



Castlecrag Conservation Society Inc

PO Box 4230 Castlecrag 2068, <http://castlecragconservationsociety.org/>

Newsletter No 89
May 2013

CONSERVATION UP- DATE

Next Meeting

Wednesday 22 May 2013

Glenaeon School Hall, 121 Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag

8 pm

Mountain Pygmy Possum

Hayley Bates



Hayley Bates is a PhD candidate from the University of New South Wales. She will be presenting a talk on one of Australia's most iconic climate change species, the Mountain Pygmy-possum *Burramys parvus*. Hayley has spent the last three years researching and monitoring *Burramys* populations across New South Wales. Her talk will cover topics including: a history of *Burramys*, current population status and threats, present research, recent field discoveries and an exciting new approach to conservation.

Everyone welcome - friends and neighbours included. Please join us for supper after Hayley's presentation.

Castlecrag Fair, Sunday 2nd June, 10am - 3pm: John at the Post Office said he would be delighted to pay the \$70 for our stall. We are asking our members to donate biscuits, cakes, scones and jams to be sold on the day or anything for a hamper - wine, savoury biscuits, pate - if you have anything to spare contact Katie Cooney, Matthew Keighery or Mark Crew. We will also be raising money for endangered Pygmy-possum conservation. Can you help to man our stall?

Membership: Many thanks to members who have renewed their membership. Those outstanding will be able to do so at our speaker meeting or at our stall at Castlecrag Fair.

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- Pros and cons of BushCare and Bush Regeneration. An ongoing discussion.

Reports

- Speaker meeting 27 March. Lorraine Cairnes and Professor Chambers gave an excellent presentation on the Value of Trees. Our President Mark Crew suggested that tree preservation both locally (and more widely) was a pressing concern in which Willoughby Council needed a better identification and tree removal process after a local pine, *Callitris*, was removed after it was mistakenly identified as a European pine and allowed to be removed.
- Mark Crew reported on his meeting at Joe Hockey's office on the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act Mark discussed with Joe's assistant Danielle Fera, a wide range of environmental issues, including Coal Seam Gas and Hunting in National Parks. Mark suggested to Danielle that Marine Parks on the East Coast are small and fragmented and that this has been influenced by the Shooters and Fishing Party.
- Terese Hayward talked about wallabies that are now being seen all across Castlecrag and being filmed by WCC in Retreat Reserve. Richard Blacklock reported on his recent presentation of Bush Regeneration certificates to students of Ryde TAFE and Gay Spies spoke about her and Harold's attendance at the Faces of Willoughby and the historical photos of the Foundations of Willoughby and their great value.

Society's Committee Meeting, April 2013

Matters raised:

- Castlecrag Fair See above.
- Pollution in Sailors Bay Creek. Follow-up letter to be sent to Council.
- Wildlife sightings in Castlecrag.

Quotes & Sayings

GOP Congressman: 'The Best Thing About The Earth Is If You Poke Holes In It Oil And Gas Come Out'

23 Mar 2013 *Climate Progress* on line



The planet we live on is valuable only as a repository for natural resources, according to USA Rep. Steve Stockman . Stockman, a lawmaker best known for bringing Ted Nugent to the State of the Union and opposing the Violence Against Women Act because it protected “change-gender” individuals, went on an extended Twitter rant Thursday afternoon accusing environmentalists of hating science.

O'Farrell's Proposed Planning Reforms

"It's safe to say many of our community groups are extremely disappointed," said Elaine Malicki, a Ku-ring-gai councillor of 21 years. Like others, she believes the rights of communities will be eroded. "There are 23 proposed changes most of which benefit developers. It will be a massive reversal of planning as we know it," she said. Margaret Rice. "When public opinion counts for little" *News Review, SMH* March 23, 2013

Natural capital versus human needs

'The Earth has needs: as long as humans place their needs above planetary needs the earth will suffer.....' James Lovelock in *Responding to Climate Crisis* in *Challenging Climate Change. a special issue of Australian Political Economy*. 'Natural capital', a metaphor for Earth's stock of natural wealth that is consumed at humanity's peril. Schumaker(1973).

Planet's hidden costs

"We are the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe. And reclaiming the democratic control over our food and water and our ecological survival is the necessary project for our freedom." Monocropping, a farming system where the same crop is grown on a piece of land year after year, is foundational to industrial-scale agriculture. Yet it depletes the soil, upends the ecological balance, and creates conditions highly susceptible to pests and disease, requiring more pesticides and fertilizers. Our planet pays profound hidden costs: polluted water, air, and soil; deforestation; acid rain; species extinction; and climate change. The corporate food system wreaks countless ecological harms.

Quotes from Vandana Shiva, *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace* (Massachusetts: South End Press, 2005), Vandana Shiva, physicist and activist, *Truthout* on line 24 March 2013

Ten times faster

A [Nature Geoscience study](#) found humans are spewing carbon into the atmosphere 10 times faster now than 56 million years ago, the Paleocene-Eocene Thermal Maximum (PETM), a time of 10°F warming and mass extinction. *Climate Progress* on line 24 March 2013.

Broome anti-gas campaign scores win

Broome community and environmentalists around Australia are celebrating an important victory. Oil and gas producer Woodside Petroleum said it would not go ahead with the gas hub at James Price Point in the Kimberley. But Zeb Parks in *Green Left Weekly* (24 April) said the defeat of the gas hub is a temporary reprieve, the campaign is far from over. Woodside said that it was reviewing alternative concepts: The Browse Basin field itself is still expected to be developed, with joint venture partner Royal Dutch Shell to push for a cheaper floating LNG plant, which it is developing for its Prelude project in the same region as Browse.



