

GREEN

MAGAZINE OF THE AUSTRALIAN GREENS

How to
rejuvenate a
state economy
and build for
the future



Bad policy
decisions, and
the impact on
Australia



The Greens'
plan to
legislate for a
safer climate

Creating a Green New Deal

FACING UP TO CLIMATE CHANGE

www.faceup.org.au



The Rudd Government was elected with a mandate to face up to climate change.

Yet the legislation they've created locks in climate failure. It currently promises \$16 billion to polluters, penalises ordinary Australians for reducing their emissions and sets pollution reduction targets way too low to stop climate change: just 5% by 2020.

Right now the fossil fuel industry lobbyists are the ones with the access and influence to be seen. We want to change that. After all, the Rudd government works for you, not the polluters.

Upload your photo now to take a stand for climate action that counts. We will take the photos and messages from your electorate and personally deliver them to your local MP and the Prime Minister as a greeting card and CD.

Run a face up to climate change event

How?

Grab a digital camera, and whiteboard or sheet of white paper and a marker

Where?

At your university, at home, at your local shopping centre... anywhere!

What?

Ask people to write their postcode and message on climate change, take a photo and post it on www.faceup.org.au



For information about all Greens campaigns around the country, visit www.greens.org.au

Sign up at www.GreensMPs.org.au for regular action email alerts.





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the australian greens wish to acknowledge that we are on indigenous ground – this land is the spiritual and sacred place of the traditional owners and their ancestors and continues to be a place of significance. further, we thank them for sharing this land with us and agree to respect their laws and lores.

editorial: greenmag@greens.org.au

advertising, subscription & mailing inquiries: greensoffice@greens.org.au

postal address: gpo box 1108 canberra act 2601

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greening up the deal

Green New Deal. We've had a conference on it, this magazine has discussed it in an article previously, our political representatives are talking about it non stop. But what is it really? The three words encompass some very large, and some very simple ideas. Essentially, in working for a Green New Deal we are campaigning for a radical shift in the way our economy and society operate on a fundamental level.

As Chloe Harvey reported in her article in our *New Frontiers* edition of Green magazine;

"Echoing U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's 'New Deal' to lift the USA out of the 1930s Great Depression, a Green New Deal seeks to rebuild the global economy based on the very Green four pillars of renewable energy, energy efficiency, clean alternative transport and protection of ecosystems. And building infrastructure would also have that effect, with the added bonus of being a long term, positive investment in the future economy."

In essence it is the transition towards more sustainable versions of all aspects of our modern society. Creating more 'green collar' jobs in sectors such as energy, moving our economic base to one with a more sustainable long term outlook, and promoting more responsible usage of our resources.

In this edition we take an indepth look at what a Green New Deal for South Australia and Victoria might look like and how the Australian Greens' *Safe Climate Bill* would lead the way for a positive national approach to the *CPRS*. Ben Eltham reveals why governments are so resistant to the kind of real policy change required to implement something as significant as a Green New Deal and Richard Denniss takes a look at what a 'green job' really entails.

As always, we welcome your feedback and thoughts on the ideas raised in this edition, and hope you enjoy.

Lefa Singleton Norton - Editor
greenmag@greens.org.au ▲



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Got something to say? Drop us a line at greenmag@greens.org.au

Senator Scott Ludlam's article *Despair and Defiance* catalogues plenty of powerful reasons for anger and resistance to the nuclear industry, I question some of his assertions, particularly about the British Atomic Tests at Emu Field and Maralinga during the 50s and early 60s. The treatment of Aboriginal people before, during and after this period was shameful - callous, racist and indifferently uncomprehending of their culture - but to use that in a general anti-nuclear argument weakens the case.

The British didn't exactly 'fence off' an area the size of England at Maralinga and Emu Field. The Australian government obligingly proclaimed a prohibited zone for the tests and kept the Aboriginal people out of it - although by the late 1940s, nearly all Aboriginal people were gone. They were already decimated, and would be again, by whitefella diseases like measles and deracinated by dependence on the missions. Undoubtedly the Anangu people would have refused consent to the tests (had they been asked!), as the zone contained traditional hunting grounds and sacred sites, but they

were told nothing about the nature of the tests. Instead, they were warned off by the very few patrol officers assigned the impossible task of checking that thousands of square miles were 'clear'. Ironically, the task was successful, but more by luck, or the inculcation of fear, than proper management. Aboriginal witnesses to the Royal Commission in 1985 were still angry about the whole affair.

The 'black rain' that 'fell at Maralinga' is probably the 'black mist', an outcome of the Totem 1 test in October 1953. The compact fallout cloud passed low over Wallatinna, Mintabie and Wellbourne Hill Station, 275kms - 320kms north-east of Ground Zero at Emu Field. It dropped black, sticky particles of irradiated dust and fission products - but not plutonium - and terrified those who saw it. The plutonium scattered on the range itself (possibly as much as 20 kg), along with beryllium and Cobalt 60, was the result of the 'minor trials', mostly at what they called 'Taranaki', which was fenced off.

Senator Ludlum wrote that the British 'permanently contaminated an area the size of metropolitan London' (or more, actually), but the area

was finally cleaned up in 2001 by the Howard government. 'Permanently' means, I guess, the contamination is still there. You can go out there now and see vast, ugly, three metre high mounds under which the contamination is buried. Also seen are signs warning against permanent occupation. The British tests were undoubtedly an act of environmental vandalism on a massive scale, but cause-and-effect between contamination and injury is still debatable.

Aboriginal people saw the mushroom clouds, heard the blasts and felt the ground shake, but to say any were 'under a mushroom cloud' may be good copy, but an exaggeration. As for compensation, the range clean up cost \$120 million, and I refer Senator Ludlum to the now thriving community at Oak Valley, 150 km to the north-east of Maralinga Village. Let's stay outraged, but let's be accurate.

MICHAEL BRINDLEY
Richmond Victoria



I felt a surge of relief reading the last paragraph of Christine Dann's excellent limits to growth article in the Winter edition. To paraphrase, making

clever stuff still takes resources, no matter how clever, and we have to do it ALL differently.

This article was followed by Samuel Alexander's article on doing just that (paring down your life to make it happier). I read this after hearing Elizabeth Farrelly saying to Geraldine Doogue recently (12/9/09) that she believes we need to be outspoken on things that matter when in public and gentle and perhaps even circumspect in private, quite the opposite of what we often do.

Thanks for an excellent read.

JOAN MCVILLY
Boonah-Beaudesert Greens



I was concerned that the content of Issue 28 did not seriously explore the contentious issue of population growth. Rather, the well written piece by Christine Dann was a mostly general overview of the limits to economic growth with a brief reference to expanding population.

Disappointingly, the complex issue of population limits for Australia and the world, and how the targets might be achieved, was absent. As outlined in Dann's article, is the figure one or two billion for people to live sustainably on

the planet? Is Australia's limit 12 to 15 million? What roles do migration, birth control, improved standards of living etc. have in achieving those targets? How do we deal with the paradox of advocating improved living standards (i.e. expanded consumption) in poor countries as a long term means of reducing population numbers since evidence shows that better off people reduce their family sizes?

