far this year at <https://gu.com/p/6jmx8>*

*Reprinted from The Guardian, 13 July 2017, [www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jul/13/environmental-defenders-being-killed-in-record-numbers-globally-new-research-reveals](http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jul/13/environmental-defenders-being-killed-in-record-numbers-globally-new-research-reveals)*

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# NT fracking pipeline construction looms

Jimmy Cocking – Arid Lands Environment Centre

While Australia's environmental movement focuses on the Adani carbon bomb, a fuse for another carbon bomb was lit this month. On June 8, Northern Territory Mines and Primary Industry Minister Ken Vowles approved the construction of the first stage of the Northern Gas Pipeline (NGP).

The proposed pipeline is owned by Jemena, an 'Australian' company established by state-owned entities China State Grid (60%) and Singapore Power (40%). The 622 km pipeline is proposed to connect to the Amadeus pipeline (existing Alice Springs to Darwin pipeline) linking NT gas supplies to the east coast, connecting from Tennant Creek to Mt Isa in Queensland.

The initial contract is a 10-year supply agreement between the NT Government owned Power and Water Corporation and Incitec Pivot. While the initial contract is focused on conventional gas sourced from the Blacktip gas field in the Top End of the NT, Jemena clearly stated its intention in the Environmental Impact Statement for the project, which is to drive the development of the onshore gas (a.k.a. unconventional, fracked shale gas) industry.

The Northern Territory is said to have an abundance of shale gas resources deep under the ground. The process of extracting this shale gas requires deep drilling (between 1-4 km underground) and up to 2 km of horizontal drilling through the shale rock layer. Large amounts of water (between 4-20 million litres) and a range of chemicals including household cleaners and any number of undisclosed and untested chemicals are added with sand and guar gum and pumped at high pressure into the exploration well.

The high-pressure water and chemical mix breaks up the shale layer and releases the gas from the shale rock, this is what is called a 'frack'. Wells require many fracks over the life of a production well, with some of the toxic mix remaining underground and the rest of it being left in evaporation ponds to be stored permanently in a licensed waste facility. The fracked gas can be a mixture of methane and other climate warming gases including hydrogen sulphide, nitrous oxides and sulphur dioxides amongst others.

The impacts of the shale gas industry on communities in the United States are only just being realised. Connectivity between gas wells and aquifers have been found to be a source of groundwater contamination and methane leakage rates of up to 10% renders shale gas as polluting as coal as an energy source. Communities across the Northern Territory have

been standing up against fracking for the past 5 years and opposition to fracking was largely seen as the reason for the landslide election swing against the Country Liberal Party in August 2016.

Opponents of the gas pipeline are concerned about the pipeline's enabling impact on the shale gas fracking industry that is currently reeling from the relatively new Territory Labor Government's moratorium on fracking and the establishment of a Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing. The Inquiry, headed by Justice Rachel Pepper has been consulting communities across the Northern Territory since April 2017 and is set to release the findings and recommendations to the NT Government by the end of the year. A moratorium on gas fracking has been placed on the specific act of fracking, but companies can still carry out seismic testing, drilling and other activities as part of their exploration licence.

The pressure on the NT Government from the gas lobby is building. The budget cuts to GST revenue for the Northern Territory and Federal Government budgeted feasibility studies for another pipeline through the Simpson Desert is all part of the push for opening the NT up for fracking. The previous Giles Country Liberal Government spent millions of taxpayer dollars on advertising for the gas industry and among other dubious activities related to the fossil fuel industry, gave Jemena the go-ahead to proceed with the development of the pipeline in 2015. The EIS for the project detailed only the specific impacts of the pipeline corridor with a 30m clearing over its length and does not consider the cumulative impacts of the project that has a stated economic purpose of opening up the Northern Territory to fracking.

Ninety percent of the Northern Territory landmass is groundwater dependent. That means everyone outside of Darwin is dependent on water from aquifers deep under the ground. Eighty-five percent of the Northern Territory is subject to Petroleum exploration licences, all of which would require fracking to extract the gas.

The recent approval of the pipeline is a serious concern for all Australians. The east coast gas crisis was the selling point for the pipeline under the previous NT government, now it is abundantly clear that all the gas in Australia is not going to 'fix' the export driven supply problems that the gas companies have manufactured. The pressure to frack the NT is a ploy to open up new gasfields and export markets, not solve the gas supply issues on the east coast. It is an increasingly known fact that the 'gas crisis' requires market intervention and not a liberalising of land access for unscrupulous gas companies.

The beauty of the Northern Territory is a testament to its land and its people. Collectively Australians have stood up to protect the NT from uranium mines and nuclear waste dumps. Today we're asking if you can do it again.

We are small in number here and vast distances separate us from each other and our supporters across the continent. We are calling on all Australians to reject Jemena's Northern Gas Pipeline and join in the campaign to stop it opening up the NT to fracking. Please get involved and do what you can to stop this fracking pipeline. We cannot win this battle in the NT alone, it requires collective efforts across Australia.

Don't let Jemena open up the NT for fracking!

## To support the campaign:

Get informed, like Don't Frack the NT facebook, Central Australian Frack Free Alliance and Arid Lands Environment Centre pages

Contact the NT Chief Minister and Mines Minister:

Chief Minister Gunner: [chief.minister@nt.gov.au](mailto:chief.minister@nt.gov.au), ph 08 8936 5500

Mines Minister Vowles: [minister.vowles@nt.gov.au](mailto:minister.vowles@nt.gov.au) 08 8936 5680

Join local campaign groups to apply pressure on Jemena

[www.coalandgasfreevic.org](http://www.coalandgasfreevic.org) and others (see below)

Contact your local energy and water provider and let them know you don't want them dealing with Jemena.

Tell Jemena not to frack the Territory!

