**Round the traps: upcoming events and issues – ICYMI - #6**

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This digest series – *Round the Traps –* is produced for the Restoration Decade Alliance in Australia: <https://restorationdecadealliance.org/> supporting the [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/) aims “to halt the degradation of ecosystems and restore them to achieve global goals, for the benefit of people and nature”.

## International governance

A welcome surprise! [[Helping Nature Regrow: A Win for Climate and Biodiversity](https://www.wri.org/insights/what-assisted-natural-regeneration-benefits-definition?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=restoreforward&utm_campaign=socialmedia&utm_term=3a6bec14-6fce-4c0e-b726-4dc4ef6e9c9b)](https://www.wri.org/insights/what-assisted-natural-regeneration-benefits-definition?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=restoreforward&utm_campaign=socialmedia&utm_term=3a6bec14-6fce-4c0e-b726-4dc4ef6e9c9b): case study from Latin America.

World Resources Institute published paper on “The Benefits and Power of Assisted Natural Regeneration” by Robin Chazdon, University of Sunshine Coast & others conclude:

*These next ten years, during the*[*UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration*](https://www.wri.org/insights/ecosystem-restoration-questions)*, are ANR’s time in the sun. It’s up to policymakers, investors and local landholders to take the dream of forest regeneration and turn it into a reality.*

Coming up in November, the Egypt meeting on the **Convention of Biological Diversity**, it’s fine to see *Physics World* pick up on an article for this Conventionfrom *Trends in Ecology & Evolution* by a team of ecologists: <https://phys.org/news/2022-10-trees-mitigate-climate.html>.

Protecting ancient trees in forests, woodlands, historic gardens, and urban and [agricultural areas](https://phys.org/tags/agricultural%2Bareas/) remain limited by national policy levels, the ecologists write: *The current review of* ***the Convention of Biological Diversity*** *and Sustainable Development Goal 15 'Life on Land' of* ***Agenda 2030*** *should include old-growth and ancient tree mapping and monitoring as key indicators of the effectiveness of protected areas in maintaining and restoring forest integrity for a* [*sustainable future*](https://phys.org/tags/sustainable%2Bfuture/)*.* They’re proposing an approach to protect ancient trees.

Ancient trees/’monumental organisms’ are valuable as “unique habitats for the conservation of threatened species because they can resist and buffer climate warming” and as “hotspots for mycorrhizal connectivity”.

"We call for international efforts to preserve these hubs of diversity and resilience. A global coalition utilizing advanced technologies and community scientists to discover, protect, and propagate ancient trees is needed before they disappear."

**Backgrounder 101**: [What is biodiversity and](https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/mar/12/what-is-biodiversity-and-why-does-it-matter-to-us?s=09) why does it matter to us? – with drawings. For sharing as the Convention meeting becomes newsworthy.

## Political economy

**Australian Government’s Budget. S**everal items shed insight:

* Katharine Murphy’s pre-budget interview with [Jim Chalmers his long view](https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/oct/22/chalmers-offensive-crunch-time-as-treasurer-faces-first-federal-budget?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other&s=09), and big changes ahead. First with a “Wellness” component, that includes environment.
* Labor Government’s [overhaul](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/oct/25/federal-budget-2022-climate-crisis-change-environment-programs-labor-albanese-government-australia-renewable-energy-carbon-capture-ccs) of climate and environment programs in 2022-23 partly funded by redirecting $746.9m from those promised by Coalition, report from Adam Morton and Anne Davies
* Minister Plibersek thread on Twitter mostly GBR and Water, (not found on Ministerial site under media)

https://twitter.com/tanya\_plibersek/status/1585067923877818368/photo/1

A photo of the sunflower protest in *The Financial Times* 22 October headlined “The energy crisis is distracting us from the real emergency”: **the climate battle**. “But it’s not going away, nor are the young activists who care”. Sunflowers – Just Stop Oil.

As most Australians [polled](https://australiainstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Polling-September-2022-Fossil-fuel-sponsorship-Web.pdf) now regard fossil fuel sponsorship as the new tobacco, news hit hard of the [*CSIRO accused of failing to disclose GISERA gas industry links in fracking information sheets*](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-10-24/csiro-accused-of-sending-misinformation/101556858?utm_campaign=abc_news_web&utm_content=link&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_source=abc_news_web)*.* While CSIRO has responded by justifying its accelerating commercialism, some science staff decry this or had already left.

Similar revelations emerged about the suppression within the Bureau of Meteorology. That the BoM was [“cowering in the corner”](https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/oct/23/bureau-of-meteorology-was-cowering-in-the-corner-on-climate-crisis-former-staff-claim?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Other) from the climate crisis struck a chord. The BoM revelations have been amplified by [the call](https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/oct/24/law-governing-bureau-of-meteorology-must-change-to-reflect-climate-crisis-says-former-chief?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Other) from its former director for legislative reform to reflect the climate crisis:

Consultation on amending the climate bills - as to whether the eligibility to burn Native Forest “waste” in power stations under the Renewable Energy Target should be removed, or only constrained by regulation– is sought by the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications. Regulatory control would lie with the Clean Energy Regulator. The Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF) is administered by the Clean Energy Regulator, which has $4.5 billion to spend on ACCUs.

