

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY MEDIA SPOTLIGHT:

This weekly report is brought to you by the La Trobe University Sustainability Taskforce to introduce and encourage awareness and opinion about our sustainable future. We would welcome opinion pieces, which we will try to place in the media, and any comments that you have about sustainability, so please feel free to contact me at J.Ayers@latrobe.edu.au or on 9479 1187. Or you can contact Sustainability Taskforce at sustainability@latrobe.edu.au.

Major Australian Media - 10 September – 17 September 2009

'Environmental Sustainability' – Major Media Report

Green jobs dopey: CFMEU leader

Sid Maher, 14 September 2009, [The Australian](#)

Lend Lease, Greens vote for change

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Thomson water grab a measure of Policy failure

14 September 2009, [The Age](#)

Reducing Canberra's footprint on economic recovery

13 September 2009, [Canberra Times](#)

Real leaders get the economy climate-ready

Jeremy Baskin, 12 September 2009, [Australian Financial Review](#)

'Environmental Sustainability & La Trobe' – Major Media Report

ABC Central Victoria (Bendigo)

Compere: Dave Lennon, 16 September 2009

Dutch show sustainable way

15 September, [Bendigo Advertiser](#)

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Matthew Dunckley, 14 September, [Australian Financial Review](#)

WIN News (Bendigo)(Ballarat)

9 September 2009

'Environmental Sustainability' – Major Media Report

Green jobs dopey: CFMEU leader

Sid Maher, 14 September 2009, [The Australian](#)

ONE of Australia's most powerful union leaders has lashed out at the push for green jobs, labelling it a "dopey term", and has dismissed environmental campaigns against some of the nation's major export industries as "judgmental nonsense".

The president of the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union, Tony Maher, said existing industries such as coal and steelmaking would have an important place in the nation's future economic prospects and in producing a lower carbon future.

He said carbon capture and storage and other hopes for cutting emissions such as solar and thermal, would require massive amounts of steel that should be made by Australian steel workers.

Mr Maher said much of the opposition to major industries -- particularly the coal industry -- was "well-intentioned naivete".

"By mid-century we'll be using twice as much coal and a lot more steel and plastic and concrete that aren't the flavour of the month with environmentalists and green groups," he said.

Yesterday he dismissed a protest at Victoria's Hazelwood power station as "just silly".

His rhetoric is at odds with ACTU president Sharan Burrow, who has embarked on a campaign to argue the benefits of green jobs, including joining the Southern Cross Climate Coalition, a joint group of welfare, union, research and environmental organisations that have been lobbying the government to do more to create green jobs.

In March Ms Burrow said Australia had to position itself to ensure it had the knowledge and skills to capture at least a quarter of what would be a global green products market worth more than three trillion dollars.

"The challenge is to reskill workers in existing blue-collar jobs to ensure they can manufacture, install and operate new technologies and to educate generations of students and young workers to take up new green jobs," she said.

Mr Maher played down any split with Ms Burrow, saying he chaired the ACTU's climate change group and that there was merely a "difference in emphasis".

But while white-collar workers were more comfortable with talking about green jobs, he said he was concerned for his blue-collar constituency, keeping existing industries and fitting them into a restructured low-carbon economy.

"A lot of the new jobs will be the old jobs," he said.

There would be a lot of new jobs created such as in recycling and harvesting stormwater run-off, but these would be bolt-on skills to existing trades to cope with new developments. "It's no different when plumbers had to adapt to using plastic pipes after years of using clay pipes," Mr Maher said. "Coalmines aren't going anywhere. Power stations aren't going anywhere."

Mr Maher told a trade publication last week the challenge for business leaders in the emerging green industries would be attracting staff from sectors who already had good pay and conditions.

"A coalminer or a power station worker isn't going to leave their job on \$120,000-plus with well-regulated shift arrangements and decent conditions to install low-wattage light bulbs or insulation," he said. Yesterday he dismissed the protest at the Hazelwood power station as "just silly".

Hundreds of protesters gathered at Hazelwood in Victoria's **La Trobe** Valley to protest against the plant's emissions.

Police arrested 22 protesters after the "Switch Off Hazelwood" protest, which started about 11am with organisers planning a "mass civil disobedience action".

Police said protesters became aggressive, and some wanted to jump over the plant's fences.

The protesters were arrested for trespassing, and one person was arrested for assaulting a police officer.