Grey Butcherbird (*Cracticus torquatus*) devouring male White Stemmed Wattle Moth (*Chelepteryx chaelepteryx*)



A female Golden Whistler in Keep Reserve, Castlecrag. She seems to be a daily visitor, feeding on insects amongst a patch/thicket of native Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*) and Cheese tree (*Glochidion ferdinandi*), as well as weedy species such as Small Leaf Privet (*Ligustrum sinense*), Broad-leaf privet (*Ligustrum lucidum*) that has an understory of Fish-bone fern (*Nephrolepis cordifolia*).

Photos Matthew Keighery

BPN Petition Handover

28 March 2013 Report by Gay Spies

This was an excellent event, albeit with nonsensical bureaucratic interference by Security at the Parliament House entrance - no banners allowed inside PH. Banners had to be scanned - presumably for hidden explosive devices - then left at the entrance. Nor could photos be taken in the PH grounds. We all had to troop out, go through the prescribed exit, back to the entrance to get the banners, then line up for our pics in the street! This one (attached) was obviously selected as the best and I think it is pretty good. Shows Corinne Fisher handing over the petition to Jamie Parker.

Once back inside we went to the Macquarie Room where tea and coffee were available. Pollies attending were Jamie Parker (Greens, Lower House), David Shoebridge (Greens, Upper House) and Alex Greenwich (Independent, Lower House), Clover' s replacement. Later Luke Foley (Labor, Upper House, and Labor Shadow Minister for Planning) came in. There were **few** apologies: Rev Fred Nile and(I think)his fellow Christian Democrat Paul Green, plus a few others I can't remember. However there was a striking absence of all Coalition MPs and also of any Shooters and Fishers, and none of them sent apologies. All were invited - BPN is non-party political.

Corinne gave an introduction, why are we here etc, introduced the pollies, each of whom gave a very short speech but stressed they were there to listen. Corinne called on various group reps to give a very short summary of the issues in their area, beginning with those from the City of Sydney because Alex Greenwich could not stay the full length of the meeting. The rep from the area of Great Lakes Council could not understand the problems he was hearing about from some of these reps, particularly problems of non- consultation because that Council, like Willoughby, obviously consults its residents. They, and we, are obviously going to get more of a shock when the new planning laws come in than residents from some of the other areas who are already reeling from changes to planning which are being introduced in advance of the Review.

The announcement this week of areas of 'urban activation' are a case in point, as is the recent release of the Sydney Metro Strategy, which we would do well to have a look at.

BPN had use of the room until 1pm. Just before this, Jamie Parker, David Shoebridge and Luke Foley were each asked to say a few words. David Shoebridge raised a number of possibilities: what will happen to the Land and Environment Court when 70% - 80% of developments will not require a DA; what will happen to all the planning lawyers; what will happen to all the council planners, when councils become powerless after their planning powers are taken away and their only role becomes implementation of the decisions of the Regional Planning Panels?

All the pollies expressed great appreciation of BPN and all the community groups in the network. They said BPN had already had a great impact in weakening the proposed changes to DCPs last November. They pledged to be guided by community views and to fight hard against the new legislation. With that support David Shoebridge felt they could improve the forthcoming legislation. Luke Foley said that when the crunch comes they (in the Upper House) would have to make a difficult decision whether to make a compromise or to walk away and risk a worse outcome supported by the Shooters and Fishers.

The Greens and Labor in the Upper House are two short of control. If the two Christian Democrats decide to go with The Greens and Labor, then there is a chance of getting a better result, or even of defeating the legislation. For this reason, **Corinne has asked all groups present to email the two Christian Democrats asap** - Rev Fred Nile and Paul Green - thanking them for sending apologies today and especially pointing out our concern that the Green Paper has recommended that there should be no right to comment on individual developments. ie the place next door. Nile, at a previous meeting with BPN, did not realise this was a recommendation of the Green Paper. He was shocked and said he did not support it. He had had a DA next door to him and had appreciated the opportunity to comment.



NSW Government's Cynical Betrayal of Community

"The NSW Government's planning White Paper and Draft Legislation is a cynical betrayal of every promise made to the community," said Better Planning Network's Corinne Fisher.

"The Government is trumpeting its push for rapid development approvals but speed comes at the cost of community consultation. So much for assurances that community will be at the heart of the planning system," Ms Fisher said.

The White Paper has at its core the ability of developers, small and large, to achieve approval for most developments in a rapid time frame. The onus will be on decision makers to approve complying developments within ten days and code assessable developments within 25 days. In neither case will neighbours or the local community have a right or opportunity to comment.

"Code Assessable development is not benign or necessarily low impact," said Ms Fisher. "It includes residential flat buildings in town centres, new commercial buildings, mixed use building, and subdivisions with twenty or fewer villas or town houses. These developments can have a major impact on a neighbourhood or small town centre. The community should have the right to comment and to negotiate for the best possible outcome in such cases."

"The Better Planning Network is deeply disappointed in the State Government. Barry O'Farrell's election promise to: *give planning powers back to the people* (Contract with NSW, March 2011) has proven to be a cynical ploy. This planning system is a developer's dream."

Ms Fisher said that the community has been almost entirely cut out of the planning process at the local level. "The Government hopes that within five years 80% of development will be complying or code assessable. The rest will be merit assessed developments, including the really big developments that are determined by the Planning Assessment Commission or taken into the Minister as State Significant."

"This is the first major overhaul of the planning system for thirty years," said Ms Fisher. "It is a disaster for communities all over NSW."

