**Round the traps: upcoming events and issues – ICYMI - #9**

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**Mob 0419 811 750 Feedback welcome. Friday 14 April 2023**

This digest series – *Round the Traps –* is produced for the Restoration Decade Alliance (RDA) in Australia: <https://restorationdecadealliance.org/>. The RDA is supporting the [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/) that “aims to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean”.

**UN Resolution on ocean biodiversity**: https://www.un.org/bbnj/

In March, UN member states signed the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdictions treaty (High Seas treaty), but its framework has been under discussion for almost 20 years. Ministers Wong and Plibersek issued a media release explaining that this treaty provides the legal basis for the 30% land x 30% sea target by 2030, adopted in the **UN Convention on Biological Diversity** in December 2022.



**Australian commentators:** [The real challenge for protection? Management](https://theconversation.com/protecting-30-of-australias-land-and-sea-by-2030-sounds-great-but-its-not-what-it-seems-187435)**.**

* + Pew Trusts reported on the momentum building to halt commencement of [seabed mining in international waters](https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2022/12/08/momentum-builds-to-halt-the-commencement-of-seabed-mining-in-international-waters).
  + [The Australia Institute Tasmania](https://australiainstitute.org.au/event/tasmanian-ocean-summit-2022/) convened an Ocean Summit, November 2022– from “global to local, for the ocean we want”, giving the [downloadable program](https://australiainstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Tasmanian-Ocean-Summit-Program_final.pdf).

**IPCC AR6 Synthesis** **Report Climate Change 2023**

<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-cycle/>

The Report itself gives “headline statements” which are their over-arching conclusions that, taken together, provide a full narrative. It is an easy document to read. Here’s two extracts, with the first B1 illustrating the style of referencing the supporting evidence for the statement, and B2 a useful takeout message:

“B1 - Deep, rapid, and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions would lead to a discernible slowdown in global warming within around two decades, and also to discernible changes in atmospheric composition within a few years (*high confidence*). {Cross-Section Boxes 1 and 2, 3.1, 3.3, Table 3.1, Figure 3.1, 4.3} (Figure SPM.2, Box SPM.1)

B2. Risks and projected adverse impacts and related losses and damages from climate change escalate with **every increment** of global warming (*very high confidence*). “

Media coverage was extensive - for example, the [*Guardian* picked up the IPCC report’s warning for urgent action](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/mar/20/ipcc-climate-crisis-report-delivers-final-warning-on-15c)*.* The ABC reported in March the [Pushback from Australian business groups.](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-03-20/climate-deal-greens-government-business-groups-deal/102117824)

In the Senate, Sen David Pocock gave a profound 2-minute speech calling for stronger action, heard throughout the Parliament from social media:

<https://twitter.com/i/status/1639130169767247874>

The gravity of the message generated [The Conversation’s](https://theconversation.com/how-to-talk-to-your-family-and-friends-about-the-new-ipcc-report-five-tips-from-climate-change-communication-research-202306) “communication advisory” with tips on how to talk to your family and friends about the new IPCC Report, the fifth tip being “explore actions together”.

[Ketan Joshi *Crikey*](https://www.crikey.com.au/2023/03/27/saul-griffith-quarterly-essay-electrification/):

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*This essay differs largely from simplistic technocratic thinking like former chief scientist Alan Finkel who, in promoting a*[*previous Quarterly Essay*](https://ketanjoshi.co/2021/06/27/resistance-is-everywhere-a-response-to-alan-finkel/)*, argued against behaviour shifts like cycling and vegetarianism.* [Griffith comments on the absurdity of riding a bicycle next to an electric vehicle the size of a tank].