[Lend Lease, Greens vote for change](#)

John Breusch, 17 September 2009, [Australian Financial Review](#)

Political party the Australian Greens, in an alliance led by property group Lend Lease, will propose the establishment of a separate emissions trading system for the building and construction industry. Greens Environment Spokesperson Christine Milne will propose the scheme today at Federal Parliament, setting an emissions intensity baseline for each type of commercial building. Lend Lease Global **Sustainability** Head Maria Atkinson says that commercial building owners pass energy costs on to tenants, which does not necessarily mean the proposed emissions trading scheme (ETS) would encourage owners to cut energy consumption.

Meanwhile, Opposition Leader Malcolm Turnbull has proposed using accelerated depreciation to reduce the upfront cost of 'green retrofits.' The proposals come days after the Business Council of Australia (BCA) asked for more business assistance through ETS in written correspondence to the government, opposition, Independent Senator Nick Xenophon, and Family First's Steve Fielding. BCA Policy Director Maria Tarrant says that correspondence was not sent to the Greens because the issues raised in the letter were not directly relevant to the party's environmental issues in the Senate. The alliance includes Deutsche Asset Management, Credit Agricole Asset Management, and BlackRock, among others.

Deutsche Asset Management, Lend Lease, Malcolm Turnbull, Blackrock, Australian Greens, Business Council of Australia, Nick Xenophon, Family First, Steve Fielding, Credit Agricole Asset Management, BlackRock.

Building springs into new, green life

Marika Dobbin, 16 September 2009, [The Age](#)

A ONCE-NEGLECTED 120-year-old Docklands railway shed has become Victoria's first historic building to be awarded a five "green star" rating by the Green Building Council of Australia.

Developer Equiset, a Grollo company, yesterday received the rating after making the Goods Shed North into ecologically sustainable offices for government tenants.

The shed, which fronts Bourke and Collins streets, will house state developer VicUrban and the Building and Plumbing Industry commissions when finished in November.

Among its green features are a relatively new cooling technology of slim beams of steel in the ceiling that are chilled in summer using power from a gas-fired co-generation plant. The building also has a rainwater collection and treatment system, and grey-water treatment plan.

Equiset bought the site last year, after several years of negotiations with the prospective tenants.

Developer Lorenz Grollo said a review of the building, which was originally used as a freight terminal, found contaminated soil and damage to the piles, steelwork and roof.

One corner was so badly deteriorated it had to be dismantled brick by brick and reconstructed to preserve the original structure.

"It certainly has been a massive transformation," Mr Grollo said.

"**Sustainability** needs to be built into every type of commercial construction in the future. This is a project to move forward on."

Another challenge was to connect the shed to the Collins Street bridge to use as the main VicUrban entrance. A new, four-level structure called the Lantern Building has windows that flood a central galleria with light.

Green Building Council of Australia chairman Tony Arnel, who will move into the building as head of the building and plumbing commissions, said the three government agencies wanted to have their offices in a building that exemplified green design.

"I'd hope that developers and investors will see what's occurring in the Goods Shed North and understand that sustainable outcomes in historic buildings are actually achievable," Mr Arnel said.

"This is all about a leadership statement and hopefully others will follow suit."

He said that while Docklands was home to several buildings with five or six green star ratings, such as the new ANZ headquarters, the combination of sustainable design with the restoration of the heritage elements made the shed unique.

"The indoor environment quality is going to be really spectacular and that provides a huge benefit to people who are going to be working in the building because it's a healthier environment and a much more productive environment," Mr Arnel said.

Mr Grollo said Equiset had the option to convert the building into a shopping mall after the tenants' 15-year leases had expired and Docklands had matured into a busier area.

Planning Minister Justin Madden said older buildings made up most of the commercial building stock and while refurbishing them could be complex, it had the potential to make a significant difference to the **sustainability** of Victoria's buildings.

The building has 10,000 square metres of office and retail space.

Mr Grollo said many older buildings would be required to have green credentials in the proposed \$1 billion overhaul of Coburg's town centre, in conjunction with the Moreland council.

Permaculture prophets

Peter Boyer, 15 September 2009, [Hobart Mercury](#)

ENERGY is life -- nature's gift to us that enables us to survive. We know that, but we continue to use energy as if it's nothing more than the flick of a switch. If ever we needed a sign that reason plays little part in our lives, this is it.