In developed economies, how do we promote restraint in an ever more consumer-mad, short term, quick fix, advertising driven society? And still try to get system changing numbers of Greens elected within

a largely non-PR electoral system! Remember, no political party has ever been elected to govern in peacetime on a program of austerity. (By the way, here in Queensland, Greens numbers largely plateaued at the last state election.)

What is the way forward? Clearly, politically, instead of arguing for sacrifice, Greens need to show where the rewards might lie. The Greens' jobs initiative is obviously part of that new direction. Also, emphasis on human ingenuity and resourcefulness, as well as community action, are more likely to be listened to than tales of woe, however true, which the human condition seems,

in large measure, hard-wired to deny or ignore as a short term defence mechanism.

Yet, all this still rubs up against the problem of nearly seven billion people needing at least three planets to live like most of us do in Australia. This, ultimately, should require the well off having to accept less if we aspire to global equity in a carbon constrained, over-populated world. In truth, however, it is the world's poor who will be disproportionately affected by an increasing number of global catastrophes. Unfortunately, for most over-consuming Australians, 'back to basics' or 'living lightly'

and other Green catches will have real meaning when that giant coastal wave collides with their air-conditioned shopping complex.

DENIS WALLS
FNQ Greens, Cairns

ED: Thank you to all our letter writers. We're interested to hear what all members think about this resource, and we encourage you to write a letter to the editor on any issue regarding Green magazine and its content. Letters are requested to be no longer than 400 words and will be edited for length. Please email them to greenmag@greens.org.au ▲

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Even before we get to the federal election of 2010, the Greens are fielding strong candidates in two by-elections: Higgins & Bradfield.



Bradfield NSW

Susie Gemmell

Susie Gemmell was the Greens Candidate for Bradfield in the 2007 federal election, gaining 11.2% of the primary vote.

“I am excited to be representing the Greens in Bradfield.”

“People in Bradfield are disappointed with Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Opposition Leader Malcolm Turnbull’s weak performance on climate change.”

“The Labor Government must match the efforts of other developed countries if we are to recover from John Howard’s abysmal climate legacy.”

“A vote for The Greens in the Bradfield by-election will show support for faster, more meaningful action on climate change from a party that has not succumbed to the vested interests of the big polluters.”

“I love my work in Green politics because it gives me hope that we can change the old ways that don’t work.”

Susie lives in Turrumurra with her husband and three children.

More info:
www.greens.org.au/bradfield

Higgins VIC

Dr Clive Hamilton AM

Clive Hamilton is an Australian author and public intellectual. In June 2008 he was appointed Professor of Public Ethics at the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics, a joint centre of the Australian National University, Charles Sturt University and the University of Melbourne.

For 14 years, until February 2008, he was the executive director of The Australia Institute, a progressive think tank he founded. He holds an arts degree from the Australian National University and an economics degree from the University of Sydney. He completed a doctorate at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex.

“With our country once again a laggard nation in response to global

warming, and the government and opposition competing to vilify asylum seekers, never has a national and international standpoint been more sorely needed.”

“Only the Greens can rise above cheap politicking and take a principled stance, and I feel privileged to have been selected.”

“The people of Higgins and I now have the opportunity to make a bold national statement - Australia must take a lead in global issues.”

In June 2009 Clive was made a Member of the Order of Australia for his service to public debate and policy development.

More info:
www.greens.org.au/higgins





QUEENSLAND

renewing the state

A greener economy does not necessarily have to be dictated from the halls of Canberra. Craig Wilkins and Mark Parnell MLC mythbust the South Australian economy, while Cam Walker looks to Victoria in our search for a state-based green new deal.

South Australia

For Greens to be central to the emerging public debate over the new economy we need to understand why certain industries always dominate and others are ignored. We also must have a clear vision about where we want our economy to head.

Whether we like it or not, myths and misinformation dominate economic debate, and it is from history that many of these myths develop.

The South Australian story started out with a big focus on mining. In the first fifty years of its life, the young colony was saved from bankruptcy more than once by a mining boom. No wonder the State still eagerly embraces any promise of a mining boom today.

Then, in the middle of the last century the then Premier Thomas Playford developed a new policy-driven economic model that attracted manufacturing through cheap labour, housing and energy. As a result, factories sprung up and cars and white goods became the dominant symbols of our economy.

This was such a successful model that forty years ago, 1 in 3 South Australians were employed in manufacturing. However, when the tariff walls came tumbling down, so too did the employment figures and today only 1 in 8 has a job on the factory floor, with only 1 in 10 employed in traditional consumer durables.

However, despite the writing on the wall for the automotive industry, the clarion call of the Commodore still commands attention.

Another powerful economic myth is the idea of 'punching above our weight', where a small sector or industry in which we are seen to be 'leading' will attract more attention than a much larger one that is performing at, or below, average.

Equally strong for myth-making is the importance placed on export industries. Our analysis shows that South Australia's orthodox economic identity is closely aligned to export performance, not employment. This is critical to a debate over jobs, as job-rich industries are not necessarily high export earners, and vice versa.

For example, anyone listening to the State Government or the business lobby would swear our

economic future rests on a big expansion in the mining and defence industries.

Although mining related commodities constitute about one quarter of all South Australian export dollars, the industry employs just 1.5% of workers and contributes only about 4% of gross state product.

For the defence industry it is a similar story with only about 1.3% of state employment.

So, why do these two industries take up so much of the public economic debate in South Australia, when they make up less than 3% of our employment? This is especially curious when we consider that a whopping 73% of the state's employment is in the amorphous 'services' sector, where small business is much more prominent.

Scratch the surface, though, and there is a rich vein of alternative voices and perspectives.

For example, Dr Barbara Pocock from the University of South Australia's Centre for Work and Life has been highlighting for many years issues of work-life balance. There is also Dr Phil Lawn from Flinders University who has developed a Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) for South Australia which shows that since 2000 our GPI has not moved, while gross state product has roared ahead.

Some economic myths need busting, but others provide us with a useful tool to meet and then match prevailing thinking with clear Green alternatives. Let's take exports for example.

An idea that has strongly caught our attention is from another South Australian academic, Professor Dick Blandy.

He says we should focus on fixing up our problems and then once we have fixed them, we can export the solutions to the world as, chances are, if it is a problem here in South Australia it will also be a problem elsewhere.

This makes much sense. Using this approach, not only do we aggressively tackle areas of real and immediate need, but best of all our export products will help, not harm others.

So we believe a focus on fixing some of our biggest challenges is central to a Green New Deal for South Australia.

South Australia has a rapidly ageing population. The number of people over the age of 85 in our state is set to double by 2030. This means that without radical change, Government spending on health is projected to consume the whole state budget by 2032. To avoid going broke we need to quickly find innovative solutions to keep people active and healthy and in their own home for as long as possible.

Similarly, there is a wealth of evidence that investment in early childhood years can help prevent many social and health problems developing down the track.

For these reasons we believe jobs in early childhood education and preventative health are just as much 'green jobs' as those in the renewable energy industry.

Another challenge we face is water. Over the last 25 years a local council in Adelaide's North has developed one of the most advanced systems for capturing and recycling stormwater in the world. It has become the crucible of an exciting export industry.

In terms of energy supply and demand, South Australia has one of the 'peakiest' electricity grids in the world. This means that much of our electricity supply capacity is set up for the few days of the year in summer when air conditioner use soars. Solving that problem, especially by developing our natural advantage in wind, solar, geothermal and wave power, offers many exciting possibilities.