<https://jemena.com.au/>

More information:

#noNTPL

#banfracking

Northern Territory Fracking Inquiry

<https://frackinginquiry.nt.gov.au>

Central Australian Frack Free Alliance

[www.facebook.com/CentralAusFrackFree](http://www.facebook.com/CentralAusFrackFree)

Lock the Gate: [www.lockthegate.org.au](http://www.lockthegate.org.au)

Don't Frack the Territory: <http://dontfracktheterritory.org>

Arid Lands Environment Centre

[www.alec.org.au/don\\_t\\_frack\\_the\\_outback](http://www.alec.org.au/don_t_frack_the_outback)

Northern Territory Gas Pipeline: A white elephant

[www.smh.com.au/business/energy/northern-territory-gas-pipeline-a-white-elephant-report-20160518-goya2b.html](http://www.smh.com.au/business/energy/northern-territory-gas-pipeline-a-white-elephant-report-20160518-goya2b.html)



Waramungu and Wakaya Traditional Owners walked out of pipeline negotiations with Jemena, 2016.

# Radiation risks and fracking

Friends of the Earth Australia made a submission to the NT Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing regarding the radiological risks associated with fracking.

Oil and gas fracking generates several radioactive waste streams including mineral scales inside pipes; sludges/sediments; contaminated equipment or components; and produced waters. Because the extraction process concentrates naturally occurring radionuclides and exposes them to the surface environment, these wastes are classified as Technologically Enhanced Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material (TENORM).

In some circumstances, these radioactive materials (esp. sludges/sediment) can meet the criteria for classification as Low Level Radioactive Waste. In the NT, the government must resolve the issue of how to store or dispose of materials that meet the criteria for classification as Low Level Radioactive Waste given that there is no repository for such waste in the NT (nor is there a national repository).

Radiation levels can vary dramatically depending on the geological radioactivity and processing methods (e.g. recycling of fracking waste water can generate a sludge meeting the criteria for classification as Low Level Radioactive Waste).

The management of radioactive fracking wastes has been uneven and generally poor, as discussed in the submission. Illegal dumping is clearly a problem, and necessitates a thorough monitoring regime as well as enforcement and penalties. A proactive approach is required, whereas responses in the US, the UK and elsewhere have generally been reactive.

The submission recommends that further fracking activity in the Northern Territory should not proceed on the basis there is an inadequate management and regulatory system in place to avoid harm from the radioactive waste streams generated by the industry and to avoid the costly, complex, and long-term management issues posed by these waste streams. The industry has yet to demonstrate the production of these streams of radioactive waste can be adequately managed to avoid harm and costs to the broader economy.

The submission is posted at [www.tinyurl.com/frack-radiation](http://www.tinyurl.com/frack-radiation) or [www.frackinginquiry.nt.gov.au/?a=423147](https://www.frackinginquiry.nt.gov.au/?a=423147)

# Controversial copper mine on Bougainville hits roadblock

The push to reopen a controversial copper mine on the island of Bougainville has suffered a setback, with opposition groups stopping the region's government from signing a new agreement with some landowners.

The Panguna mine was abandoned by Bougainville Copper Limited (BCL) in 1989 after disaffection from landowners grew into an armed uprising and a push for independence from Papua New Guinea.

The President and Cabinet of the Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) had planned to go to the mine site on June 16 to sign an agreement that would allow BCL to work towards reopening the mine.

But opponents, led by angry women, blocked the road and demanded the ABG and the company abandon their plans. The protest was successful: Justice Kandakasi ordered in the Waigani National Court that the agreement cannot be signed until further notice.

Some opponents are specifically opposed to BCL returning, while others are opposed to any company reopening the mine.

Bernadine Gemel Kama said: "As a landowner in Panguna, I want everyone to know that it is only a minority of people, especially men, who want to reopen the Panguna with BCL. All of us do not want BCL to ever come back to Panguna and mine. If they want to talk about mining, talk about it after independence, not now."

In two years' time, there will be a referendum on Bougainville to determine if the region should secede from Papua New Guinea.

The Bougainville Freedom Movement (BFM) congratulated the women of Bougainville and their supporters for stopping the signing of the agreement. "The handpicked BCL landowners who were supposed to sign the agreement for the company were brought to a halt, thanks to the road-block protest held on June 16," said BFM's Vikki John.

John Momis, president of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, wants the Panguna mine to reopen and said the ABG will continue to work to that end. "This government is committed to make sure that people who have been most detrimentally affected, and the landowners have been in Panguna, we have to look after them," he said.



The abandoned Panguna copper mine in Bougainville.

Supporters and opponents of a reopening of the mine share common ground in their opposition to Rio Tinto's refusal to address the environmental legacy of the mine after it divested its share in 2016. The company claims it no longer has any obligation to address the mine's environmental legacy because it adhered to PNG's laws of the day and was forced to abandon the mine due to armed conflict.

"In terms of the environmental damage and social disruption, it is a moral negligence on the part of Rio Tinto to have caused so much damage to the environment and to people's lives, and to now walk away," said John Momis.

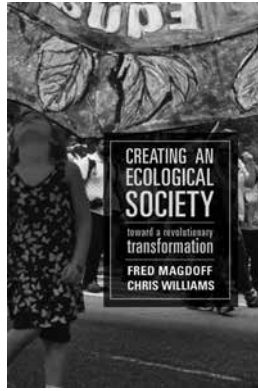
Momis said that "the only other way to fund a cleanup is through the resumption of mining. It [BCL] is now majority owned by the landowners and the ABG and we believe the cleanup could be done concurrently with the reopening of the mine."

However a chief from Guava Village, Maggie Mirau Nombo, said opponents will continue to fight to stop the mine reopening: "As long as I am the Chief from Panguna and Guava Village and owner of my land, BCL is not welcome. This is the company that has killed our sons and daughters. The ABG has to stop ignoring the cries of the women and take note that BCL is never allowed to come back to Panguna, and this is final and it is not negotiable."