In March this year, the conduct of the ERF was condemned as being a ‘[fraud on the environment’](https://law.anu.edu.au/news-and-events/news/australia%E2%80%99s-carbon-market-fraud-environment) by ANU environmental law expert Professor Andrew Macintosh as. In an ANU News report, Professor Macintosh said:

*The available data suggests 70 to 80 per cent of the ACCUs issued to these projects are devoid of integrity – they do not represent real and additional abatement,” Professor Macintosh said.*

*Unfortunately, Australia’s carbon market currently suffers from a distinct lack of environmental integrity.*

*All of the major emission reduction methods have serious integrity issues, either in their design or the way they are being administered.*

*People are getting ACCUs for not clearing forests that were never going to be cleared; they are getting credits for growing trees that are already there; they are getting credits for growing forests in places that will never sustain permanent forests; and they are getting credits for operating electricity generators at large landfills that would have operated anyway.*

*What is occurring is a fraud on the environment, a fraud on taxpayers and a fraud on unwitting private buyers of ACCUs, including private households who purchase ACCUs to offset their personal emissions.*

[*https://law.anu.edu.au/news-and-events/news/australia%E2%80%99s-carbon-market-fraud-environment*](https://law.anu.edu.au/news-and-events/news/australia%E2%80%99s-carbon-market-fraud-environment)

With the ensuing news coverage and political sensitivity, the Emissions Reduction Fund is now subject to the Chubb Review under Minister Bowen.

The Consultative paper on NF wood “waste” recognised some sensitivity: *It is important that concerns over particular fuel types [sic] or its potential adverse impacts do not detract from broader market and consumer confidence in the RET and renewable energy providers*. In time for submission-writers, Griffith University’s *Climate Action Beacon* (2/22) neatly set out some arguments by Mackey, Lindenmayer & Keith in *Burning forest biomass for energy: Not a source of clean energy and harmful to forest ecosystem integrity.* The case for removing the eligibility to burn, therefore, has been made.

## More about wood

Opportune timing the Victorian Forest Alliance re-ran the arguments to [remove the Regional Forest Agreements](https://www.victorianforestalliance.org.au/remove_the_rfas) a mechanism between Federal and State government that exempts native forestry logging from the EPBC Act. Native Forests are one of the best ways to tackle climate change (B. Mackey, 18/10/22 pers. comm.), providing habitat, whereas logging makes them more flammable, putting regional communities at risk and bringing wildlife to the brink of extinction (Greater Gliders Leadbeater’s Possum for example).

Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) also has significant concerns with the ongoing operation of the RFAs. Their 2021 submission concluded:

*Given the ongoing concerns about the implementation of the RFAs and their ability to deliver environmental outcomes, the interaction between the EPBC Act and forestry operations carried out under RFAs must be reconsidered, and this should occur as part of legislative package of reforms that implement the recommendations of the Final Report of the Independent Review of the EPBC Act*

<https://www.edo.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/210319-EPBC-RFA-Amendment-Bill-Inquiry-EDO-submission.pdf>

Their submission useful revision prior to the Federal government’s response to Samuel review of EPBC Act (including RFAs) expected later this year.

## More on energy-climate- greenhouse gas emissions

Victorian Government announced its major [proposal for energy transformation](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/oct/24/victoria-deserves-praise-for-promising-a-rapid-shift-from-coal-to-renewables-now-comes-the-hard-part?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Other) although media coverage was easily overshadowed by its “least remarkable part of the promise – the revival of SECV”, as explained by from Adam Morton, Guardian Australia’s Climate and Environment editor.

In Victoria’s Supreme Court, Environment Victoria commenced argument in its test case of the *Climate Change Act* (2017) and judicial review regulation of air pollution from power stations in the La Trobe Valley. [ABC News reported](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-10-24/victoria-climate-change-act-latrobe-power-station-supreme-court/101565746) that a decision is expected in weeks.

Meanwhile in NSW, the EPA NSW has produced a Draft Climate Policy and Action Plan following a successful court action brought for Bushfire Survivors for Climate Actions (BSCA) by EDO. The EDO with BSCA has produced a [community briefing](https://www.edo.org.au/community-briefing-on-the-epa-climate-policy-and-action-plan/) on the draft policy and action plan. And to assist submission-writers, see BSCA’s guide: https://www.bushfiresurvivors.org/bsca-submission-guide

Submissions are due **5pm Thursday, 3 November.**

[**On ocean heat accelerating extreme weather**](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/oct/18/amount-of-ocean-heat-found-to-be-accelerating-and-fuelling-extreme-weather-events?CMP=share_btn_tw&s=09) The rate of warming in the top 2km has doubled from levels in the 1960s, from *Nature Reviews: Earth and Environment* reported by Graham Readfearn with commentary by authors including Matt England UNSW about the findings.

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