Tasmanians, of all people, should know better. Our closeness to nature is something that millions around the world, trapped in growing urban wastelands, can only dream of. Being aware of the way nature supports our lives should be imprinted in our DNA -- but it would seem not.

There's another reason we should know better. This island is the starting place for modern permaculture, a way of thinking based on growing food (concentrated energy) by mimicking the way nature works. The permaculture movement is now a worldwide phenomenon.

This powerful, disarmingly simple idea had its roots in the early 1970s, when The Limits to Growth study revealed a world living beyond its means, and when Tasmania's march of progress prompted Richard Jones to found the world's first green party, the United Tasmania Group.

Founding UTG member and university lecturer Bill Mollison and a young environmental design student named David Holmgren, as mentor and student, forged the permaculture concept. While Mr Mollison took his message first to his students and then to wider audiences, Mr Holmgren produced a thesis on the subject that informed a 1978 book by the pair, Permaculture One.

Fundamental to the permaculture thesis is the ability of natural systems such as woodlands, with their high biodiversity, to maximise the energy in a system by converting it into biomass -- many times the capacity of the monocultural food crops that dominate modern agriculture.

The Mollison-Holmgren writings ought to have alerted us to the danger of ignoring natural processes and the possibilities that open up when we tune into them.

Richard Jones, at least, was impressed enough to persuade the Hobart City Council to replace ageing ornamental trees lining his street with food-producing species -- an almond grove.

But while permaculture ideas were resonating among people concerned about our alienation from nature, they failed to connect with the mainstream. In Tasmania the movement stuttered and stalled. It was as if we had it too good to ever think of changing the way we do things.

Bill Mollison and David Holmgren each took the message about deriving nourishment from natural systems to those wanting to hear. Their classic texts are Permaculture: A Designer's Manual (Mollison, 1988) and Permaculture: Principles and Pathways Beyond **Sustainability** (Holmgren, 2002).

For 25 years Mr Mollison, who at 81 is still working from his Tasmanian base near Stanley, taught his permaculture design course throughout the world to people from all walks of life, revitalising lives, communities and regions. The most remarkable transformations of degraded land have been achieved by people in poor countries struggling to survive.

The prosperous West, by contrast, has been slow to respond. But with ever-increasing climate and energy threats, the wisdom of permaculture is finding its way into Western lives.

With a steadily rising demand for the time and expertise of what is now an international network of permaculture designers, educators and activists.

For Mr Holmgren, permaculture has become a lifelong investigation of relationships between different species in the natural environment, and between humans and

nature. Based at Hepburn Springs in country Victoria, he has pioneered the use of non-native plants to help in the recovery of degraded land.

It is interesting that despite all their foresight, dedication and sheer hard work to put theory into practice and take their vision to the wider world, Bill Mollison and David Holmgren have had such a low profile for so long.

It is long past time we honoured these prophets in their own land, and the best way of doing this is to take up their ideas and run with them, as far and fast as we can. * INTENSIVE permaculture training is on offer to Tasmanians in January, when specialist Rick Coleman leads a 12-day residential course at Lorinna in the state's North-West. For further information contact Hannah Moloney on 0418 307 294.pb@climatetasmania.com.au

Thomson water grab a measure of Policy failure

14 September 2009, [The Age](#)

The refusal to tap major alternative sources has left us all vulnerable.

THE spring warmth of recent days would normally be cause for celebration among winter-weary Melburnians. But these are not normal times: the city's dams are at record lows after winter failed to replenish them, and the outlook for months to come is grim. Last month the Bureau of Meteorology issued a "special climate statement" confirming Melbourne's winter was the warmest on record and warning that an El Nino, which is associated with low rainfall, is developing.

The State Government responded last week by announcing an emergency measure to draw another 10 billion litres from the highly stressed Thomson River. The decision is a mark of how vulnerable this city of 4 million people is to running dry before the \$3.5 billion desalination plant comes online in late 2011. Water Minister Tim Holding admits the move poses a significant threat to an endangered fish species, the Australian grayling. That could yet require Commonwealth intervention under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. Australian Platypus Conservancy spokesman Geoff Williams has also warned that platypuses in the Thomson River system might not survive any more reductions in water flow.