*Subscribe to the Papua New Guinea Mine Watch e-list at [www.ramumine.wordpress.com/](http://www.ramumine.wordpress.com/)*

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<https://asiapacificreport.nz/2017/06/12/panguna-women-landowners-say-bcl-didnt-consult-and-isnt-welcome/>



## Creating an Ecological Society

*Creating an Ecological Society: Toward a Revolutionary Transformation*  
By Fred Magdoff and Chris Williams  
February 2017

Paperback ISBN: 9781583676295

eBook ISBN: 9781583676318

Order from [https://monthlyreview.org/product/creating\\_an\\_ecological\\_society](https://monthlyreview.org/product/creating_an_ecological_society)

Sickened by the contamination of their water, their air, of the Earth itself, more and more people are coming to realise that it is capitalism that is, quite literally, killing them. It is now clearer than ever that capitalism is also degrading the Earth's ability to support other forms of life. Capitalism's imperative - to make profits at all costs and expand without end - is destabilizing the Earth's climate, while increasing human misery and inequality on a planetary scale. Already, hundreds of millions of people are facing poverty in the midst of untold wealth, perpetual war, growing racism, and gender oppression. The need to organise for social and environmental reforms has never been greater. But crucial as reforms are, they cannot solve our intertwined ecological and social crises. *Creating an Ecological Society* reveals an overwhelmingly simple truth: Fighting for reforms is vital, but revolution is essential.

Because it aims squarely at replacing capitalism with an ecologically sound and socially just society, *Creating an Ecological Society* is filled with revolutionary hope. Fred Magdoff and Chris Williams, who have devoted their lives to activism, Marxist analysis, and ecological science, provide informed, fascinating accounts of how a new world can be created from the ashes of the old. Their book shows that it is possible to envision and create a society that is genuinely democratic, equitable, and ecologically sustainable. And possible - not one moment too soon - for society to change fundamentally and be brought into harmony with nature.

Noam Chomsky writes: "Humans are now facing the most severe challenges that have arisen during their brief stay on Earth, both self-induced: nuclear weapons and ecological catastrophe, the latter a broad category including not just global warming, disastrous enough, but also destruction of species, radical disruption of nutrient cycles, and other unprecedented calamities. This careful and comprehensive study is a very valuable contribution to addressing the social and ecological challenge, not only with its remarkable breadth of scope and expert understanding but also in its analysis of the inherent unviability of capitalist institutions and hopeful message that the "revolutionary systemic change" necessary to avert catastrophe is within our reach."

## The Threat of Nuclear Annihilation

*Sleepwalking to Armageddon: The Threat of Nuclear Annihilation*  
Edited by Helen Caldicott

August 2017

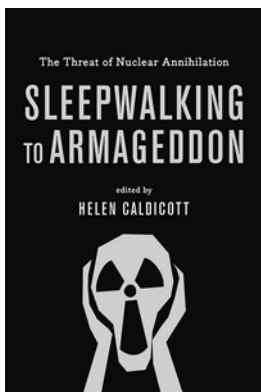
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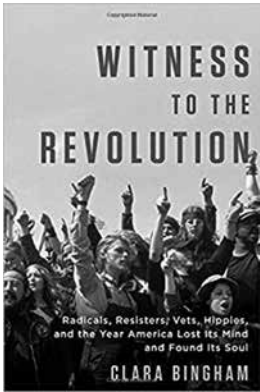
Also available as an e-book



With the world's attention focused on climate change and terrorism, we are in danger of taking our eyes off the nuclear threat. But rising tensions between Russia and NATO, proxy wars erupting in Syria and Ukraine, a nuclear-armed Pakistan, and stockpiles of ageing weapons unsecured around the globe, make a nuclear attack or a terrorist attack on a nuclear facility one of the greatest threats facing humanity.

In *Sleepwalking to Armageddon*, antinuclear activist Helen Caldicott assembles the world's leading nuclear scientists and thought leaders to assess the political and scientific dimensions of the threat of nuclear war today. Chapters address the size and distribution of the current global nuclear arsenal, the history and politics of nuclear weapons, the culture of modern-day weapons labs, the militarisation of space, and the dangers of combining artificial intelligence with nuclear weaponry, as well as a status report on enriched uranium and a shocking analysis of spending on nuclear weapons over the years.

The book ends with a devastating description of what a nuclear attack on Manhattan would look like, followed by an overview of contemporary antinuclear activism. Both essential and terrifying, this book is sure to become the new bible of the antinuclear movement - to wake us from our complacency and urge us to action.



# Witness to the Revolution

*Witness to the Revolution: Radicals, Resisters, Vets, Hippies, and the Year America Lost Its Mind and Found Its Soul*

By Clara Bingham

2016

Paperback, hard cover, ebook

Penguin Random House

[www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books](http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books)

[www.amazon.com/Witness-Revolution-Radicals-Resisters-Hippies/dp/0812993187](http://www.amazon.com/Witness-Revolution-Radicals-Resisters-Hippies/dp/0812993187)

Review by Andy Piascik

*Witness to the Revolution* by Clara Bingham is a valuable contribution to further understanding and popularizing the radical upsurge of the 1960s in the US. The book is an oral history and we hear from well-known figures of the time such as Ericka Huggins, Tom Hayden and Robin Morgan as well as others like Vivian Rothstein, Wesley Brown and Jan Barry who did significant work mostly behind the scenes in one or more of the movements that together made up The Movement. Though the focus of the book is the one-year period from the summer of 1969 to the summer of 1970, the interviews cover ground going back much earlier and thus provide many important insights about context and individual development.

The primary focus of *Witness to the Revolution* is the movement against the war in Vietnam. There's a great deal about the white Left as well as the counterculture and nothing about free jazz, DRUM, AIM, Stonewall or Black Arts. This was a conscious choice. The author explains in an Introduction that *Witness to the Revolution* is "a selective history" and the book "touches only lightly on the black experience, feminism, and the music scene" because there "just wasn't room enough in one book."