*Griffith’s complex, community-focused plea for a justice-driven electrification pathway puts him far closer to climate writer Rebecca Solnit, who recently argued for*[*a “new kind” of abundance*](https://www.thealternative.org.uk/dailyalternative/2023/3/5/rebecca-solnit-interview)*: “What if we see all the ways our lives are poor now — poor in hope, poor in social solidarity, poor in mental and emotional well-being and confidence in the future, poor in social connectedness, poor in relationship to nature.” Solnit describes abundance not in the current language of excess, inefficiency and over-consumption, but one in which our lived experiences are cured of the injustices that dominate the societies of countries like Australia.*

The **United Nations General Assembly** has adopted a resolution proposed by **Vanuatu, on behalf of six** South Pacific island states, to seek an opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on what legal obligations nations are under to protect climate systems and people affected by climate change. Vanuatu is suffering a continuing climate emergency, having experienced two major cyclones within four months. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/3/29/un-agrees-on-role-for-intl-court-of-justice-in-climate-change>

## On Australian policy development

Restoration Decade Alliance’s (RDA’s) submission on the **Nature Repair Market exposure draft bill** has been appreciated by environment groups.

On 30 March, the Senate referred the Nature Repair Market Bill 2023 and the Nature Repair Market (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2023 to its [Environment and Communications Legislation Committee for inquiry](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment_and_Communications). The public is invited to make a submission to this inquiry by **1 June 2023**.  The Committee’s report back to the Senate is due to be submitted by 1 August 2023.

Related to the Government’s 30x30 (Targets 1 and 2) goals - The Australian Government is developing a framework to guide recognition of consultation on **other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)** in Australia. OECMs were introduced in Aichi Target 11 in 2011 – 2020 and the definition, IUCN guidance, and site level methodology are more recent. Numbers of OECMs are still quite small (1000 globally) but Canada, the European Union, South Africa, and Colombia are all actively considering / recognising OECMs.

The Department of Climate Change Energy Environment & Water (DCCEEW)has issuedtheir [consultation paper](https://consult.dcceew.gov.au/consult-draft-principles-for-oecms-in-australia) on the draft principles to guide the recognition of (voluntary) OECMS in Australia. A second round of consultation will consider a draft national framework and a draft assessment tool.  Concerns include that these could take attention away from new restoration required and be 'too-easy' a device for meeting the targets. **Submissions are due on 21 April, to make a written submission:** <https://consult.dcceew.gov.au/consult-draft-principles-for-oecms-in-australia>

Some more food for thought:

* **Watch 4min ABC video, 29 March:** [Federal Government proposes certificate scheme to promote biodiversity](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-03-29/federal-govt-proposes-certificate-scheme-to/102159864) when Dr Evans described the proposed legislation as being not fit-for-purpose and likely to exacerbate nature loss.
* **Listen:** [ABC Radio National: “Can the market save the environment?”](https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/lifematters/can-the-market-save-the-environment/102180502) 4 April 2023.

“Do environmental markets really work - and if not, why are they so popular?” A discussion between

**Polly Hemming**, Director of Climate and Energy program, The Australia Institute and **Dr Megan Evans**, Senior Lecturer, Public Sector Management. The [submissions listed](https://consult.dcceew.gov.au/nature-repair-market-exposure-draft/new-survey/list) includes the RDA’s, Polly’s and Megan’s.

In the ABC RN program, Megan mentions a new book by American Professor Robert Fletcher, *Flailing Forward; the rise and fall of neoliberal conservatism.*

Timely then to pick-up a 2021 book Pierre Charbonnier’s [*Affluence and Freedom: an environmental history of political ideas*](https://www.politybooks.com/bookdetail?book_slug=affluence-and-freedom-an-environmental-history-of-political-ideas--9781509543717). Charbonnier shows that all political ideas are informed by a certain conception of our relationship to the Earth and to our environment – ‘a conceptual a priori to economic thought’ – whether the relationship between ideas for abundance and growth and nature’s finitude are addressed, ignored or sought to be transcended.