Like other Australian cities our urban form is spread thinly and our public transport is woeful. We urgently need innovative mass transit solutions. Equally our housing stock is ageing and has poor energy performance and we have badly designed suburbs that are struggling through high unemployment, crime and poor social capital.

There is much work to be done, and if we get it right we will be well placed to export the solutions.

We strongly believe the Greens need to be able to articulate a strong and viable economic vision. If we are not happy being the world's quarry with a sideline in

military equipment, we must be ready to talk about how we can use the economy to create a better future, while being mindful of the myths that allow the industries of the past to dominate. ▲

Craig Wilkins is a Research Officer in the Greens SA Parliamentary Office.
Mark Parnell is a Greens SA MLC.

Victoria

Australia, in common with the rest of the global economy, is facing a 'triple crunch' of recession, accelerating climate change and growing energy costs and insecurity. These overlapping phenomena threaten to develop into a 'perfect storm', the like of which has not been seen since the Great Depression.

As jobs are lost at an increasing rate, decisive and visionary action by the state and federal governments is needed to guide us through this gathering storm and to take advantage of the opportunities that these unprecedented events present to us.

We now stand at a pivotal moment in history. To prevent catastrophic climate change we must ensure the global temperature does not rise by more than two degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels. But time is now rapidly running out. To achieve this target the industrialised countries must cut their carbon emissions by at least 40% by 2020. This epic challenge can only be achieved if emissions start to fall drastically right now.

At the same time we are facing one of the deepest and most severe recessions the world has known, plunging millions into poverty. Yet these two crises share common roots. A world addicted to fossil fuel and driven by an ideological obsession with letting the market rule, has led to economic and environmental breakdown.

Most people now realise that our current economic system, based on relentless growth and high consumption lifestyles, is not sustainable. It is apparent



Activists protest at Victorian Parliament House, calling to replace Alcoa's Anglesea power station with renewable energy

PIC CREDIT: CC LICENSED FLICKR USER CLIMATE ACTION CENTRE

that the rich nations have such relatively extravagant lifestyles and, significantly, produce such high levels of waste, that there is simply not enough environmental space for all 6.7 billion people currently on the planet to enjoy the type of lifestyles we have. We must get much smarter and more efficient in our resource use. Our aim must be high quality lifestyles and vital and robust economies operating within ecological limits.

The bushfires that devastated much of Victoria over the past summer have, and will, lead to considerable changes in how and where we build in fire prone areas. We should ensure that the response to bushfire is fully integrated into a broader response that deals with the recession and builds resilience in the face of climate change.

Victoria should act quickly on the promised review of the regulations that govern new domestic housing. New houses are currently required to meet a 5 star energy standard and install either a rainwater tank or solar hot water panel. A requirement to have both a panel and a tank, and to meet an 8 star energy rating standard would create thousands of new jobs in Victoria in construction, installation and maintenance and would have substantial benefits for our manufacturing sector.

Prioritising the most vulnerable households, we should be refurbishing thousands of existing homes each year with full insulation, enacting other efficiency measures and renewable energy. Low-income individuals and families living in poor quality houses will be paying even more of their income on heating and cooling their homes. This improved efficiency must also include commercial buildings. By 2012 the 8 star energy rating should apply to new build and retrofit of all commercial and public buildings.

This will require the creation of a 'carbon army' of high and lower skilled workers to implement this vast street-by-street reconstruction, through a comprehensive program of training and re-skilling. Initially this would include greatly expanded funding for free energy and water audits of existing homes. These audits would cover an assessment of short-term fixes around energy and water efficiency as well as a more comprehensive assessment of economically viable retrofitting. This service could be delivered through community organisations with existing skills and networks, and coordinated through state government.

This will also require major re-focussing and resources for TAFEs and other centres for workplace training. There are a range of training initiatives such as Global Green Electrician (GGE), that are already carrying out the type of training that will be required. Training in the best reuse of materials currently considered to be waste in the construction industry is also a significant opportunity for training programs in that sector.

Although it should have climate change mitigation and adaptation as the cornerstone of its funding criteria, the new DEEWR Jobs Fund, which is intended to support the development of community and social infrastructure, is to be commended.

Anyone who has travelled in Western Europe will know that compact cities can be vibrant, dynamic and wonderful places to live. Melbourne 2030 is a

Agricultural communities can be rejuvenated into renewable energy producers, with the right kind of investment



PICTURE CREDIT: CC LICENSED WIKIMEDIA USER RIANA

30 year plan that aims to manage sustainable growth across the metropolitan area. Many key elements, for instance encouraging housing density around activity centres, make ecological sense. We must halt further developments on the fringes of Melbourne and low-density sprawl and build up around public transport and other social infrastructure in appropriate locations.

The Victorian government has clearly failed to sell this idea to the community. We therefore need a rethink about how to achieve this vision. A starting point would be for the government to convene a state-wide summit similar to the climate summit already hosted by Premier Brumby, which brings together the various elements of society that understand the need for a move to a more compact city. From this one-off gathering, it would be possible to develop a broad-based committee to develop a fresh vision of a compact and sustainable Melbourne to advise government policy in this regard.

We urgently need to decarbonise, regionalise and localise energy production through large-scale renewables and micro-generation and seek to use fossil fuels more efficiently.

As one example, aluminium giant Alcoa operates a 160 MW power station and coal mine near Anglesea.

The mine lease is due for renewal in 2011. Friends of the Earth is calling on the Victorian government to not renew the coal mine lease and to work with Alcoa to replace the power station with renewable energy and create a just transition for the one hundred workers currently employed by the mine and station. This would be a major boost for the Surf Coast region, and would build on its current focus on nature-based tourism.

Similarly, in far western Victoria, the aluminium smelter in Portland and the Point Henry smelter near Geelong could be involved in a rapid transition to using renewable energy. There is already manufacturing capacity at Portland and this could be greatly expanded with continued development of wind energy in the west of the state. These two smelters currently use 28% of Victoria's electricity.

There is huge potential to massively expand renewable energy across rural Victoria. To drive this we need a renewable energy target that is sufficient to the task. A commitment to reach 100% of stationary energy production from renewables by 2020 would drive innovation, employment, regional development and investment.

We would also create thousands of new 'green collar' jobs in manufacturing through specifying that the components of this new renewable energy – such as turbines, towers, generators, PV panels and so on are

made in Australia. The Latrobe Valley, Ballarat, Portland and Geelong would be logical places to support this new sustainable manufacturing base.

There is also huge potential in the multi-billion dollar world market for technologies of the future: power generation, materials efficiency, energy efficiency, sustainable mobility and water and waste management. This can be achieved through direct financial investment, regulation and support for research and development. In terms of generating green jobs, ideas and technology that could be exported, while reducing greenhouse emissions, this would be a far better use of public Research and Development funds than the current investment on 'clean coal' and biotechnology.

The Green New Deal should build on our existing strengths in manufacturing, high technology research, construction and agriculture to develop a sustainable economy rather than one overly dependent on services and retail.

Transforming our transport system is essential for it to be fit for purpose in the coming era of high oil and carbon prices. We must stop investing in new freeway infrastructure. Development of renewable power needs to continue at such a pace that new light and heavy rail can be run from these sources.