The White Paper will be on public exhibition until June 28th 2013 despite communities asking for a minimum consultation period of 6 months, Ms Fisher said. 'Community comments on the Green Paper have been largely ignored in the White Paper. So how does Government expect us to believe that communities will be at the centre of the NSW Planning system?'

Early Intervention Bill - a Threat to Councils and Local Communities

On 26 February 2013, the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Don Page, MP, introduced the *Local Government Amendment (Early Intervention) Bill* to the Legislative Assembly, where it remains currently. As detailed below, this Bill will substantially increase the power of the Minister for Local Government to intervene in Councils, including suspending them for up to six months without a publicly accountable process. The Bill will also make Councils accountable to the Minister. Currently, the Minister has a "supervisory role" and Councils are solely accountable to their residents and ratepayers. This will create conflicts for Councils, particularly those seeking to advocate against State Government proposals on behalf of their residents and ratepayers. "The

Bill can be a tool against Councils that disagree with the State Government."

Corinne Fisher, BPN on line 13 April 2013

Planning White Paper Released

The Government's planning White Paper, released on 16th April, confirms that the NSW Government is pushing ahead with alarming proposals that will see:

- 80% of all development in NSW assessed as 'complying' or 'code assessment' development with **no community consultation and limited environmental assessment**,
- **a presumption in favour of a right to develop** if a proposal meets code-based requirements, and
- **expanded review rights for developers.**

Further, the Government has failed to ensure that the planning system will protect our environment and natural resources. We have continuously asked the NSW Government to fix our planning system and improve environmental protection by:

- providing clear and robust requirements for considering environmental impacts,
- removing restrictions on third-party merit appeal rights for major projects that have been subject to public hearings,
- implementing measures for mitigating and adapting to climate change impacts, and
- providing guaranteed protection for our drinking water catchments and high conservation areas from the impacts of coal and coal seam gas mining.

The White Paper does not address these key concerns and fails to provide a planning system that protects our environment and our communities.

[Download](#) a copy of the White Paper and draft Exposure Bill from the Department's website: www.planning.nsw.gov.au/newplanningsystem

We cannot let the Government proceed with planning reforms that fail to protect our environment and communities.

Stand up for your rights and the environment. Tell the NSW Government that you do not support proposals to expand code assessment and developer rights and that more needs to be done to protect our environment.

Call Premier O'Farrell and Minister Hazzard and urge them to ensure that the new planning system protects the environment and our communities.

Barry O'Farrell, MP, Premier: (02) 9228 5239

Brad Hazzard MP, Minister for Planning: (02) 9228 5258

Possible talking points (we suggest using your own words):

1. I am deeply alarmed at the proposal to exclude local residents and the community from up to 80% of development approval decisions.
stronger protection for the environment and community health
2. In particular I support:
 - mandatory accreditation and independent appointment of environmental consultants,
 - clear and objective criteria for the environmental impact assessment of development applications,
 - proper protection for our high conservation land, water catchments and agricultural land, including restrictions on high impact development such as coal and coal seam gas exploration and mining.

The Government has already prepared draft legislation to implement its White Paper proposals. **We must act now for the environment and our communities.**

The White Paper and Exposure Bill are open for public comment until 28 June 2013. Find out how you can have your say by visiting the Department's website:

www.engage.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/newplanningsystem

Nature Conservation Council

Developers welcome changes!

They have welcomed the proposed changes to the planning systems outlined in the NSW government's white paper. Carolyn Cummins, *SMH Business Day* 17 April 2013

O'Farrell's Broken Promise

Under the planning scheme in the White Paper, once the strategy for an area is locked in, as much as or little public consultation is set out for an individual apartment block as for a barbecue - that is, none.

This has alarmed opponents, including Labor and the Greens, which decry it as shifting power to developers at the expense of locals.

The community group coalition, the Better Planning Network, labelled this a "developers dream", while the Nature Conservation Council of NSW said it is the "most significant backward step in a generation". "The Premier promised to give people a real say on issues affecting their local community," the council's chief executive, Pepe Clarke, said. "The government has broken that promise four out of five developments will be assessed with no public consultation and limited environmental assessment."

Leesha McKenny *News Review, SMH* 20-21 April 2013

Planning system changes will silence the community's voice in 80 per cent of development decisions



The state government's proposals for sweeping planning law reforms will deny residents a say in 80 per cent of development decisions and set back public participation in the planning system by more than a generation.

NCC Chief Executive Officer Pepe Clarke said public participation improved the quality of decisions and gave the community input on development proposals that affect local environments and people's way of life.

"The community has had these rights since the current planning laws were introduced in 1979 and it is vital that they be protected and enhanced," Mr Clarke said.

"Prior to the state election, Premier Barry O'Farrell promised to give people a real say on issues affecting their local community.

"Now he is in power he is proposing to have four out of five developments assessed with no public consultation and limited environmental assessment."

The White Paper proposes applying a fast-track "code assessment" approach to a wide range of developments, including commercial buildings, apartment blocks and land sub-divisions.

Under the proposals, local councils will not be able to refuse proposals that comply with relevant codes.

Tiny Bulga wins day against mining Goliath

The tiny town of Bulga has won a three year battle against the giant Rio Tinto, when a court overturned a state government - endorsed decision to allow it to dig an open-cut coal mine next to the town.

The challenge was brought by the Bulga Milbrodale Progress Association, representing the views of most of the town's residents, with help from the Environmental Defender's Office of NSW (EDO).