Even within that dramatically reduced landscape, Bingham covers a great deal of ground. Many of the seminal events of that one-year period are explored in depth: the Chicago Conspiracy Trial, Kent State, the Resistance, the extensive activism at the University of Wisconsin up through and including the bombing of the Army-Math building, Woodstock, Jackson State, the expose of the massacre at My Lai, Altamont, the Pentagon Papers and more.

## Vietnam Vets

Some of the best sections of the book are the stories of the Vietnam veterans who came home and built organizations in opposition to the war. They did so as they often struggled with serious physical and psychological problems while having to live the rest of their lives with memories of atrocities they observed and sometimes participated in. As the interviews reveal, some vets found a degree of healing through activism. Others expanded popular

awareness of the true nature of the war by shedding valuable light on war crimes by way of investigative reporters like Seymour Hersh.

Throughout, *Witness to the Revolution* repeatedly underscores how much vitriol some had to endure as elites attacked both the messengers and the message in the student, vet, Black Power and anti-war movements. Even as late as 1970, when many in the upper levels of government, business and planning had concluded that Vietnam was lost, those who showed that the war was not a righteous cause gone awry but consistent with U.S. foreign policy different only in scale were spied upon, harassed, imprisoned and killed.

## Popular power

As elites today move dramatically to make dissent ever more costly and dangerous, it is inspiring to read of the courage and endurance of those from an earlier time of discord. Fundamental to the success in stopping the war as well as resisting attempts to suppress dissent were the existence of massive movements of a galvanized population that was in many ways at war with its own government. One of the book's biggest strengths is that the power of the collective Movement is always present even when it's not front and center. And while *Witness to the Revolution* was published before the ascension of Trump, the thread linking the popular power of the time to the tasks we confront today is inescapable.

There are moving anecdotes and surprises. We hear poignantly if indirectly from Stephanie Fassnacht, the widow of Robert Fassnacht, the graduate student killed in the Army-Math bombing. Bingham also provides important history of organizations and efforts such as that of the Diggers that deserve more attention and which may stimulate greater exploration by others.

Bingham's introductory qualifier notwithstanding, it is still unfortunate that she excluded important pieces of the history of that time. This is especially so since she devotes so much space to the sorry tale of the completely marginal Weather Underground. Lots of people worked to stop the war in Vietnam even if that may not have been the specific focus of their



Veterans protesting against the Vietnam war in Connecticut, 1972.

activism; couldn't we have heard something from some combination of Elizabeth Martinez, Mike Hamlin, Frances Beal and Dennis Banks? Maybe a little something about the August 29<sup>th</sup> Chicano Moratorium, which was within the time frame Bingham covers and drew upwards of 25,000 people to the streets of Los Angeles?

Instead we once again get page after page of Mark Rudd, Bernardine Dohrn and Bill Ayers. Rudd's regrets and likening of himself to a police agent are to his credit; too bad the Weather Underground's story couldn't have been left at that and some space been granted to the original Rainbow Coalition, say, that was working at the same time and in the same city where Rudd and his comrades were carrying out the senseless Days of Rage. Juan Gonzalez is quite visible and not difficult to locate; wouldn't it have been more valuable to hear him on his experiences both as a student activist at Columbia and as a leading figure in the Young Lords?

*Witness to the Revolution* contributes a great deal to our understanding of the movements of the 1960s despite this weakness. The book gives voice to people from that time whose stories absolutely have to be heard and amplified as elites continue to distort, ridicule and de-fang the movements of opposition while also re-writing history, such as in the Pentagon's recent official account of the war in Vietnam. The importance of recording the stories of movement participants is underscored by Bingham's mention of those subjects who have died since she interviewed them, a number that has increased since.

### Lessons for today?

Among the lessons of the book that seem to apply to 2017 are, one, the need to utilize a variety of tactics; two, the need to resist and organize against as many of the attacks coming from the Trump Administration and the ruling class in general as is possible; and three, the need to establish alliances between those working on all of the many issues.

On the first point, we must continue to organize the kind of rallies, protests, strikes, and sit-ins that have been much in evidence since Trump's

election, right on up to actions that may include mass civil disobedience. The diversity of tactics including the willingness of many thousands to risk arrest or even violence at the hands of the police is one of the biggest strengths of the activism Bingham covers in her book. Similar efforts today should be supplemented by holding public officials accountable such as has been done at town hall meetings throughout the country as well as by challenging Trump allies in elections with candidates, preferably people who are a part of the emerging movements but who at minimum reflect the views and values of those movements. That we need to be present and organizing around all of the many issues is probably self-evident. The ever-growing movement in opposition to police violence against black people and the resistance at Standing Rock against the North Dakota Access Pipeline can serve as examples of how people from different parts of the country, different races and whose main activism may be on some different issue, can come together as needed to oppose a particularly dangerous threat. It wasn't enough, not nearly enough, but that can change, just as happened over a few short years in the period covered in *Witness to the Revolution*. Since ecological collapse and nuclear war are among those threats, the sooner we can get more of what we need up and running the better. The recent coming together of a large number of groups tackling a wide spectrum of issues throughout the country in a new coalition called The Majority is a positive development in this direction.

Given the scale of the trouble we face, we need more books like Bingham's. Such resources will be of great value as we confront challenges the only antidote to which is the construction of popular power on a mass scale. *Witness to the Revolution* is testament to how much such popular power can accomplish even in the most daunting circumstances.

*Andy Piascik is a long-time activist and award-winning author whose novel 'In Motion' was recently published by Sunshine Publishing. andypiascik@yahoo.com*

# Sustainable Agriculture versus Corporate Greed

*Sustainable Agriculture versus Corporate Greed:*

*Small farmers, food security & big business*

Alan Broughton & Elena Garcia

Resistance Books

ISBN: 978-1-876646-74-5

\$15.00

[www.resistancebooks.com/product/sustainable-agriculture-versus-corporate-greed/](http://www.resistancebooks.com/product/sustainable-agriculture-versus-corporate-greed/)



Review by Lalitha Chelliah

This new book is vital to understand the desperate state of farming in Australia and the world. The foolish thinking behind the way world leaders propose to manage sustainable food production is clearly exposed.