We will need an assessment of where we need to place new public transport

infrastructure to enable the maximum shift of freight off our roads. We need continued investment in cycling and walking facilities, and must scrap plans to expand Tullamarine airport.

There is a growing community conversation about water stress and shortages, and how the government should respond to the water crisis. At present the Victorian government is committed to building the north – south pipeline and a major desalination plant near Wonthaggi, at a combined cost of around \$5 billion. Between them these projects are intended to deliver 225 billion litres (GL) a year.

It is clear there are growing community concerns about both these projects. They are not yet on line and there is enough time to stop them and reconsider other options that will meet our water needs with less environmental impacts and greenhouse gas emissions and far more jobs.

As another example, food production is clearly very sensitive to climate change impacts. There are also significant greenhouse implications of food production, largely because of our current reliance on high energy input monoculture agriculture and transport of food products over long distances.

“The New Deal should consider the role of community organisations in building community spirit and capacity”

Any attempt to deal with medium and long term responses to climate change must include consideration of options to re-localise food production, and a shift to low energy input systems. Organic agriculture is generally more employment rich than conventional agriculture. Food production in urban and urban fringe areas reduces greenhouse costs and builds resilience in the face of climate change.

Jobs-based solutions are popular with the community and promote unity. During a recession, the economy is the most tangible problem that people face. Without leadership, it can be expected that the recession will be bad for both people and environment. A green jobs and just transition focus means we can both generate jobs and protect the environment. It also means we can avoid a divisive – and unnecessary – argument about whether we look after jobs OR the environment.

It allows us to shift from being a carbon laggard to being a carbon leader. At present, Australia's per capita emissions are 28.1 tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂-e) per person per year. This is almost double the OECD average, and more than four times the world average.

Only five countries are worse than us: Bahrain, Bolivia, Brunei, Kuwait and Qatar. Victoria is Australia's worst greenhouse performer across a number of emissions indicators. This is largely a historical accident. Our huge reliance on brown coal made sense in the early 20th century, with what we knew then. It doesn't in the 21st century.

It is ever more apparent that the federal government is not going to set emission reductions targets that are equivalent to what climate science tells us is needed. With this failure to act, we need leadership from the states.

As the scientific evidence about the scale of the climate challenge we face grows stronger, so the economic consequences of failing to act and the economic opportunity of taking decisive action have become clearer.

A starting point in this process must be a thorough assessment of the Victorian government's sea level rise work, with consideration of the current estimates of possible sea level rise (rather than the outdated IPCC 4th report data that formed the basis of the initial report). This will show which areas need extra work for protection and where 'staged retreat' is required.

In addition, we will need to assess whether the current protected area system of national parks and other reserves is sufficient in light of the expected impacts of climate change. The government must mandate the delivery of environmental flow to key river systems through legislation.

There is considerable information available that suggests that communities with high levels of citizen involvement such as volunteering are better able to cope with the changes likely to come with global warming. The Green New Deal should consider the role of community organisations in building community spirit and capacity in light of climate change.

A Green New Deal is an opportunity for the Victorian government and community to focus on a common project and rekindle a real sense of purpose for a sustainable vision for the state. Despite some good outcomes on environmental protection by the Bracks and Brumby governments, there is great inconsistency in many areas of policy and priorities of the state government. While we talk about reducing emissions, we build freeways. While responding to water stress, we propose projects that will fuel global warming such as an energy intensive desalination plant.

A Green New Deal would allow the creation of a holistic and integrated approach to economic vitality and ecological sustainability. ▲

Cam Walker is National Liaison Officer for Friends of the Earth Australia
A full copy of the report 'A Green New Deal for Victoria' can be found at [www. greennewdeal.wordpress.com](http://www.greennewdeal.wordpress.com)

Ageing public transport systems such as Melbourne could benefit greatly from a Green New Deal





A maintenance worker rests upon the power generator of a 900kW wind turbine

climate change and jobs

With all the hype about green jobs, does anyone know what they are? Richard Denniss explains.

I was looking at the ABS website the other day and I couldn't find data on green jobs anywhere. I have to confess I don't even know what they are. Planting trees sounds pretty green, but what about when the trees aren't native? Installing insulation seems to be a widely accepted green job, but what about the factory jobs that make the insulation? What about the construction jobs that built the factory? Let's call them green too. Why not?

Tackling climate change is all about reducing emissions as quickly as we can. Creating green jobs is about keeping unemployment down. The second is an important goal, but Australia's unemployment rate has gone up and down for a hundred years. This volatility is called the business cycle and it's not clear what it has to do with the need to tackle climate change.

The main argument seems to be that we can't tackle climate change until we have figured out where all the people who might lose their jobs would work. This is a nice idea, but let's be honest — it's not how the world works. Recent history provides all the proof we need.

Let's start with employment in coal mining. According to the ABS, which has quite good data on non-green jobs, employment in coal mining fell from 30,400 employees in 1989 to 16,500 in 1999. So in one decade, employment in the coal industry fell by more than half. Apparently, when the introduction of labour-saving technologies wreaks havoc on regional communities we don't care but if we are tackling climate change it's quite a different story.

"Ah, but that was due to market forces", I hear you say. "The difference with the *CPRS* is it's the introduction of government policy that will cause the job losses. Responsible governments would never introduce policy that would cause job losses." Yeah, right.

Let's start small. The introduction of National Competition Policy (NCP) and the associated privatisations and contracting out resulted in the direct destruction of tens of thousands of jobs. This was not an unintended consequence; it was the specific aim of the policy. According to the Electricity Supply Association, employment in electricity generation in Victoria alone fell from 9382

employees in 1994 to 5420 in 1998. That's 4000 workers in four years and at the time the unemployment rate in Australia was substantially higher than it is today.

The impacts of NCP were small compared to the longer-term devastation of the manufacturing industry associated with 20 years of

tariff reductions and the pursuit of free trade. Hundreds of thousands of people lost their jobs in the search for a level playing field but, of course, these job losses were not seen as a barrier to the pursuit of this policy agenda. On the contrary, the language was that of "freeing up" unproductive labour for employment in other areas of the economy. At the time, it was not seen to be necessary, or even possible, to forecast where these "freed up" workers would end up.

And then we get to the big one, the recession we had to have. In the fight against rising inflation and rising imports, it was deemed necessary to drive interest rates so high that more than one million people lost their jobs. This was not just Paul Keating's folly; Treasury and the RBA was right behind the approach. We had to break the back of inflationary pressure even if it meant breaking the backs of many Australian families.

The point is not that unemployment is fun, useful or desirable. On the contrary, it is destructive, wasteful and inequitable. But it is important to analyse the past in order to understand what is really going on in the current debate around mining jobs, green jobs and con jobs.

First, many of the industry groups, which are expressing concern about job losses, are crying crocodile tears to impress their workers. They were unconcerned in the past and they will be unconcerned in the future. Nobody should think for a minute that, if some new labour-saving technology were to be invented tomorrow, industries wouldn't install it at the expense of their regional workforces.

Second, while transformation costs jobs and creates jobs, the process has never been, and never will be, a simultaneous one. The issue is how generous we are to those who lose out and how much assistance we give them to retrain.