In his judgment Justice Preston was not persuaded by the economic analysis offered by the company. He said "the project's impacts would exacerbate the loss of sense of place and materially and adversely change the sense of community, of the residents of Bulga and the surrounding countryside". "The mine would have had significant and unacceptable effects on plants and animals, and would generate serious levels of dust and noise." Planning Minister Brad Hazzard said he was seeking legal advice on what court action might be available to the government."

Abridged from Ben Cubby,

Sam Ridney, *SMH*, 16 April 2013

Rio takes coal project to court. The proposal for an 18 million tonne per annum, 1200 hectares open-cut coalmine in an area currently occupied by farmland and a critically endangered woodland ecosystem. The mine would encroach on the village of Bulga with the town within the mine's compulsory acquisition zone.

Green Left Weekly, 1 May 2013

Villagers put celebrations on hold as Rio Tinto appeals court ruling



Nature News Online

"Bravo Bulga! Beautiful one day, and now beautiful for many days to come."

Paul Van Reyk, Petersham. *Letters SMH* 17 April 2013

Did You Know That

- In a lowland forest in Vietnam herpetologist Dr Jodi Rowley discovered a new species of frog, a large bright-green frog, its enormous webbed hands and feet identified it as a 'flying frog' - a group that spends most of its time in trees and uses its webbed hands and feet like a parachute to glide from tree to tree or descend to the forest floor. It was named *Helen's Flying Frog* in honour of Jodi's mother Helen Rowley.



Information and photo based on an article *Helen's Flying Frog* in *Explore*, Journal of Australian Museum, Autumn/winter April to July 2013.

- Mitochondria - the bean-shaped organs that supply energy inside animal cells are bacterial endosymbionts. Chloroplasts in plant cells are also bacterial endosymbionts. Their DNA is not in long linear chromosomes as in animals and plants but in circular hoops as bacteria do. These micro-organisms most probably became symbionts in primitive cells millions upon millions of years ago when life was just starting to evolve on this planet.
- 8% of our genome isn't human: a quarter of our base pairs in our DNA are old virus genes. "If Charles Darwin appeared today, he might be surprised that humans are descended from viruses as well as from pre-apes." Robin Weiss in *Violinist's Thumb* by Sam Kean
- ACF wrote an article on global warming 37 years ago in *Habitat!*
- There is an established link between poverty and the increased risk of exposure to toxic and hazardous chemicals. Exposure of poor people to toxic chemicals is often strongly correlated with geography. In urban settings, low income or minority populations typically reside in neighbourhoods considered undesirable, such as areas adjacent to chemical plants. (Full report in our next newsletter).
- Mining companies will be able to challenge whether their proposed coal and coal seam gas projects must abide by new rules designed to protect some of the state's most sensitive land. (A protocol published by the NSW government on Friday 19 April 2013).
- Greenhouse gas level highest in 3m years. It was 399.72 CO2 parts per million in Hawaii on 25 April 2013.
- Every 20 minutes 3500 humans are born and one or more entire plant or animal species are lost.
- Every year, the Australian Government hands over more than ten billion dollars in subsidies to polluting fossil fuel companies.

Indonesian forest open for mining, logging

The Canadian mining company East Asia Minerals has boasted of an Indonesian government decision to free up 1.2 million hectares of virgin forest in Aceh, Sumatra, for commercial exploitation.

The government's plan would zone large blocks of previously protected forest for mineral extraction, timber concessions and palm oil plantations. The plan would also approve an extensive new network of roads through protected forests.

Environmental groups said the news was devastating. Logging, mining and palm oil concessions would want to operate in increasingly scarce lowland forests where endangered orang-utans, Sumatran tigers, rhinos and elephants live.

Michael Bachelard, SMH 18 April 2, 2013

Report Calls Anti-Fracking Movement a "Highly Effective Campaign"

[Katrina Rabeler](#), [Yes! Magazine](#) | Report

Wednesday, 27 March 2013



Opponents of hydraulic fracturing rally in New York City.

(Photo: [Adam Welz for CREDO Action](#))

A report intended to help the oil and gas industry squash the anti-fracking movement turns out to be full of useful information - and admits that much of what activists are saying is true.

The anti-fracking movement "grew out of the grassroots—it wasn't led by any national NGO but stemmed from regular working people who have never been activists before," he says. "It is born out of children who have become ill, farms that have been ruined, aquifers and wells that have been contaminated, and air that has been poisoned.

Climate Progress on line 28 March 2013

NSW Minerals Council plans ad blitz against critics

The Minerals Council chief executive Stephen Galilee said “activists and extremists” are using fear, rather than facts, to further an anti-mining agenda. He said the Council’s “land use facts” campaign would include TV ads.

It should be noted that about 300 people (all, of course, activists and extremists) attended a rally in Campbelltown on 17th March to call on the NSW government to protect drinking water, local communities and farmland from coal seam gas development.

Local resident Len Williamson said too many communities remained exposed to potential health risk consequences from coal seam gas. “We are calling on the government to rule out coal seam gas exploration and mining in Sydney’s water catchments,” he said.

Based on AAP report, SMH 18 March 2013

Injection Well Linked to Destructive Earthquake in Oklahoma, Raising New Fracking Fears

Friday, 29 March 2013

By Mike Ludwig, Truthout Report. on line.



A team of federal and university geologists have linked a series of unusual earthquakes, including a destructive 5.7-magnitude shocker, to oil-drilling wastewater-injection wells in Oklahoma.