The Thomson and the Gippsland Lakes, which are fed by the river, are already in a bad way — an evaluation by the Department of **Sustainability** and Environment found less than 30 per cent of the catchment was in good condition. The river has missed out on promised environmental flows, starting with a pledge of 10 billion litres in 2005 (which was to rise to an extra 25 billion litres a year by 2015). By 2005, catches by the Lakes Entrance Fishermen's Co-operative were down to half of the take in 1991.

Ironically, Labor secured office after the 1999 election with a promise to restore the Thomson, which earned the vital support of Gippsland MP Craig Ingram and his

fellow independents. A look at the history of the water debate in Victoria since then raises the question: how has it come to this?

In 1999, low flows from the Thomson River — which supplies more than half of Melbourne's water — and associated algal blooms, silting and declining fish stocks in the lakes were already causing alarm. That led to calls for water restrictions in Melbourne, which had experienced the first three years of this long drought. More than half of non-metropolitan urban water authorities had imposed restrictions by 1999, including in the second-largest city, Geelong, which has had stage 4 restrictions since December 2006. Today, its storage levels are the same as Melbourne's, at just under 30 per cent. That is about 5 percentage points below Melbourne's previous record low this time last year. If ever there was a time for stage 4 restrictions, this is it.

The Government, however, has long baulked at applying the same standards to Melbourne's water use as the rest of the state, to the extent of coming up with a contrived stage 3a restriction. By 2004, Mr Ingram was impatient with the lack of progress on alternative sources of water and restoring Thomson River flows. "We need to start tackling some of the big issues," he said, "such as why are we using some of the world's best drinking water on parks and gardens and pumping semi-treated waste water into (Bass) Strait."

Yet only after the 2006 election did the Government begin work on the desalination plant and north-south pipeline. Until then, it appeared to rely on the hope that water-saving measures would suffice until the drought broke. For a decade, the Government has resisted calls to greatly increase use of recycled waste water and stormwater, even after storages plunged from 2005 onwards. Indeed, it has stubbornly and stupidly stuck to former premier Steve Bracks' pledge that dam levels would not be boosted by recycled waste water. Hundreds of billions of litres are available to be treated to a completely safe, drinkable standard — as has long been done in much of the developed world — but are instead still running out to sea.

Having delayed action on an alternative supply, the Government is now clearly fearful of the political cost of imposing stage 4 restrictions before the November 2010 state election. Instead, it is prepared to further damage the Thomson and Gippsland Lakes. In a parallel to the disaster inflicted on the lower Murray River, the river and lakes environment, which supports a \$200 million tourism industry and valuable fishery, will suffer a decline that won't be easily reversed — all so that Melbourne can secure a couple more weeks' supply of water. It is an indictment of water policy over the past decade that Victoria has come full circle back to the crisis of 1999 when Melbourne was draining the life out of the Thomson at the region's expense.

Reducing Canberra's footprint on economic recovery

13 September 2009, [Canberra Times](#)

THE PROPERTY Council held a Green Building Blitz workshop on Tuesday for re-energising tired buildings by making them greener. Then this past weekend the Switch to Green Conference was held in Canberra, including an expo and business and community awards which recognised active and inspirational members of the public who either took action against climate change or provided high quality products or services to improve **sustainability**.

Judging by the enthusiastic response of many of the delegates at both of these events, it seems green is still very much on the agenda for us all, despite the impact of the global recession. And so it should be. Economic recovery may well be short-lived if we do not continue to deal with the effects of climate change and reduce those effects wherever possible.

After all the economy will be affected by climate change too. In both of last week's events the emphasis was on practical solutions on what could be done and how it could be done to reduce Canberra's environmental impact. I was involved in the workshop sessions on renewable options for improving Canberra's energy efficiency.

There were three concurrent meetings on three significant subjects: renewable options for powering Canberra, an efficient transport system for Canberra, and increasing the energy efficiency of our homes and offices. Although, of course, all these topics are linked and we need to concentrate on all three for the ACT to become truly sustainable, it was good to hear the opinions of specialists in each topic. For example, Professor Andrew Blakers, the director of the Centre for Sustainable Energy Systems at ANU and geothermal scientist Dr Bridget Ayling, spoke on power options.

We had Ben Keneally from the Electric Car Company and Peter Moore from the International Association of Public Transport speaking on transport systems. Peter Miller of the Home Energy Advice Team and Melinda Dodson, national president of the Australian Institute of Architects spoke on ways to increase energy efficiency in homes and offices. Altogether a rewarding and encouraging week.

Catherine Carter is ACT executive director of the Property Council of Australia.