In *Sustainable Agriculture vs Corporate Greed*, published by Resistance Books, farmers and socialist activists Alan Broughton and Elena Garcia explore the world of survival. Broughton has enormous experience and knowledge about sustainable farming. He has worked in or studied experiences in Venezuela, Thailand, Tanzania, Uganda, Cuba, South Korea and Italy. He also designed and taught the first organic farming diploma course in Australia.

Broughton exposes the actual numbers of farmers suffering due to the policies of Australian governments. He examines the way agriculture is designed in the United States invariably leads this area around the world. His writing is rich with facts and figures about the companies that gain enormously from exploiting the small farmers with the help of governments.

The book is a weapon to argue against farming policies designed with the help of large corporations. It allows activists and interested people to understand that there is no dichotomy between workers, farmers and environmentalists.

Broughton establishes that we are all victims of this agricultural system, and that we need to cooperate to fight it. He offers information to help improve understanding of rural issues, and points out that rural and urban communities share common interests – we all eat and food is a common and important issue.

The book informs us that farmers have no influence over the price of their products. Large corporations and others along the distribution chain extract enormous profits from the produce, while farmers' income is constantly undermined.

The percentage of income obtained by farmers has fallen dramatically over the past century. This is especially the case since the establishment of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and "free trade" agreements in recent decades that have strengthened large agribusinesses. The resulting despair has caused a spike in farmer suicides globally.

Free trade is supposed to advantage farmers and increase exports, but it has only increased the rate of farmers being driven off the land. It is supposed to increase intellectual property rights for farmers, but in reality it has weakened protection for farmers and increased protection for large corporations.

Collusion among large companies and governments, and lobbying by corporations have contributed to the shaping of agriculture across the world. In the US, agricultural corporations write the food policies that are followed by government agencies. Add to this the interests of corporations that produce pesticides, fertilisers and insecticides, who are also pushing policies in their own interests.

The casualisation of labour has added to the woes of the farmers and workers. In Australia, we now have the taxation of fruit pickers.

Other partners in crime include energy companies and banks. Energy policy in Australia is written by the energy corporations.

Broughton offers a rich source of information at almost all levels to enable readers to grasp the plight of farmers. He also cuts through divisions among working people. He succeeds in establishing that all workers, including farmers, are at the mercy of large corporations.

Environmentalists have much to gain by reading this book, as it joins the dots to make us understand that a united people benefits the environment. People who are fighting for the poor in developing countries, too, can get an understanding about the importance of sustainable food production.

Broughton says that, contrary to widespread claims, there is not actually a crisis in food production. The problem lies with food distribution and accessibility. Food insecurity is unnecessary, given that the world already produces enough calories to feed 12-14 billion people.

He exposes the huge network of large corporations that influence global organisations. He says four corporations control 90% of the grain trade.

Africa is the latest continent to be attacked by corporate power on the food front. Global agribusiness is gaining a foothold there while people starve.

Broughton covers agricultural research and technology to include the latest developments, including who controls these areas and who benefits. He points out how science is usually used to sustain vested interests.

He explains the value of small farmers, showing how small farmers are more efficient than large agribusiness. To this end, he points to "La Via Campesina", an international group involving 200 million small farmers.

It has radical policies for solving the issues facing farmers, including: abolishing the WTO and free trade agreements; increasing farmers' input into research and new technology; implementing ecological farming systems; and dispensing with large corporations.

Garcia, an organic cattle farmer, discusses the recent milk price crisis in detail and the hypocrisy of the governments and large corporations.

She says that Australian agribusiness is dominated by companies like Coles, Master Foods, Golden Circle and SPC, which are now owned by US corporations such as Heinz and Coca-Cola Amatil. Almost all food processing plants have moved overseas for cheaper labour, except for SPC, which uses minimal services in Australia.



# What's the Matter with Meat?

*What's the Matter with Meat?*

Katy Keiffer

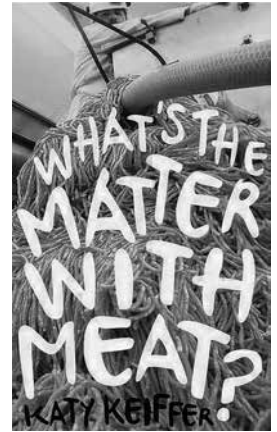
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[www.newsouthbooks.com.au/books/whats-the-matter-with-meat](http://www.newsouthbooks.com.au/books/whats-the-matter-with-meat)



Garcia also discusses carbon emissions and its links to cattle farming. She says one-third of such emissions come from bushfires that are not included in the Kyoto protocols. She points out that water usage is strictly monitored for farmers, but is unrestricted for mining companies and the coal seam gas industry.

She also explains that the farming industry creates wealth and jobs that remain in Australia, while the large corporations send their profits offshore and of course pay minimal or no tax. Land use for mining and its devastation is also well described.

Garcia discusses the legal measures that allow large corporations to rake in profits. She criticises the government for introducing such measures that allow attacks on small farmers and at best, bankrupts this industry to the advantage of global giants who bring little or no benefit to Australians and the environment.

She goes into detail about these manipulations of laws. In particular, she criticises the two major parties for placing the interests of multinationals above farmers and the community.

Garcia says this failure has opened space for the rise of right-wing parties such as One Nation. Rural and farming votes amount to 11% of the electorate, meaning the urban-rural divide has to be closed for the issues raised, of importance to all Australians, to be resolved.