(Photo: Matt Nager / The New York Times)

The earthquakes occurred near Prague, Oklahoma, in 2010. The largest quake left two people injured, destroyed 14 homes, damaged a federal highway and was felt as far away as Milwaukee, according to a Columbia University release. Columbia geologists partnered with the US Geological Survey to produce the report, which revealed a “potential” link between drilling wastewater injection and the massive earthquake.

Daniel Fitton, SMH 18 March 2013

On the current greenhouse emissions trajectory driven by repeated political failure, global warming will reach 4 degrees Celsius this century and as early as 2060. Such an outcome may well reduce the human population to **less than one billion people** through decades of climate ecocide. In these circumstances the paths to global justice, civil right and human dignity are best, and can only be, served by making transformative climate action the core of political activity.

Climate Code Red on line 8 April 2013

Fracking fails the poll test

Three-quarters of NSW voters oppose coal seam gas exploration on agricultural land, the latest polling reveals, as the government draws more fire over its handling of the resource.

A [Fairfax Media/Nielsen poll](#) shows fewer than one in five supports allowing the process, with 17 per cent favouring it. In a blow for the government, the poll indicates opposition is as strong among Coalition voters (75 per cent) as Labor voters (73 per cent). The finding comes as the government was singled out for not yet signing a protocol to refer big coal and coal seam gas projects to a national expert panel for advice on their environmental impact.

The report by the Council of Australian Governments Reform Council, recently released, said NSW was the only participating state not to reach agreement with the Commonwealth on how to decide which projects were referred for advice.

The report coincided with an announcement by the gas company Dart Energy that it would slash 70 per cent of its workforce - about 100 jobs - and suspend its operations in NSW in response to state and federal policy shifts.

Sean Nicholls, Paddy Manning. SMH, April 3, 2013

The Wish List!

It was the most exclusive of events: a glittering \$500 minimum per head gala fundraising dinner last week for a right-wing think tank. Tony Abbott, Gina Rinehart and Rupert Murdoch took turns sharing the stage. Andrew Bolt was MC. Tony praised his fellow key-note speakers, especially Rupert, and promised the crowd a “big yes” to many of the think tank’s list of 75 policies to radically transform Australia.

So what, exactly, is on this think tank’s wish list?

- Public broadcasting - gone. The ABC to be broken up and sold off, SBS to be fully privatised.
- Corporations to be allowed to make secret payments to political parties.
- Medicare gone for most Australians.
- A return to Work Choices, just by another name.
- The clean energy fund and the renewable energy target - scrapped.
- Funding for sport and arts - including the Australian Institute of Sport - axed. Same for science, with the CSIRO to be privatised.

Get Up on line 9 April 2013

CSG in retreat – Dart Energy leaves the Hunter

[Kate Ausburn](#) April 02, 2013

The Lock The Gate Alliance has welcomed today's news that coal seam gas (CSG) driller Dart Energy are suspending their operations in NSW.

Dart released a statement to the Australian Stock Exchange this morning, blaming 'uncertainty created by recent NSW and Federal Government decisions' for its decision to suspend operations at Fullerton Cove, near Newcastle.

"This is a huge victory for the community of Fullerton Cove, and for Newcastle at large," said Steve Phillips, Hunter regional coordinator for Lock The Gate. "With Dart suspending their operations in this area, our precious drinking water is safe, for now, from coal seam gas."

"The people of Fullerton Cove have fought bravely to

defend their community from a global gas company, and for now at least, they have won. Dart Energy were never welcome at Fullerton Cove. 97.5% of Cove residents voted to be CSG Free.

When Dart tried to bring a drill rig in last August, the people of Fullerton Cove staged a courageous blockade lasting over a week." "We call on Dart Energy to end the uncertainty for residents in the Lower Hunter, and relinquish their exploration lease." This is the second CSG company in NSW to retreat in the face of mass community protest. Last month, Metgasco suspended operations in the Northern Rivers, after continuous blockades by resident.

"CSG companies have no social licence to operate in NSW," concluded Phillips.

"We call on AGL, Santos, and all other CSG companies to follow the example set by Metgasco and Dart, and suspend their operations."



DREDGING WASTE TO BE DUMPED ON GREAT BARRIER REEF

Radio National

Friday 22 March 2013

Potentially toxic dredging waste will be dumped in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and North Queensland fishermen have been asked to choose where in the marine park the waste should be dumped.

The major dredging project is for the expansion of Abbot Point port near Bowen to accommodate plans to unlock the Galilee coalfields, which are forecast to drive Queensland's next big coal boom.

P S: The Greens are calling on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to stand firm against the demands from the LNP's largest donor, Clive Palmer, to dump polluted water from his nickel refinery into the Great Barrier Reef

ABC Four Corners program in April Gas

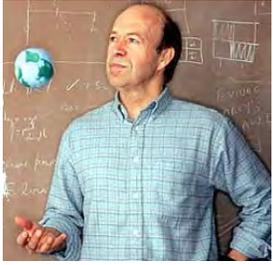
Leak! highlighted worrying flaws in the approval and monitoring processes for coal seam gas (CSG) developments of state governments in Queensland and New South Wales. "Bankable" outcomes appear to take priority over environmental outcomes where cash-strapped governments receive royalties from CSG developments.

Health and community groups have consistently expressed concerns that the level of assessment and regulation of CSG activities in Australia is inadequate to ensure environmental protection and the health of present and future generations.

Despite governments allowing rapid development of the industry, there are still many information gaps. The homework has not been done to properly work out what the carbon footprint of the CSG industry really is and how much will contribute to acceleration of climate change.