Third, while we may have preferences for where we would like people to work, the fact is technological change and behavioural change are so rapid it is naïve, if not pointless, to be declarative about our vision for the "green jobs" of the future. Imagine, for example, how far off the mark economists would have been if they'd had a go at forecasting jobs related to the internet

in 1990; or how wrong forecasts made in 1980 of the numbers of people to be employed in the mobile-phone industry would have been.

Technologies that have not even been invented yet will employ hundreds of thousands of people by 2050. Will they be green jobs? Who knows and who cares. The singular challenge

for those interested in tackling climate change is to reduce the output of highly-emitting industries. The singular challenge for those interested in looking after the unemployed is to ensure that there are generous benefits and meaningful assistance provided to those who are looking for work.

While it may seem appealing to wait until we know where the new jobs are going to be before we start moving away from the jobs the atmosphere can no longer support, developing such a "plan" is a fool's errand. The fact is we did not wait until we knew where photo development lab workers would be reemployed before we embraced the digital camera. And we should not wait until we know where every worker will be working in 2020 before we start tackling climate change.

The simple fact is that if we spend billions of dollars per year on rebuilding our energy and transport systems we will create lots of jobs. It's not rocket science, and it's nowhere near as difficult as inventing clean coal. ▲

“If we spend billions of dollars per year on rebuilding our energy and transport systems we will create lots of jobs.”

Dr Richard Denniss is executive director of the Australia Institute

how to kick bad policy habits

From climate change to urban planning, Australian governments are finding it hard to relinquish their business as usual policies, writes Ben Eltham

What would a truly sustainable society for Australia look like?

I'm talking about a society where industries don't pollute the sea or the atmosphere, and where growth for some is not accomplished at the cost of poverty and inequality for others.

I'm talking about an economy where the pollution and other costs that industries impose on current and future citizens are properly regulated and taxed, but in which enterprising people can still transform society for the better by virtue of hard work and good ideas.

I'm talking about a society where our government taxes citizens at a fair rate to provide the public goods and services we all require, and where the policies we collectively pursue don't trade short-term expediency for long-term disaster.

Is this complete sustainability possible? I don't know. A simple glance at our daily newspapers (themselves in declining health) shows how difficult it will be to achieve.

In her influential 1984 book *The March of Folly*, historian Barbara Tuchman described 'folly' as the pursuit of a clearly disastrous government policy, even in the face of available evidence and public opinion. Our current economic and environmental policies on climate change now meet that definition. If 'business as usual' means burning ever more carbon to create even fewer jobs and along the way to cook the planet's climate, then 'business as usual' is actually the policy nearly all Australian governments are pursuing.

Cigarette addiction is a kind of personal folly. In return for the short-term enjoyment that nicotine confers, smokers trade a future of ill-health, disfigurement and possible death. Worse, they also affect the health of others. They litter our streets with the waste product of their addiction, while complaining about the taxes governments levy on their drug.

Our governments are no less addicted to a different kind of dirty combustion: burning coal. As the report released this week by The Climate Group found,

when it comes to coal and the coal industry, our state governments are three-pack-a-day wheezers. In 2008, coal made up 87 per cent of Australia's stationary energy supply. Renewables make up just 5 per cent — and most of this figure is thanks to legacy assets like the Snowy River hydro scheme.

Australia's reliance on coal for our electricity generation leaves our politicians with some uncomfortable choices. Banks, aware of the medium risks of steepening carbon prices, are already refusing to renew debt covenants and lend fresh money to coal-fired power stations for essential running costs. State governments like Victoria's — which sold off public power generation assets 15 years ago — may soon be forced to buy such assets back, simply to keep the lights on.

Contrary to popular belief, coal mining creates relatively few jobs — far fewer than service industries like the retail or cultural sectors — but it does provide indispensable mining royalties and state government tax revenues. This is

the real reason state premiers like Anna Bligh and Nathan Rees are so desperate to expand their state's coal industries. The Rudd Government's renewable energy target (apparently no longer even 'mandatory') of 20 per cent by 2020 seems a long way away.

A recent *4 Corners* program by Sarah Ferguson on coal exploration in the Liverpool Plains illustrates the madness. In return for hundreds of millions of dollars, the NSW Government sold coal mining rights to BHP Billiton and Chinese coal miner Shenhua; both are now aggressively prospecting. The Liverpool Plains are among the most fertile farm lands in Australia. Located at the head of Australia's ailing Murray Darling Basin, they contain vast underground watercourses that eventually flow into the lower Basin.

And the NSW Government has sold these rights to companies that want to mine coal. Coal! The very mineral that is most responsible for anthropogenic global warming. The same mineral that leading climate scientists like James Hansen argue we must stop burning if we are to prevent dangerous, runaway climate change. It is folly on the grandest scale imaginable.

Other follies are readily apparent. Take urban planning, a field which over the past 30 years has produced a sophisticated body of academic literature which clearly demonstrates the huge costs to our economy and society of building ever more sprawling suburbs further and further away from the jobs and amenities people need. The 'costs of sprawl' literature is extensive and well documented. Planning policies

which promote in-fill development and housing near employment sources and along established transport routes are far less costly in terms of pollution, traffic congestion and household petrol budgets than the typical Australian model of building on the edge of our already vast outer suburbs. In the early 2000s, the Victorian Government actually recognised this with its Melbourne 2030 urban growth boundary.

In late 2008, Victoria's Premier John Brumby and Planning Minister Justin Madden announced that their Government was effectively abandoning the Melbourne 2030 boundary — only six years after implementing it. Caving in to special interest groups headed by the Property Council's Jennifer Cunich, Madden wrote a curious op-ed in *The Age* attacking the "cultural snobbery" of the inner-city types and justifying his decision in reference to his own childhood growing up near Melbourne's airport. What was good for the Madden family is apparently also good enough for hundreds of thousands of

Victorians moving to Melbourne over the next two decades.

Unfortunately, certain things have changed since Minister Madden grew up. The price of oil, for example. Is it cultural snobbery to point out that many of these families will effectively be stranded in outer suburbs, far from their jobs, once the price of petrol rises above \$8 per litre, as the

CSIRO predicts it will by 2018? As Griffith University's Jago Dodson and Neil Sipe point out, the combination of mortgage debt and oil vulnerability in Australia's outer suburbs is a ticking time-bomb. In contrast, a report by SGS Planning's Rob Adams, commissioned by the Victorian Government's own Transport and Planning bureaucracy, details the billions in extra costs that 'business as usual' urban sprawl will cost the Government.

According to Adams, "the hidden costs of development, of 1000 houses built on the periphery of the city or the fringe of the city, are \$300 million more than 1000 houses in the city." Speaking at a meeting of the Planning Institute of Victoria, he explained, "if we carry on building the way we are building, we will spend \$110 billion more than we need to on building in the wrong places."

"We are building in poverty," Adams concluded.

But these long-term costs can be safely ignored by a government desperate for the stamp duties and other property taxes (not to mention the party donations from property developers) that sprawling outer suburban development delivers. "The power to command frequently causes failure to think," wrote Tuchman in 1984.

The march of folly goes on. ▲

“If we carry on building the way we are, we will spend \$110 billion more than we need to in the wrong places.”

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creating a safe climate

The Greens have a legislative approach aimed at creating a safe climate. Tim Hollo outlines the game plan for the Parliament.