[*https://rgs-ibg.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/tran.12434*](https://rgs-ibg.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/tran.12434)

* **Read “**[The business of biodiversity - What is needed for biodiversity markets to work](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/emr.12573)”.*Viewpoint* in *Ecological Management and Restoration* by David Lindenmayer, Ben C.Scheele, Michelle Young, Michael Vardon.
* **Indigenous Peoples and colonialism**
  + *Stanford Social Innovation Review* Spring 2023 “The Problem with Carbon Offsets” by [Roshan Krishnan](https://ssir.org/bios/roshan_krishnan), [Sofia Jarrin Hidalgo](https://ssir.org/bios/sofia_jarrin_hidalgo) & [Marianna Fuchs](https://ssir.org/bios/marianna_fuchs) who wrote: “Carbon offset programs enable affluent states and corporations to greenwash and pose serious threats to Indigenous peoples’ rights. Consider the case of the LEAF Coalition’s partnership with Ecuador.”
  + The broad problem of colonialism, and closer to home Papua New Guinea: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-02-13/carbon-colonialism/101968870> and **watch** ABC 4 Corners [Carbon trade exposed](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7x4TWazWJg) or on iView.
* **Biodiversity offsetting policy** seems to **wax and wane**, now waxing again in Australia at a national level. The spatial scale, both geographic and jurisdictional is evident for integrity. Some insight from a 2021 paper published in the [Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers](https://rgs-ibg.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/tran.12434): “Neoliberal policy refugia: The death and life of biodiversity offsetting in the European Union and its member states”.

**The National Reconstruction Fund** – provision to exclude money for native forest logging. A useful summary 15 April 2023 from [ClaytonUtz lawyers](https://www.claytonutz.com/knowledge/2023/april/15-billion-national-reconstruction-fund-what-you-need-to-know), including: “The Greens negotiated an amendment to ensure the Fund would not be able to finance the extraction of coal or gas, construction of gas pipelines or logging in native forests”.

Under the **Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act***, **the** [**water trigger**](https://envirojustice.org.au/blog/mediareleases/federal-government-pulls-water-trigger-over-controversial-plan-to-flood-victorian-open-cut-coal-mine/) is being applied to mine rehabilitation, following calls by [Environment Justice Australia](https://envirojustice.org.au/blog/mediareleases/federal-government-pulls-water-trigger-over-controversial-plan-to-flood-victorian-open-cut-coal-mine/) for the Minister’s close scrutiny of the plan to rehabilitate Hazelwood coal mine as ‘pit lakes’. This sets an important precedent as coal power stations close across the country in coming years.

**Feral horses in the Australian Alps –** [**impacts and management**](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment_and_Communications/FeralHorses47)

Senator David Pocock (ACT) initiated a national inquiry following government survey data of more than 20,000 feral horses in the Victorian Alps and

Kosciuszko National Parks. In Kosciuszko there has been a more than 30 per cent jump in numbers over the past two years. A range of experts including Professor Don Driscoll at Deakin University, Professor David Watson at Charles Sturt University and the Invasive Species Council have documented and raised serious concerns about the adverse impacts on biodiversity from the high

Senator Pocock said:

* “Managing feral horse populations is a difficult and often emotionally-charged issue; the Senate inquiry will provide an opportunity to take a calm, evidence-based look at the challenge.
* “We are already grappling with chronic biodiversity loss and species extinction. It’s important that we face this challenge head on, in a constructive, considered way that prioritises the long-term ecological health of these ecosystems.
* “This inquiry is an opportunity to take a good look at the ecological health of the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves. It’s also a chance to examine the powers and responsibilities of the Commonwealth, States, and Territories as well as our international obligations.”

The Environment and Communications References Committee is inviting submissions with an extended due date **28 April 2023**.

Its terms of reference to be addressed are here:

<https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment_and_Communications/FeralHorses47>

**Queensland**

Land clearing for Andrew Forrest’s windfarm faces headwinds as Apple investor pulls out – [Guardian, 5 April 2023](https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/apr/05/apple-pulls-out-of-andrew-forrest-backed-windfarm-at-centre-of-threatened-species-controversy?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other).