James Hansen, A Leader In Warning The Globe About Global Warming, To Retire From NASA After 46 Years

Climate Progress on Line 3/4/13



James E. Hansen, the climate scientist who issued the clearest warning of the 20th century about the dangers of global warming, will retire from NASA this week, giving himself more freedom to pursue political and legal efforts to limit greenhouse gases....

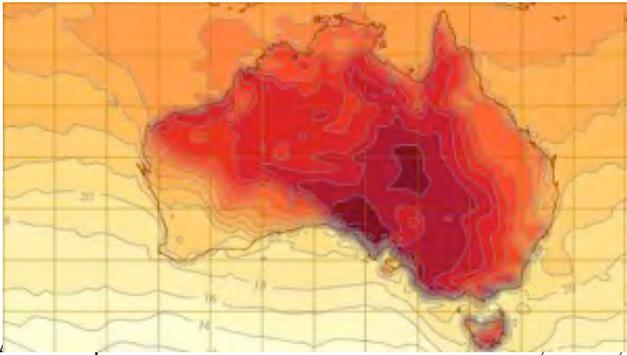
He plans to take a more active role in lawsuits challenging the federal and state governments over their failure to limit emissions, for instance, as well as in fighting the development in Canada of a particularly dirty form of oil extracted from tar sands.

Hansen is the country's top climatologist. He has been one of our most tireless public servants for decades and has been right about the dangers posed by climate change longer than almost anyone else ("In 1981 Hansen study finds warming trend that could raise sea levels"). We ignore him at our grave peril. At 72, he said, he feels a moral obligation to step up his activism in his remaining years. "If we burn even a substantial fraction of the fossil fuels, we guarantee there's going to be unstoppable changes" in the climate of the earth, he said. "We're going to leave a situation for young people and future generations that they may have no way to deal with."

PS: Hansen has since become pronuclear!

The Critical Decade: Report Links Australia's Extreme Weather To Climate Change

Posted: 03 Apr 2013 *Climate Progress* 5 April 2013



droughts and wildfires that have wracked Australia over the past decade have been exacerbated by climate change. The [report](#), commissioned by the Australian government's [Climate Commission](#), makes clear that these weather events will only get worse in the coming years, and warns that health and emergency professionals as well as citizens must prepare for their impacts now.

Noam Chomsky: Will Capitalism Destroy Civilization?

Noam Chomsky, *Truthout* 7 March 2013

There is much to learn, says Noam Chomsky, from the fact that "countries that have driven indigenous populations to extinction or extreme marginalization are racing toward destruction."

Those historians will observe that the richest and most powerful country in history, which enjoys incomparable advantages, is leading the effort to intensify the likely disaster. Leading the effort to preserve conditions in which our immediate descendants might have a decent life are the so-called "primitive" societies: First Nations, tribal, indigenous, aboriginal.

The countries with large and influential indigenous populations are well in the lead in seeking to preserve the planet. The countries that have driven indigenous populations to extinction or extreme marginalization are racing toward destruction.

Thus Ecuador, with its large indigenous population, is seeking aid from the rich countries to allow it to keep its substantial oil reserves underground, where they should be. Meanwhile the U.S. and Canada are seeking to burn fossil fuels, including the extremely dangerous Canadian tar sands, and to do so as quickly and fully as possible, while they hail the wonders of a century of (largely meaningless) energy independence without a side glance at what the world might look like after this extravagant commitment to self-destruction.

This observation generalizes: Throughout the world, indigenous societies are struggling to protect what they sometimes call "the rights of nature," while the civilized and sophisticated scoff at this silliness.

ExxonMobil Oil Spill

From: "SumOfUs.org" <us@sumofus.org> 5 April 2013



Angus, Kaytee, and the rest of us at SumOfUs

This past weekend, an ExxonMobil pipeline carrying nearly 100,000 barrels of toxic tar sands crude spewed into Mayflower, Arkansas. **Yards are flooded in black crude, a river of toxic oil flows down the street**, and the nearby fishing lake is covered in black grease. Families have been evacuated, but **nobody knows what the dangers to the community are**, or even how much oil has been spilled. Why? Because Exxon's not talking.

Let's hold **ExxonMobil accountable for this spill by demanding it release all the information on this spill** -- the good, the bad, and the ugly -- while the images of playsets and driveways overrun with crude oil are still in the public eye. Tell ExxonMobil to release information about the massive oil spill in Arkansas.

O'Farrell Government fails the grade on environmental protection and sustainability

The state's leading environmental organisations have released a report card on the O'Farrell government's performance on environmental protection and sustainability to mark the anniversary of its first two years in office.

The report card, which was based on a comprehensive review of the government's statewide environmental performance over the past two years, found the government was failing the grade.

The government's performance was assessed across ten key policy areas, from climate change to urban sustainability.

The government received a total score of 33% (E), with grades ranging from 10% (F) for marine conservation to 60% (C) for pollution and waste.

"The government's performance over the past two years had been characterised by inaction, broken promises and backward steps on important environmental issues," said Pepe Clarke, CEO of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW.

"The government's positive nature conservation achievements, such as declaration of Dharawal National Park, have been overshadowed by a succession of environmentally damaging policy decisions, from attacks on marine sanctuaries to hunting in national parks."

NCC *Nature News Online*, 10 April 2013

If the Oceans Die - We Die

From [The Daily Take](#), by Thom Hartmann *Truthout 7 May 2013*

As lawmakers in Washington continue to ignore the most pressing issue facing our planet today - climate change - we are about to pass a very disturbing environmental milestone. The CO2 levels at the Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii will reach 400 ppm any day now, which could spell further disaster for our planet.