Garcia addresses crucial issues, such as how to save small, family-run farms and manage weeds and pests. The high point of her contribution is her proposal of a manifesto on sustainable farming in Australia.

The manifesto ranges from protecting clean water, building alternatives to supermarkets, animal welfare, environmental protection, democratic community agricultural policy formation systems, and creating a rural bank.

This book is full of fantastic ideas for the benefit of ordinary people, both rural and urban. A key galvanising point is the proposal for cooperation between cities and rural communities to understand the common interests they have to save the land, make food accessible and eliminate rural and urban poverty by addressing wage issues for all.

*Reprinted from Green Left Weekly, 24 April 2017, [www.greenleft.org.au](http://www.greenleft.org.au)*

*What's the Matter with Meat?* draws back the curtain that obscures the true costs of industrialised meat production. The book exposes how the industry is expanding worldwide at a rapid pace, with just a few large companies monopolising the majority of the market. This global survey of factory-produced meat examines the practices of the industry in five major production centres: the USA, Europe, Brazil, Australia and Asia.

The system generates enormous corporate profits while providing low prices to consumers, but has an outsized and often negative impact on surrounding communities. Katy Keiffer focuses on issues such as labour, genetics, animal welfare and environmental degradation, as well as probing less-reported topics such as 'land grabs', where predator companies acquire property in foreign nations for meat production, frequently at the expense of local agriculture. The current industry model is simply not feasible for the future, as our planet will soon run out of the resources required to raise animals.

A salutary, hard-hitting critique of the meat-producing industry and its harmful effects, this book exhorts consumers to resist the lure of cheap meat and encourages governments to foster alternative methods, and the industry itself to amend its practices. This book is not about telling people to stop eating meat. Rather, by exposing current industry practices we can all be aware of the perils of supporting the system; instead of urging people to avoid meat, it proposes that we demand and pay for better meat.

# Reflections on justice and injustice

*Watching Out: reflections on justice and injustice*

Julian Burnside

August 2017

RRP: \$29.99

<https://scribepublications.com.au/books-authors/books/watching-out>

ISBN: 9781925322323

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In *Watching Out*, a successor volume to his *Watching Brief: reflections on human rights, law, and justice*, barrister and human-rights advocate Julian Burnside explains the origins of our legal system, looks at the way it operates in practice, and points out ways in which it does and doesn't run true to its ultimate purposes.

He examines fundamental legal principles, such as the presumption of innocence, explains why good barristers defend bad people, and sets out legal remedies for wrongs done to individuals and groups. The law's reach is immense, and so is the territory this book covers. Legal aid, class actions, assisted dying, counter-terrorism, unjust verdicts, and the treatment of asylum-seekers are some of the contentious subjects dealt with here.

There is also a compelling chapter on the plight of people who are bereft of legal remedies, living on the margins of society, and shocking examples of hate mail that Burnside's defence of refugees has provoked. Rich with fascinating case studies, and eloquent in its defence of civil society, *Watching Out* is a beacon of legal liberalism in an intemperate age.

Julian Burnside, QC, is an Australian barrister who specialises in commercial litigation and is also deeply involved in human-rights work. He is a former president of Liberty Victoria. [www.julianburnside.com.au](http://www.julianburnside.com.au)

## Inglorious Empire: What the British did to India

*Inglorious Empire: What the British did to India*

Shashi Tharoor

August 2017

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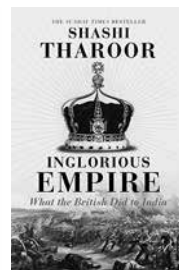
e-book ISBN: 9781925548518

<https://scribepublications.com.au/books-authors/books/inglorious-empire>

*Inglorious Empire* tells the real story of the British in India - from the arrival of the East India Company to the end of the Raj - and reveals how Britain's rise was built upon its plunder of India. In the eighteenth century, India's share of the world economy was as large as Europe's. By 1947, after two centuries of British rule, it had decreased six-fold.

Beyond conquest and deception, the Empire blew rebels from cannon, massacred unarmed protesters, entrenched institutionalised racism, and caused millions to die from starvation. British imperialism justified itself as enlightened despotism for the benefit of the governed, but Shashi Tharoor takes on and demolishes this position, demonstrating how every supposed imperial 'gift' - from the railways to the rule of law - was designed in Britain's interests alone. He goes on to show how Britain's Industrial Revolution was founded on India's deindustrialisation, and the destruction of its textile industry.

Shashi Tharoor served at the UN for 29 years, culminating as UnderSecretary-General. He is a Congress MP in India and the author of 14 previous books, and the winner of numerous literary awards.



## Another side of Santamaria's Movement

*The Show: Another side of  
Santamaria's Movement*

Mark Aarons and John Grenville

August 2017

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e-book ISBN: 9781925548440

<https://scribepublications.com.au/books-authors/books/the-show>

In 1942, on the recommendation of Bob Santamaria, Australia's Catholic bishops created a clandestine church organisation to smash the Communist Party's massive trade union base. Soon, The Movement, aka The Show, working closely with ASIO, became a sophisticated intelligence agency that would influence every corner of politics.

Santamaria based his Movement on the Communist Party, copying its spectacularly successful union-organising machinery. Within a decade, it had defeated communist power in many major unions. He also adopted the communists' strategy of infiltrating the Labor Party, and embarked on an aggressive program to transform it into a Catholic political machine, helping spark the great Labor Split of the mid-1950s.

Ironically, in modelling The Movement on his enemy, Santamaria imported its most odious characteristic: Stalinism. He rapidly embraced the characteristics of a Stalinist leader and, over time, his organisation adopted authoritarian and anti-democratic practices. As in the Communist Party, this caused catastrophic splits that undermined and, eventually, destroyed The Movement.

Weaving together a rich story from previously secret archives of both The Movement and the Communist Party, ASIO's massive files, and extensive oral history interviews, *The Show* exposes a previously unseen side of Santamaria's Catholic Movement.