The Greens' *Safe Climate Bill* is the first legislative attempt to transform Australia as swiftly as possible into a flourishing carbon neutral powerhouse.

Where the Rudd Government's *Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS)* locks in failure on the climate crisis by sidelining the science and sandbagging old polluters at the expense of the sunrise industries, the Greens' Bill gives us a real chance of success by aiming for the goal we know we need to achieve and then setting out how to get there.

Our goal is not simply to reduce carbon emissions. The true goal we must aim for is to pass on to our children, and our children's children, the safe climate that has nurtured us and made human civilisation possible.

The Bill, unlike the *CPRS*, will deliver a massive transformation in the Australian economy, a transformation that will require the creation of hundreds of thousands of new jobs. Some industries will inevitably be replaced, as thousands of industries such as photo film and horse power have throughout history. Part of the job of government is to make that transition as painless as possible, not pretend that it will not have to happen and work to delay the inevitable – in fact smart governments position their nations ahead of the curve.

The Bill puts equity at the heart of climate action, investing in upgrading homes of low income Australians for energy efficiency, rolling out transport alternatives in disadvantaged areas, retraining workers in polluting industries for the clean jobs of the future, and funding climate adaptation and emissions cuts in developing countries.

The Bill is a collection of 12 linked bills based around the pillars of renewable energy, energy efficiency, clean transport and forest protection, supported by a real carbon pricing scheme. The Bill as a whole and each of its constituent elements are intended as exposure drafts for public comment and debate. Some of the Bills have already been introduced in the Senate, others are in exposure draft form, and still others are in consultation phases.

Targeting a safe climate

The critical question with any climate action is how much it will reduce carbon emissions. With overarching policies such as the *CPRS* or the *Safe Climate Bill*, and even more so with international negotiations, we must ask first of all whether they will deliver the necessary outcome.

Recently, at both the domestic and international level, the Rudd Government has joined other major economies in proclaiming that we must aim to limit warming to two degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels by constraining carbon concentrations in the atmosphere to 450 ppm, delivered by reducing global emissions by 50% by 2050. This is fundamentally flawed at each step:

- Firstly, it is unlikely that halving global emissions by 2050 will achieve the 450 ppm goal.
- Secondly, even the conservative and out-of-date Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said that stabilising carbon at 450 ppm in the atmosphere gives us a 50-90% chance of exceeding the two degree limit. If we are serious about the two degree limit, that is obviously not an acceptable level of risk.
- Finally, many climate scientists now argue that two degree warming is not a safe climate goal, but in fact one that will jeopardise the lives, livelihoods and homelands of hundreds of millions of people around the world, including all those Australians who depend on the ongoing health of the Great Barrier Reef and Murray Darling or live on the coast.

The clear scientific evidence is that, in order to deliver a safe climate, we must bring greenhouse pollution in the atmosphere back down to 350 ppm or lower. Eventually achieving 350 ppm means global emissions must peak within years and start coming down as swiftly as possible. A fair contribution to this global challenge from a rich, high-polluting country like Australia means we must transform into a net zero carbon economy within the coming decades, cutting our emissions to at least 40% below 1990 levels by 2020.

For many, this might seem out of reach, but as Gandhi once said, “The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world’s problems.” We only need to recall the retooling of the US economy for the war effort. Or we can look around at the world of the iPhone, at how our lives today are shaped by instant wireless communication, and recall that, a mere twenty years ago, mobile phones were in their infancy and email was unheard of.

Making polluters pay, not paying polluters

Lord Nicholas Stern, author of the Stern Review, called climate change the world’s biggest market failure. The core objective of emission trading is to correct that market failure, making polluting firms pay for the cost of their pollution, thereby allowing new firms which pollute less or not at all, to compete with the old. It’s fundamentally about creating a fair, level playing field. At its heart is the polluter pays principle - a fundamental principle of environmental law and ecological politics.

Arguments about how best to make carbon emitters pay for the cost of their pollution (to internalise the externality) are ongoing. In the context of the current debate, the Greens believe that a well designed emissions trading scheme, while it is not a silver bullet, can work effectively as one element among many in the effort to transform the way we use and produce energy in particular.

The Rudd Government’s *CPRS*, however, does neither. Its targets are so woefully weak, and so difficult to change once passed into law, that it actively locks out an effective environmental outcome. And its design is so compromised that it will often pay the polluter to keep polluting instead of making the polluter pay. However, the failure of the *CPRS* does not mean we need to abandon emissions trading altogether.

The Greens’ emissions trading scheme would set a science-based emissions reduction target of at least 40% below 1990 levels by 2020, with the 350ppm goal enshrined in law. It would auction all permits instead of handing them out free to polluters, and use revenue from the sale of permits to invest in real equitable emissions reduction programs from household energy efficiency and smart grid upgrades to providing debt guarantees for major renewable energy installations, as well as ‘Just Transitions’ programs for coal communities and financing for developing nations.

Repowering Australia with renewable energy

The Greens have a vision for a 100% renewably-powered Australia.

There is no technical or economic reason why Australia cannot get a steady, safe and reliable supply of energy from a mix of solar, wind, ocean, biomass and geothermal power. Many of these technologies are made in Australia, are ready to scale up to utility size now, and will revitalise regional communities across Australia with new, long term and high quality jobs.

But, with coal holding an effective monopoly on our energy networks, we will need a broad range of policies and measures to make a 100% renewable Australia a reality. It is vital to remember that price is not the only lever – the confidence of investors, whether private or public, in new technology needs to be supported. Those renewable energy technologies which are cheapest now may not be the ones that will be cheapest and most reliable in the longer term.

The *Safe Climate Bill* includes an increased and improved mandatory energy target, a feed-in tariff that would pay a premium for all renewable energy generated from all sources, an infrastructure program to study and prepare options for developing a 100% renewable grid, a Sun Fund for research, development and commercialisation,

debt guarantees for grid-scale renewables investors and much more.

Save energy, save money, save the planet

Energy efficiency is the fastest, cheapest and easiest way to reduce greenhouse emissions, particularly in a country whose energy supply is as carbon polluting as Australia’s.

Studies have shown that Australia’s energy demand in the household, commercial building and industrial sectors could all be cut by a massive 30% using technologies and techniques that are available now off the shelf and will pay themselves back in 4 years. After that, it’s savings all the way, with lower power bills, less need to bolster existing overloaded electricity grids and fewer polluting power stations to replace with renewable energy.

A serious approach to energy efficiency creates a jobs boom, as the Rudd Government acknowledged with its recent stimulus package. Unfortunately, the insulation program was yet another ad hoc, hastily designed scheme that cannot truly transform Australia.

**“The Safe Climate Bill
will deliver a massive
transformation in the
Australian economy”**



“Our goal is not simply to reduce carbon emissions.”

PIC CREDIT: CC LICENSED FLICKR USER BAMBINO

As with renewable energy, it is long demonstrated that a price signal alone will not drive energy efficiency upgrades. Effective policies need to put easy to understand information about efficiency opportunities right in front of those who make the investment decisions and pay the bills. This is usually not the case.