Real leaders get the economy climate-ready

Jeremy Baskin, 12 September 2009, [Australian Financial Review](#)

The Confederation of British Industries (CBI) has changed its position in the past couple of years, saying climate change is a pressing reality and that the UK government needs to press on with its 80 percent carbon reduction target. The Corporate Leaders Group on Climate change (CLG) can claim much of the credit for the CBI's change in direction, convincing business of the opportunities that exist in sustainable products and markets. Groups such as the Japan Climate Leaders' Partnership, for example, see a low-carbon future as a 'business opportunity,' a stark contrast to the mainstream business Nippon Keidanren which opposes any emissions

cuts bigger than 6 percent. Today the UK CLG consists of 17 companies - including Shell, Anglian Water, Kingfisher, Standard Chartered, Unilever and Vodafone. Most recently the CLG has been focused on getting businesses to sign up to the Copenhagen Communique.

A number of Australian companies have joined the movement - including National Australia bank, IAG, Woolworths, News Ltd, Linfox, Westpac, Lend Lease and Telstra. Businesses need to focus on the opportunities available in getting the economy climate-ready.

Jeremy Baskin, (Australia director of the university of Cambridge's Program for **Sustainability** Leadership)

'Environmental Sustainability & La Trobe' – Major Media Report

ABC Central Victoria (Bendigo)

Compere: Dave Lennon, 16 September 2009

Regular Segment: Politics with Ian Tulloch, Lecturer in Politics, La Trobe University: - Tough day at the office for Malcolm Turnbull yesterday: he tried to convince his party there should be negotiations over amendments to the Government's emissions trading scheme. [Ends]

Interviewee: Ian Tulloch, Lecturer in Politics, La Trobe University

Duration: 4 mins 52 secs

Dutch show sustainable way

15 September, [Bendigo Advertiser](#)

SUSTAINABILITY pioneers from the Netherlands are visiting Bendigo this week.

At a lecture tonight they will discuss their approach to creating a low carbon economy.

The event will be led by Yoram Erozer, founding director of the European Institute for Sustainable Innovations at the University of Twente; and Simon Tijssma, head of the Friesland province Department of Economic Affairs, Recreation and Tourism.

Friesland province is in the northern Netherlands and has shown how regional cities can be sustainable and still have a vibrant economy.

The lecture, at The Capital theatre, is part of the Alfred Deakin Eco-Innovation Lectures, an initiative of the State Government.

Professor John Martin, director of the Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities at La Trobe University, said the lecture was an important one on a vital topic.

"It offers a fascinating insight into ways in which the Friesland provincial government has replaced petrol and diesel in its vehicles with biogas as well as other examples of innovative sustainable practices." The lecture will discuss and investigate how regions, cities and communities can take the lead in creating a new future suited to the change in resources, skills and history of a specific locality.

New water technologies and ecotourism developments in Friesland will be a feature of the discussion.

The two visitors will also be guest speakers at the Bendigo Business Council and Bendigo Sustainability Group breakfast on Thursday morning at the All Seasons.

Tax breaks for company cars targeted

Matthew Dunckley, 14 September, [Australian Financial Review](#)

As business, unions and green groups campaign for a change of tax laws to favour cleaner, greener vehicles, the large six cylinder company car may become endangered. The Henry review is looking into company car tax breaks and submissions say they must be axed as they offer incentives to drive extra kilometres to gain a tax break. A proposal from salary packaging firm McMillan Shakespeare has attracted support and would replace the kilometres-driven test with a schedule that gives tax breaks to owners of greener cars. Executive director of McMillan Shakespeare Anthony Podesta says the plan would encourage employees to buy greener cars, and was supported by Chuck Berger, director of strategic ideas at the Australian Conservation Council. Supporting the unnecessary kilometres view was a 2008 **La Trobe University** study, while Access Economics says the plan would be revenue neutral but would cut company car emissions by up to 20 percent per vehicle.

WIN News (Bendigo)(Ballarat)

9 September 2009

Community leaders have heard that Victoria's regional centres are critical to national economic growth. The Centre for Economic Development has told Victoria's 10 regional centres are to prepare to accommodate at least 100,000 residents.

Interviewee: Mal Kersting, VicRoads

Interviewee: Prof. John Martin, LaTrobe University

Interviewee: Peter Fitzgerald, CEDA

Duration: 1 mins 34 secs