Mark Aarons was an investigative reporter on ABC Radio National for 20 years. He is the author or co-author of six books. John Grenville joined the National Civic Council (The Movement) in 1957. He was a senior official in the Victorian Trades Hall Council in the 1960s and 1970s, and federal secretary of the Federated Clerks' Union from 1973 to 1975. He resigned from the NCC and his union position in 1975.

# Friends of the Earth Australia contacts

## National campaigns, projects and spokespeople

**Anti-Nuclear and Clean Energy (ACE):**  
Jim Green (Melb),  
jim.green@foe.org.au, 0417 318 368  
Robin Taubenfeld (Bris), 0411 118 737  
nuclearfreequeensland@yahoo.com.au

**Climate Justice:**  
Leigh Ewbank, 0406 316 176  
leigh.ewbank@foe.org.au,

**Climate and Health:**  
Harry Jennens, 0417 418 225  
admin@healthyfutures.net.au,

**Coal:**  
Chloe Aldenhoven, 0432 328 107  
chloe.aldenhoven@foe.org.au,  
Phil Evans, 0490 064 139  
phil.evans@foe.org.au,

**Community Energy:**  
Em Gayfer, emily.gayfer@foe.org.au

**Divestment and Banks:**  
Market Forces, ph (03) 9016 4449  
contact@marketforces.org.au,

**Emerging Tech:**  
Louise Sales (Tas), 0435 589 579  
louise.sales@foe.org.au,  
www.emergingtech.foe.org.au,  
www.facebook.com/  
FoEEmergingTechProject

**Finance & Divestment:**  
Julien Vincent,  
contact@marketforces.org.au

**Forests:**  
Ed Hill, ed.hill@foe.org.au,  
ph 0414 199 645 or (03) 5154 0109

**Latin America Indigenous communities solidarity:**  
Marisol Salinas,  
marisol.salinas@foe.org.au

**Murray-Darling Basin Plan:**  
Morgana Russell, 0408 095 470  
morgana.russell@foe.org.au,

**Pacific & Torres Strait Islands Climate Justice:**  
Wendy Flannery (Bris), 0439 771 692  
wendy.flannery@foe.org.au,

**Pesticides & Drinking Water:**  
Anthony Amis (Melb),  
ajamis50@gmail.com

**Renewable Energy:**  
Pat Simons, 0415 789 961  
patrick.simons@foe.org.au  
Leigh Ewbank, 0406 316 176  
leigh.ewbank@foe.org.au,

**Save the Reef:**  
June Norman (Bris), 0438 169 414  
junenorman1940@yahoo.com.au,

**Trade & TPP:**  
Karun Cowper, 0420 714 427  
karun.cowper@foe.org.au,  
Kat Moore, 0422 258 159,  
kat.moore@foe.org.au  
Sam Castro, 0439 569 289,  
sam.castro@foe.org.au

**Unconventional gas:**  
Ursula Alquier,  
csgfreepoowong@hotmail.com

## National Liaison Officers:

Cam Walker, 0419 338 047  
cam.walker@foe.org.au,  
Kat Moore, 0422 258 159  
kat.moore@foe.org.au,  
Leigh Ewbank, 0406 316 176  
leigh.ewbank@foe.org.au,

## International Liaison Officers

Chloe Aldenhoven (Melb),  
chloe.aldenhoven@foe.org.au,  
0432 328 107  
Emma Harvey (Melb),  
emma.harvey@foe.org.au  
Franklin Bruinstroop (Bris),  
franklin.bruinstroop@foe.org.au,  
0466 319 323  
Pat Simons (Melb), 0415 789 961  
patrick.simons@foe.org.au,  
Sam Cossar-Gilbert,  
sam.cossargilbert@foe.org.au

## Financial contributions

Tara Stevenson,  
tara.stevenson@foe.org.au,  
Freecall 1300 852 081,  
ph (03) 9418 8700

## Membership issues

Melbourne: Jemila Rushton,  
jemila.rushton@gmail.com,  
ph 9419 8700, 0426 962 506  
Other states – see Local Group contacts

## Local Groups

### FoE Adelaide

c/- CCSA, 111 Franklin St.  
Adelaide SA 5000.  
David Faber, adelaide.office@foe.org.au,  
www.adelaide.foe.org.au,  
www.facebook.com/foe.adelaide

### Bridgetown Greenbushes Friends of the Forest

PO Box 461, Bridgetown, WA, 6255  
president@bgff.org.au,  
www.bgff.org.au,  
Richard Wittenoom 0427 611 511

### FoE Brisbane

20 Burke St, Woolloongabba  
(above Reverse Garbage Qld).  
PO Box 8227 Woolloongabba,  
Qld, 4102.  
ph (07) 3171 2255,  
office.brisbane@foe.org.au,  
www.brisbane.foe.org.au  
*Peace, anti-nuclear and clean energy (PACE) campaign:*  
Robin Taubenfeld, 0411 118 737  
nuclearfreequeensland@yahoo.com.au  
@PACECollective

### Pacific & Torres Strait Islands Solidarity:

Wendy Flannery,  
wendy.flannery@foe.org.au,  
0439 771 692

### FoE Far North Queensland

PO Box 795, Kuranda, Qld, 4881.  
www.foekuranda.org,  
info@foekuranda.org,  
facebook: Friends of the Earth Kuranda  
Ph John Glue 0477 771 384

### FoE Melbourne

PO Box 222, Fitzroy, 3065.  
Street address – 312 Smith St,  
Collingwood.  
Ph (03) 9419 8700,  
1300 852081  
(free call outside Melb.),  
foe@foe.org.au,  
www.melbourne.foe.org.au  
www.facebook.com/foemelbourne

### Membership and fundraising coordinator:

Jemila Rushton,  
jemila.rushton@gmail.com,  
ph 9419 8700, 0426 962 506

### Act on Climate:

Leigh Ewbank,  
leigh.ewbank@foe.org.au,  
0406 316 176

*Anti-nuclear & Clean Energy (ACE) Collective:*  
ace@foe.org.au, 0417 318 368

*Dirt Radio:*  
www.3cr.org.au/dirtradio,  
Mondays 10:30am on 3CR

*Economic Justice Collective:*  
www.melbourne.foe.org.au/  
economic\_justice,  
sam.castro@foe.org.au,  
0439 569 289

*Food co-op:*  
food@foe.org.au,  
ph (03) 9417 4382

*Forest Collective:*  
Sarah Day, sarah.day@foe.org.au,  
0474 735 678

*Quit Coal:*  
Catherine Hearse,  
catherinehearse@gmail.com  
Chloe Aldenhoven,  
chloe.aldenhoven@foe.org.au,  
0432 328 107.