**NSW**

Significant election of Labor and progressive Independents.

Privatisation of urban water stopped; raising of Warragamba Wall stopped. After the fish kills on the Barka-Darling, perhaps a review of “WaterNSW”? Potential to protect public native forests from logging; a stop to former government’s use of public [Cumberland Plain land as offsets](https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/feb/23/just-a-disgrace-experts-condemn-nsw-use-of-public-land-to-offset-huge-housing-expansion?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Other) for housing developments.

**Feedback requested to NSW Government!** The five yearly statutory review of the ***Biodiversity Conservation Act*** 2016 – feedback **due by 21 April** (or seek an extension) concurrently with a review of

**native vegetation provisions** of the **Local Land Services Act** 2013 is being led by Local Land Services: <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/biodiversity/overview-of-biodiversity-reform/statutory-review-of-the-biodiversity-conservation-act-2016?s=09>

**Air pollution** again bad as [Sydney region was brought into news](https://www.google.com/search?q=Air+pollution+in+NSW+causes+603+premature+deaths+and+costs+%244.8bn+a+year%2C+study+finds&rlz=1C1CHZL_enAU823AU823&oq=Air+pollution+in+NSW+causes+603+premature+deaths+and+costs+%244.8bn+a+year%2C+study+finds&aqs=chrome..69i57j69i60l2.5184j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8) by Nature Conservation Council. While 10% households are using wood heaters, these emissions are the lead culprit causing premature human deaths, high costs ($4.8bn pa). Motor vehicle exhaust (and coal burning) were other pollutants to the Sydney air shed; these pollutants speed up [osteoporosis](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/mar/10/air-pollution-speeds-up-osteoporosis-postmenopausal-women#:~:text=A%20study%20has%20concluded%20that,with%20the%20air%20they%20breathed.), such that costs of pollutant effects far outstrip the effects of collisions on (human) deaths and injuries. The effects on the environment were not mentioned. In Victoria, [Environment Justice Australia](https://envirojustice.org.au/latest/media/) is acting for community groups on a number of air pollution, mainly coal-related, cases.

**Three stories of technology for ecological protection/restoration**

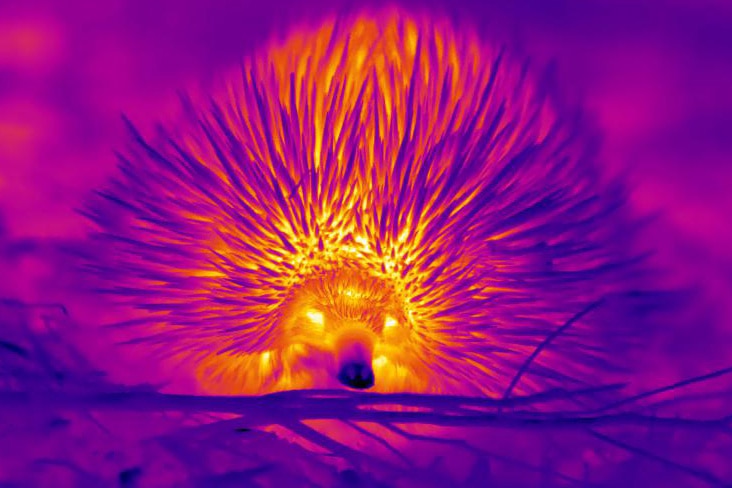
1. **Methane: Global Warming Potential 85x CO2**