Since measurements started at Mauna Loa in 1958, there has been a steady increase in CO2 concentration, known as the "Keeling Curve." Named after Charles Keeling, who started measuring CO2 air concentrations in 1958, the Keeling Curve measures the concentration of CO2 in the air in parts per million.

Since 1960, the CO2 concentration at Mauna Loa has increased by almost 28%.

Thanks to our society's toxic addiction to fossil fuels, unprecedented levels of CO2 are being pumped into our environment each and every day. But why have CO2 concentrations increased so much over the past few decades?

Part of it has to do with increased industrialization and reliance on dirty fossil fuels, but part of it also has to do with the world's oceans.

According to Richard Bellerby, Research Scientist at the Norwegian Institute for Water Research, the oceans have "been performing a huge climate service over the last 200 years."

That's because oceans have the ability to absorb CO2, which prevents it from escaping into the atmosphere. By holding the CO2 in the oceans, they've been slowing, or at least postponing, the speed of global climate change.

In fact, the world's oceans, especially the coldest waters, have absorbed about 50 percent of the CO2 that we've emitted, and continue to take up about a quarter of the CO2 that we produce every day now.

But the oceans and the ecosystems within them are now paying a steep price for taking in all that CO2.

As the world's oceans absorb more and more CO2, they become more and more acidic, and, according to a new study released yesterday by the Norwegian Institute for Water Research at the International Conference on Arctic Ocean Acidification, the rapid acidification of the Arctic Ocean has pushed us beyond "critical thresholds."

It's likely, they say, that widespread impacts will be felt across the world's oceans for "tens of thousands of years" - even if we stopped all carbon emissions today.

Dubbed "climate change's evil twin," acidification of ocean surface waters has increased by around 30 percent over the last 200 years, with the highest levels of acidification occurring in the Arctic and the rest of the world's coldest waters.

Richard Bellerby, the chief scientist on the report, said that, "Arctic ocean acidification is happening at a faster rate than found in other global regions. This is because climate change such as warming and freshening of the oceans is acting in tandem with the enormous oceanic uptake of CO2." And Bellerby told BBC News that "continued rapid change is a certainty."

Another researcher on the study, Sam Dupont of the University of Gothenburg, told the conference that, "something really unique is happening. This is the first time that we as humans are changing the whole planet; we are actually acidifying the whole ocean today."

Dupont also said that, "Within a few decades, by the end of this century, the ocean will be two times more acidic. And we also know that it might be even faster in the Arctic."

As the oceans become more acidic, they're less able to absorb CO2, which means more of what we're blowing out our tailpipes and smokestacks will stay in our atmosphere and speed up global warming and climate change.

But more importantly, ocean acidification leads to mass ocean species extinction.

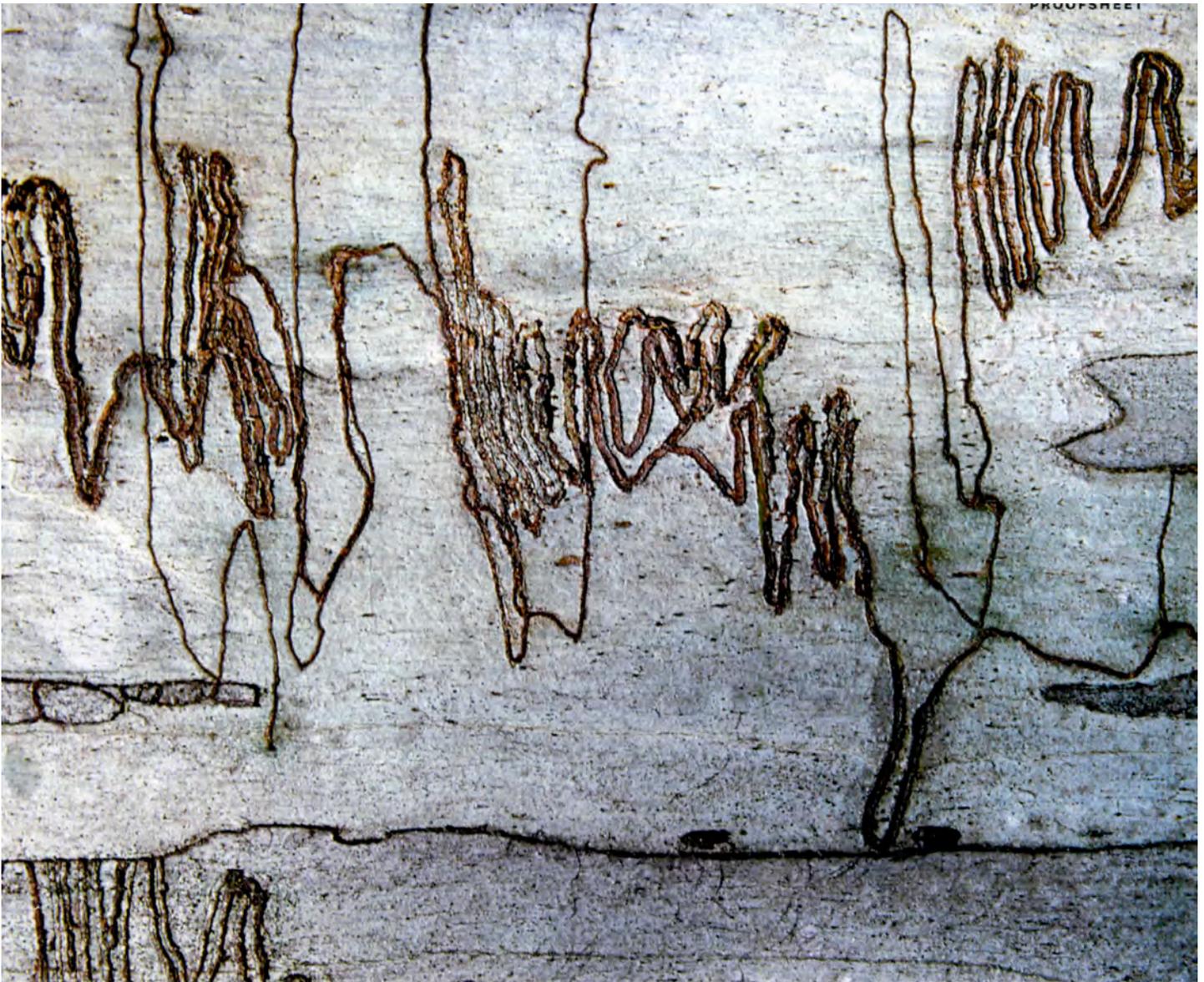
One example of a possible species extinction that the scientists at the conference gave was of the brittle star. When exposed to the ocean acidification conditions that can be expected in the decades to come, the eggs of the brittle star die within days.