Ursula Alquier, csgfreepoowong@  
hotmail.com. www.quitcoal.org.au,  
www.facebook.com/quitcoalvic,  
info@quitcoal.org.au

*River Country Campaign:*  
Morgana Russell, 0408 095 470  
morgana.russell@foe.org.au,  
Sustainable Cities Campaign:  
Rachel Lynskey, rachel.lynskey@foe.  
org.au

*Yes 2 Renewables:*  
Pat Simons, 0415 789 961  
patrick.simons@foe.org.au,  
www.yes2renewables.org,  
@yes2renewables

### FoE Perth

perth@foe.org.au,  
www.facebook.com/  
FriendsofthePEarth/  
twitter.com/FoEPerth,  
Local contact: Karun Cowper  
0420 714 427  
karun.cowper@foe.org.au

### FoE Southwest WA

PO Box 6157, South Bunbury,  
WA, 6230.  
Ph Joan Jenkins, 0428 389 087,  
foeswa@gmail.com

### FoE Sydney

Jason Ray, sydney@foe.org.au,  
www.foe.org.au/Sydney,  
www.facebook.com/foesydney,  
twitter.com/FOESydney

## Affiliate members

*Australian Student Environment Network (ASEN)*  
Callista Barritt 0423 922 275,  
Cameron Villani 0419 799 577,  
info@asen.org.au, www.asen.org.au  
www.facebook.com/asen.org.au

*CounterAct*  
Nicola Paris, nicola@counteract.org.au  
www.facebook.com/counteractive,  
@CounterActOz, www.counteract.org.au

*Community Foods Cairns*  
Patricia Gates and Peter Reay,  
ph (07) 4041 5335,  
shop@comfoods.org.au,  
www.facebook.com/  
communityfoodscairns/

*Earthworker Cooperative*  
Daniel Musil, 0432 485 869,  
contact@earthworkercooperative.com.au  
www.earthworkercooperative.com.au  
www.facebook.com/Earthworkercoop  
twitter.com/Earthworkercoop

*GM Free Australia Alliance*  
Jessica Harrison, 0407 307 231,  
info@gmfreeaustralia.org.au,  
www.gmfreeaustralia.org.au

*Food Irradiation Watch*  
PO Box 5829, West End, Qld, 4101  
foodirradiationwatch@yahoo.com.au  
www.foodirradiationwatch.org,  
0411 118 737, @FIWatch

*Goongerah Environment Centre*  
www.geco.org.au,  
www.facebook.com/  
GECOEastGippsland,  
geco@geco.org.au,  
ph 0414 199 645 or (03) 5154 0109,  
twitter.com/eastgippyforest

*Healthy Futures*  
www.healthyfutures.net.au,  
admin@healthyfutures.net.au,  
Harry 0417 418 225,  
Kate 0438 347 755,  
facebook: Healthy Futures

*The Hub Foundation, Castlemaine*  
http://thehubcastlemaine.com,  
info@hubfoundation.org.au,  
0455 589 065

*In Our Nature*  
Kitobo Colobus Project in Kenya.  
Julian Brown, julian.brown20@yahoo.com

*Market Forces*  
Julien Vincent,  
contact@marketforces.org.au,  
www.marketforces.org.au,  
@market\_forces,  
www.facebook.com/MarketForces

*Mukwano Australia*  
Supporting health care in organic  
farming communities in Uganda.  
Sam Le Gassick,  
sam\_neal13@hotmail.com.  
Kristen Lyons, kristen.lyons@uq.edu.au

*Public Transport Not Traffic*  
Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne  
Berish Bilander, Campaign Manager,  
berish@ptnt.org, 0402 469  
053. Eleisha Mullane, Campaigns  
Coordinator  
eleisha.mullane@ptua.org.au,  
0418 288 110

*Reverse Garbage Queensland Co-op Ltd*  
20 Burke Street, Woolloongabba, 4102  
Ph 3891 9744,  
info@reversegarbageqld.com.au,  
www.reversegarbageqld.com.au,  
www.facebook.com/reversegarbageqld  
@ReverseGarbageQ

*Sustainable Energy Now (WA)*  
PO Box 341, West Perth WA 6872.  
www.sen.asn.au, contact@sen.asn.  
au, ph Steve Gates 0400 870 887

*Tulele Peisa (PNG) – ‘Sailing the waves on our own’*  
www.tulele-peisa.org













*West Mallee Protection (SA)*  
westmallee@gmail.com

www.foe.org.au



## Permaculture Ethics & Design Principles

 Earth Care  
  People Care  
  Fair Share

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|  1. Observe & interact                      |  5. Use & value renewable resources & services |  9. Use small & slow solutions          |
|  2. Catch & store energy                    |  6. Produce no waste                           |  10. Use & value diversity              |
|  3. Obtain a yield                          |  7. Design from patterns to details            |  11. Use edges & value the marginal     |
|  4. Apply self-regulation & accept feedback |  8. Integrate rather than segregate            |  12. Creatively use & respond to change |

explore the principles at



[permacultureprinciples.com](http://permacultureprinciples.com)