* Mapping the invisible – US Environment Defense Fund and Google

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TrE2x6zURo>

* On **methane in Australia**, thanks to Tim Buckley for Climate Energy Finance funding media release of [Ian Lowe’s new report for Lock the Gate](https://www.lockthegate.org.au/methane_from_fossil_fuels_is_elephant_in_room_in_safeguard_mechanism) on methane. Tim explained: “The only credible path to emissions reduction under the mechanism is responsibly accounting for the short term impacts of methane, requiring fossil fuel facilities to **mandatorily avoid methane emissions**, and restricting new fossil fuel entrants to the safeguard scheme.”
* **Santos’ Climate Report 2022** refers to its methane loss rate being low from operational facilities. The cumulative impacts of methane emissions, however, such as leaks from extensive network of gas pipelines (exempted by the former NSW Premier from environmental public review), are an ongoing concern and to the Gomeroi peoples, e.g. “A few examples to date include multiple vents at Santos’ Pilliga exploration field which [North West Protection Advocacy](https://nwprotectionadvocacy.com/santos-gets-pilliga-gas-pipeline-underway-world-watches-tourdownunder/) reported to the NSW Environment Protection Authority that were subsequently repaired, but had been leaking for an unknown duration of time.”

1. **Satellite imagery by** [**researchers (and good radio and print journalism**](https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/apr/11/menindee-mass-fish-kill-satellite-images-researchers-blackwater-release-darling-baaka-river-australia)**) reveal cause of** massive fish kills in the Barka-Darling River at Menindee, aggravated repeat of the February kills, despite warnings to “WaterNSW” - WaterNSW is a State-Owned Corporation established under the Water NSW Act 2014 and operates under an Operating Licence.
2. Thermal vision was used to show how echidnas in the wild blow bubbles to exchange heat with their environment – allowing non-contact observation, [Curtin University researchers reported to the ABC.](https://www.curtin.edu.au/news/media-release/study-finds-blowing-bubbles-among-echidnas-tricks-to-beat-the-heat/)



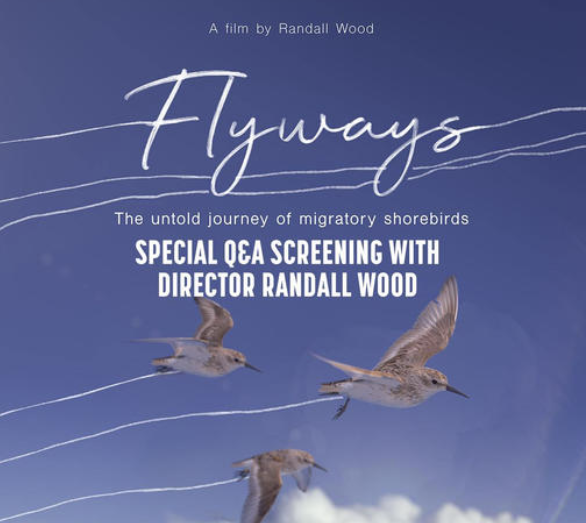
***Australian Deserts*: Ecology and Landscapes –** [**ABC RN podcast author**](https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/saturdayextra/australian-desert/101756178)

Appearance of the this fine book by ecologist Dr Steve Morton with photography by Mike Gillam made a good story [early this year on ABC news](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-01-17/are-australias-deserts-really-deserts-outback-northern-territory/101794956). It’s “not the Sahara’, Dr Morton says, observing that for tens of thousands of years, Australia's Indigenous people have lived and thrived across these dry areas. He adds: "[I have such] humility at the extraordinary cosmology that Aboriginal people developed to explain the formation and the functioning of the country that they belonged to."

**Special films**

***The Giants*** – 2023 – Tarkine, biopic Bob Brown with extraordinary photography of Huon pines’ waterflows and fungal communities, voices include David Lindenmayer and Tom May… screening Dendy, Ritz …

***Flyways*** (90 min) 2023 – migratory shorebirds, Randall Wood – Using nanotechnology and global tracking from the International Space Station, we follow migratory shorebirds (endurance athletes) on ancient flyways of their/our planet and collaborations to protect… Cremorne Orpheum and elsewhere.

A group of white mushrooms

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