If the brittle star dies off, then the species that feed on it could die off as well and there would be a massive chain reaction of oceanic species extinctions. And **if the oceans die, we die.**

It's that simple.

The bottom-line here is that our addiction to fossil fuels, throwing into the atmosphere carbon that's been stored deep in the earth for millions of years, is not only polluting our skies and wreaking havoc on our climate, it's also destroying our oceans and the species in them.

It's time to ditch fossil fuels, make the switch to cleaner and greener forms of energy, and save the world's oceans, before they die and we go with them.



Scribbly gum

Photo: Bette Devine

Visit www.acfonline.org.au/habitat to download proofsheets as your screen saver.

moth larvae bore a meandering tunnel through the eucalypt tree's bark. The scribble patterns are caused when they feed on tissues just below the epidermal cells in the tree trunk. When the outer bark is shed it produces scar tissue in response to the feeding of the caterpillar, filling the doubled part of the larval tunnel with highly nutritious, thin-walled cells. These replacement cells are ideal food for the caterpillar, which moults into the final larval stage with legs, turns around and eats its way back along the way it has come. The bark cracks off, exposing the iconic scribbles beneath.

ACF *Habitat* April 2013

As China Addresses Its ‘Airpocalypse,’ Coal Exporters Fear Loss Of Another Market

Climate Progress on line 18 April 2013



By Lifeng Fang, courtesy of Greenpeace East Asia

China’s air pollution crisis is more evident than ever. A new research report, conducted under the World Health Organization’s **Global Burden of Disease project**, shows that **over 1.2 million premature deaths** were caused by PM2.5 pollution (fine particles like soot, mostly resulting from fossil fuel combustion). That accounts for 15 percent of the total deaths in China during 2010 and 40 percent of global air pollution-related deaths. The data also showed that Chinese people’s average exposure to PM2.5 increased 50 percent from 1990 to 2010, compared to 10 percent globally.

Burning coal is a leading cause of air pollution in China, coal fired power plants release dangerous pollutants such as SO₂, NO_x and particulate matter that contributes to PM2.5 pollution. Of course, burning coal is also a major source of the carbon pollution that is changing our climate.

The crisis was especially severe in Beijing earlier this year, when air pollution levels [soared](#), “hitting pollution levels 25 times that considered safe in the U.S.”

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Coal mining is a ‘rogue industry’: US activist

Ben Cubby, Peter Hannam. April 8, 2013 *SMH*

Australian coal mining has become a ‘rogue industry’ and must be phased out, according to prominent US environmentalist, Bill McKibben, who is about to join a campaign against coal exports.

The nation is on a collision course between large-scale coal use and cutting emissions, with the federal government planning to reduce Australia’s greenhouse output by 80 per cent by the middle of the century.

Many major coal projects, and coal infrastructure projects in Queensland, are expected to run for decades and are only now gaining approval. Australian-mined coal burned overseas currently generates about 711 million tonnes of CO₂ year, but when new mines are taken into account, that total will reach up to 1431 million tonnes in 2020, and 1738 million tonnes in 2025.

“ If the world ever takes climate change seriously, that coal simply has to stay in the ground,” Mr McKibben said. “There’s no physical way to burn it, or Canada’s tar sands, or Venezuela’s shale oil, and not go over the red line that almost all governments, including Australia’s, have drawn at two degrees.”

Mr McKibben, author of the first mainstream book about global warming, *The End of Nature*, will visit Australia in June to galvanise local campaigns for action against climate change.

It comes as the independent Climate Change Authority is finalising an issues paper as part of its first review of Australia’s carbon targets and emissions trajectory. That review will examine carbon cuts to 2020 and the best way to achieve them, with draft recommendations due in October, after the federal election.

“ Emission reductions don’t end in 2020,” Erwin Jackson, the deputy chief executive of the Climate Institute, said. “We’re going to have to keep reducing them.”

The authority said the review would recommend caps up to 2020 and also seek input on how much guidance it should provide the government on emissions reductions efforts beyond this decade.

The government and the Coalition both have targets to cut carbon emissions by at least 5 per cent on 2000 levels by 2020.

Mr McKibben is travelling to Australia with [350.org](#), the group he helped found in 2008. “ At this point the fossil fuel industry is a rogue industry,” he said. “It wants to burn five times the carbon that the most conservative governments on earth say is safe. They’re not outlaw against the laws of the state ... they’re outlaw against the laws of physics. If they carry out their business plan, the planet sinks.”