The *Safe Climate Bill* includes the EASI scheme to upgrade all of Australia’s 8 million homes for top notch energy efficiency, a ground-breaking cap and trade scheme to drive energy efficiency in commercial buildings, a tightening of the Energy Efficiency Opportunities requirements on industrial energy users, accelerated depreciation for energy efficiency investments, an energy efficiency target to match the renewable energy target and increased minimum energy performance standards for appliances and buildings.

Travelling with a light footprint

Australia’s cities and suburbs are increasingly being built around cars, not people, and more of our intercity travel and freight is going by road or air instead of rail. In a world where peak oil and climate change are converging, this has to change fast.

The *Safe Climate Bill* would establish a new sustainable transport infrastructure body to drive planning from road to rail, with a high speed intercity rail network a priority for investigation. It would remove both the fringe benefits tax concession that rewards driving more and the fuel tax credit scheme that pays miners and loggers for the diesel fuel they

use. It would also increase fuel efficiency standards and implement more sustainable government purchasing policies.

Protecting our green carbon

Green carbon – the carbon stored in our forests, woodlands and soil – is a critically important part of the climate change picture. Unless we protect those carbon stores, and do everything we can to build them, we cannot hope to deliver a safe climate outcome.

By linking the sensible moves to protect existing carbon stores and build new stores with planning around water and natural resource management, green jobs and food security, we can ensure much more coordinated, effective and efficient use of Australia’s land and deliver benefits to the environment and regional communities.

These Bills, which are groundbreaking attempts at providing a legislative framework for green carbon, deal first with the protection of existing stores of carbon in standing forests and second will deal with the vexed problem of creating an incentive for new carbon sequestration, including in reforestation and soil carbon projects, while at the same time managing potentially significant adverse ecological and social impacts. ▲

Tim Hollo is Communications Adviser to Senator Christine Milne. For all the detail on the Safe Climate Bills and to download relevant materials, go to www.safecimatebill.org.au



PIC CREDIT: CC LICENSED WIKIMEDIA USER NOODLE SNACKS

beverly man

by Chester Graham

For a handful of silver he left us
And a grab at the levers of power.

His heavy metal has made
The sky dark. the water sour.

His Environment, Heritage and Arts
Are setting his country back.

The tailings seep into the basin
The sails in the sunset go black.

Our birthright dissolves in solution mining
His power and his passion, among the money men.

Hope there is one place left in the world
Where he can turn back, and face us again.

water

by Nicki Bullock

Another lake dying that we cannot deny
As we watch more vulnerable species die.
While humans in suits full of rhetoric debate
Leaving life in the lake a possible fatal wait.

The water level slowly, steadily drops
And farmers argue about irrigation for crops.
As this is what life o' Lake Bonney now holds
What will this mean as the future unfolds?

'It used to be our right' they say
And now they have to pay.

'They get more upstream' they whinge;
'Our government's just being a stinge'.

The lakes are lower than sea-level
And the drought is predicted to get worse
While those in the North are struggling with floods
Down south the water is scarce.

Once green lawns now dusty and dry,
Sensitive froggies beginning to die.

Columns of dust sweeping across the plains,
Dead turtles and fish lining once flowing drains.

Wetlands with no water for fifteen years or more,
Disappearing creeks mere memory,

While more vines get planted by the score -
Demand increasing pushing prices no-one wants to pay
For the precious commodity that is now water;
Will there be enough for our sons and daughters? ▲



The Clean Industrial Revolution - Ben McNeil

How do we persuade decision-makers in government and business to reduce greenhouse gas emissions after scientific, environmental and moral arguments have failed? Climate scientist Ben McNeil faced this problem after meeting Australian cabinet ministers in 2007. This book is his response.

McNeil's core argument is that rapid and effective reduction of greenhouse gas emissions not only gives the world the best chance of averting catastrophic climate change, but also offers Australia the best route to prosperity in the new, low-carbon global economy.

In McNeil's clean industrial revolution, energy becomes ubiquitous (from sun, wind, ocean and earth) and materials are grown or recycled. But fostering clean technology innovation and a low-carbon economy can't be initiated by market forces, since the market doesn't yet account for the cost of greenhouse gas emissions or the cost of the transition from fossil fuels.

Governments must therefore legislate to drastically reduce greenhouse

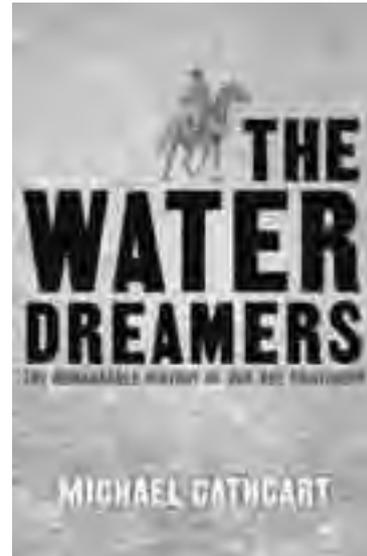
gas emissions and so spur the development of clean technology. Those developed nations that move most rapidly to a low-carbon economy will prosper by attracting foreign investment and by using and selling the technology they develop.

In short, McNeil's solution to the diabolical problem of climate change is to unleash the creative energy of market capitalism within a government-imposed framework. He argues that stabilising the climate and continuing economic growth are not at odds; indeed, each is a prerequisite of the other.

Many Greens will contest some of McNeil's propositions. He's lukewarm to people in developed countries reducing greenhouse gas emissions through lifestyle changes, pointing out that such savings will rapidly be negated by hundreds of millions of new consumers climbing out of poverty and linking to electricity grids in India, China and other developing countries. He also encourages expenditure on carbon capture and storage technology for fossil fuel power plants! There's plenty to debate in this provocative, refreshing and engagingly-written book.

Importantly, *The Clean Industrial Revolution* persuades that, in economic terms, combating climate change is not just another cost in the financial ledger. For those countries and companies canny enough to comprehend what the move to a low-carbon global economy really means, it offers an accessible guide to future prosperity. Almost accidentally, readers of this book from the big end of town could find themselves becoming environmentalists. Perhaps we should introduce them to it.

- DAVID TEATHER



The Water Dreamers: The Remarkable History of our Dry Continent - Michael Cathcart

Australia's natural landscape has often sent a shudder through the white Australian soul, its silence and dryness evoking in the frontier imagination a dreaded emptiness and death.

Our ancestors came from a wet country and sought to replicate the environment of their home – damp, rich soil that could provide an abundance of food. Finding that Australia was a chokingly dry land, European explorers continued to dream that a Garden of Eden must surely exist somewhere on its arid continent. So stubborn were the water dreamers that to talk realistically about Australia's limited potential was seen as verging on treason.

Michael Cathcart, in his evocative and absorbing *The Water Dreamers*, highlights this point with the example of climate analyst Griffith Taylor. As punishment for claiming that central Australia was too dry for farming or settlement, Taylor's career was cut short at the University of Sydney. In 1928 he left Australia to teach overseas.

While one half of *The Water Dreamers* highlights some 200 years of Australian water folly, the other half presents a vividly imagined history of Aboriginal dispossession. Inch by anxious inch you feel the first Australians losing their grip, their lands usurped and livelihood carelessly thrown away. On this Cathcart writes with great sensitivity and feeling, bringing to life the pain and struggle of the dispossessed.

White superiority precluded any consideration of Aboriginal knowledge of the land. Thousands of years of water management, and the insights this experience might yield, never entered anyone's head. Rather than learn the lessons that the first Australians had to teach, Europeans continued to find themselves at odds with their new environment. Writes Cathcart, "In fact, the explorers' journals express anxiety, tedium and alienation more often than they proclaim a triumphal geography."

More darkly, Cathcart writes of how the colonial economy created by lawless squatters was built on Aboriginal blood. Ironically, it was the more progressive, liberal minded city dwellers that benefited from this frontier brutality, indeed as we all do today.

For such a haunting and disturbing book, Michael Cathcart tries to end on an optimistic note. Today we face a water crisis, but at least we are shaking off the 'water dreamers' mentality and beginning to face the reality that Australia is a dry land that must shape us, and not we it. If we will only listen to what the land has to teach us, then maybe we have a chance.

- CHRIS SALIBA



EARTH

Bob Brown's photographic and philosophical exploration of people and their relationship to the planet

available from good book stores throughout Australia for \$19.95 from November.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: WWW.BOBBROWN.ORG.AU





jake wishart

Spokesperson for the
South Australian
Young Greens

In 1933, US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt launched an ambitious program of economic transformation which captured the collective imagination of America and steered the country through the Great Depression after years of ineffective public policy from conservative leaders. This programme became known as 'The New Deal' and is still a thrilling inspiration to progressives today.

October 2009 saw the gathering in Melbourne of activists, politicians, unionists, academics, the young, the old and everyone in between for a conference of ideas and action – The Green New Deal. Organised by Australia's newest progressive think tank, The Green Institute, the conference was aimed at addressing the threefold crises facing humanity and the planet – the environmental, economic and democratic challenges of our generation. From all across Australia and beyond, thinkers and doers congregated to chart a programme forward for our movement and our nation.

There are several crucial differences between Roosevelt's New Deal and our Green New Deal, and these were highlighted in the opening address from outspoken UK economist Tim Jackson, author of *Prosperity without Growth*. Primarily, our Green New Deal is responding not only to the massive failures and inequities of our current economic system, but responding to the abject failure of public policy makers to craft an environmentally sustainable society. Jackson radically questions the philosophy of mindless economic growth at the expense of humanity, equality and, vitally, our fragile planet.

Workshops and forums investigating these themes were dotted throughout the conference, along with the 350.org action, when conference goers assembled into a human '350' to represent the safe level of carbon parts per million. It was utterly hilarious to watch a

hodgepodge of 200 conference goers madly waving their hands in the air for 15 minutes in the hot Melbourne sun for the benefit of a Channel 7 helicopter buzzing overhead. We sure will do strange and beautiful things in our quest for sustainability.

The Green New Deal conference compliments the *Safe Climate* omnibus bill, launched by the Australian Greens Senators this month and it is vital that we continue to be ambitious, assertive and creative in our alternative vision for this nation in a time of impending crisis.

I was fortunate enough to be on a panel with Steve Keen, Christine Milne, Hendro Sangkoyo and Joan Staples, charged with articulating how change comes about. I focused on the need for our party to run grassroots community climate campaigns in marginal seats, build alliances and solidarity with existing groups who are close to our party and support, train and engage young people in our movement. Particularly for me, the link between workers, their unions and the green movement is a crucial example of where we have work to do in the community. The vested interests and polluting corporates who would seek to divide and compartmentalise great sections of our society forget that Greens and workers are natural allies - we both struggle against the exploitation of the planet and its people.

As a movement we need to denounce the false dichotomy between Greens and workers for what it is - an insidious and deliberate lie. Solidarity with our natural allies in the community is a crucial factor in increasing our electoral success, and hence a crucial factor in shifting political and economic power in Australia to a more socially just and sustainable footing. I left this conference feeling enthusiastic and excited at the prospect of disseminating these ideas in my community and campaigning for our beloved party in the next federal election. ▲



Bob Brown



BOB'S BACK PAGE

Heather's Hit-out

Australian Industry Group CEO Heather Ridout delivered the following lambast on ABC radio on 19 October:

"...The Greens would really take Australia back to the Dark Ages. They would close down so many of our industries, we'd have such mass unemployment. Eventually we might emerge as a green economy, but that will be because you know, a lot of our cities will be levelled and we'll be, you know, just growing lawns everywhere. So I think the Greens really need to take a cold shower about this..."

Instead of a cold shower, I've written to AIG's board members to ask about Ms Ridout's cranky comments. Perhaps the Greens' opposition to the Rudd government's proposal to sandbag big polluters with \$16.5 billion compensation via its Emissions Trading Scheme legislation got her going. Or was it my across-the-table question at a Press Club speech earlier this year about how she will answer to her grandchildren?

'Taint Necessarily So

ABC TV's national news recently led off with a story about the Rudd government's "plan for the world's most ambitious emissions trading scheme". However, while Scotland's aim is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 42% by 2020 and Costa Rica aims at 100% by 2030, the Rudd government's paltry target is 5%.

Queried, the ABC management agreed the claim "did not comply with our editorial standards for impartiality".

Very Suitable

In last weekend's pile-up of events (the Green Institute's Melbourne conference, a Laurie Oakes' TV interview in Sydney, a lightning visit to Hobart, and Senate sittings in Canberra) I lost my suit coat. Most likely it's in the boot of a taxi somewhere in Melbourne. Fortunately, my Parliament House Office Manager Peter Stahel was along. He had a spare pair of jeans in his kit so he swapped to the jeans and I borrowed his finely cut suit for the Channel 9 appearance.

It reminded me of a 1983 sartorial crisis when pilot Doug Hooley volunteered to fly me from the Franklin River campaign to Canberra where a press conference awaited. I got on the plane in bush gear and got off in suit and tie. Doug said I must be the only person ever to have changed trousers over Albury-Wodonga.

Earth

I've produced a little blue book called *Earth*. It is a 500 word homily to life on this planet, adorned with pictures of nature. I am delighted that Rove McManus has agreed to launch *Earth* at Parliament House on 10 November. A word of precaution: I could not find a publisher, so the book does not fit the mould of "best seller". But you will be able to find it in some good book shops.



Bob launches Susie Gemmill's campaign for the Bradfield by-election at Parliament House

Susie and Clive

Two Liberal doyens step down: federal by-elections in Bradfield and Higgins. Two great Greens candidates: and a double Rudd Labor cop-out. It has been my fortune to be at the launch of both Susie Gemmill's and Clive Hamilton's campaigns. The voters have excellent Greens candidates to challenge what the pundits say are certain Liberal wins. Our candidates at the elections on 5 December, in the week before the global climate change summit in Copenhagen and the Dalai Lama's visit Down Under, are another clear sign of the growing strength of the Greens in Australian politics.

Gorgeous Moths

Upon Capital Hill, the ravens, currawongs, magpies and wattlebirds are gorging on Bogong moths. But the annual moth migration, once also providing a feasting season for the Aboriginal people of the southeast highlands, has our politicians askance. As I write, Parliament House's fire doors are shut to stop the moths migrating along the corridors. If only they used the same tactic on some of the coal corporate lobbyists, we might all be feeling a bit safer. Enjoy the Spring. ▲

Bob



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**- United Nations Secretary-General
Ban Ki-moon**

