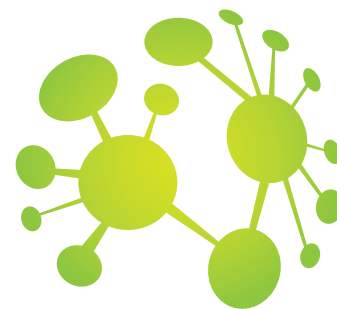


# TOTAL ENVIRONMENT NEWS



2013 / ISSUE 2

for the future

## In defence of container deposits



The CD campaign is one of the biggest in TEC's 40 year history. There have been at least two previous attempts on CD by local government and community groups in that time until finally the Northern Territory succeeded, in spite of a successful court challenge by Coca Cola. But Coke and its industry allies

continue to fight – as we must – with a national decision possible in a month's time. In the meantime the costs and benefits of a container deposit can appear hazy to decision makers, with claims and counter claims and theoretical assumptions.

Take the Australian Food and Grocery Council (AFGC) argument that a CDS will increase the cost of living. When you look at the assumptions as well as the actual experience in South Australia and the Northern Territory which have a CDS – significant exaggeration is in play.

A Senate Inquiry into the two state schemes late year unanimously reported that the AFGC research was based on 'weak methodology and poor data'. For example the Council assumed the 10cent deposit would not be redeemed by any consumers (when 80% redemption is common) and that all beverage prices will rise by 20cents (when this didn't occur in the Territory or SA).

Also these two schemes are particularly inefficient and old style and a national CDS can operate on more modern, efficient, convenient and low cost basis. The result is no extra charge on top of the refundable deposit. As for those

who don't individually redeem they can donate to a charity or the local school; and the litterers are paying for collection by others.

Critics like to throw big numbers around but when you break these down – they are not scary. In 2011 environment ministers received a CBA which assessed the proposal by the Boomerang Alliance to cost \$1.4b. Big number – but it's over 20 years. Break it down and that's \$70m a year or \$3 per person a year. This particular CBA is now being reviewed by ministers because it overstated the costs and understated the benefits.

Naturally a new system requires investment – but the essential question is – is it worth it and is it sustainable? Several international companies recently visited Australia and committed to invest \$400-500m in a national CDS generating 3,500 jobs. Correct me if I'm wrong but I thought Australia needed more investment in its manufacturing, environmental technology and services sectors.

The benefits of a modern CDS are multiple and cannot be achieved by any other alternative. They include – a doubling in recycling; network of drive through recycling centres for range of products servicing households and commercial sector; growing the recycling chain and local processing; and improved beverage and retailer marketing.

A modern CDS lifts Australia's recycling and anti-litter efforts to a new sustainable level. Bear in mind we have a major problem with beverage containers with 8billion a year being landfilled or littered every year. All the other options

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on the table require industry or government funding – they are piecemeal and under risk of being withdrawn as budgets tighten or priorities change.

Premier Napthine of Victoria recently drew attention to the contrast between South Australian litter and the rest of the nation. It does work and the CSIRO which has been mapping plastic debris reported there is far less plastic bottle litter coming off SA shores.

You also have to be careful about state comparisons. The National Litter Index from which some critics draw comfort has a serious problem. It compares items – a cigarette butt is counted as equal to a plastic drink bottle which is contributing to the plague of plastic that is killing seabirds and other marine mammals.

Councils will benefit financially from a CDS. This has been affirmed in the last five government initiated reports on CDS. The latest study in Victoria did not allocate CDS-derived kerbside collection savings to its key results and found that some metro councils could lose out at about 98cents per household (but not rural councils). But if you

include collection and other savings they will benefit by \$4.59m a year.

It all depends on what you include in your calculation of costs and benefits. If you take a broad picture – as any sensible policy maker should – then CDS is a winner. Such a judgment is found in the Northern Territory. Their cash for containers scheme was brought in by an ALP government and has been staunchly defended by the now CLP government.

Why? Because the majority of the community see its worth on social, environmental and economic grounds. Once you pass by the so-called costs and distorted studies – you have enduring community support. Newpolls consistently find over 80% of the Australians want a CDS.

And I can assure Premiers, MPs and conservative newspaper columnists alike – our campaign is not going to stop.

**Jeff Angel, Executive Director**

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## Sydney's Water and Mining Woes Worsen

*Sydney's water catchment is going down the gurgler, reports TEC's natural areas campaigner, **Dave Burgess***

In the wake of several inconsistent mining approvals by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure, TEC held a well-attended forum at Thirroul Library to discuss the issue of mining in water supply catchments. Speaking at the event were the Department's Director of Mining and Industry, David Kitto; Environmental Scientist and upland swamp expert Dr Ann Young; and myself.

Mining in water catchments has been a hot topic since Barry O'Farrell's "no ifs, no buts" announcement that he would prevent it before the last NSW Election in 2011. Since winning Government, however, and making the promising start of upgrading the imminently threatened Dharawal State Conservation Area to National Park status, the situation has gone from bad to worse. Our water catchments face serious challenges. Decision making has lacked policy direction and transparency and the most critical areas were left out of Strategic Regional Land Use plans. Since then further environmental damage has occurred.

The forum heard that the Gujarat NRE No.1 mine plans to expand its footprint tenfold under and around Cataract

Dam using mining practices not yet tested in NSW. Significant upland swamps are under threat. It also learnt that the proposed Wallarah 2 mine in the Central Coast's water supply catchment was back on the table despite being vigorously opposed by the Coalition while in

opposition. The department pointed out that each proposal would be considered on its merits, including weighing up economic benefits against environmental damage.

However in a meeting with TEC the department was

embarrassed that mining companies like BHPBilliton play the consent process to their advantage by leaving applications to the last moment and threatening job losses. The officials are now working on an overall policy to protect upland swamps and assess longwall mining impacts in NSW.

This may be progress but is a far cry from what was promised by the Premier prior to winning office. TEC will continue campaigning to ensure that the water supply areas servicing over 5 million people are protected from coal industry expansion.

**“Decision making has lacked policy direction and transparency”**

# Tossers, Butt Busters and Bottle Stoppers Unite!

*TEC's ever-busy waste campaigner, Lisa Wriley, surveys the tide of people-power pushing back the tsunami of plastic rubbishing our rivers and beaches*



Have you heard of the Cooks River Bottle Tossers? They are a group of women who meet early on a Sunday morning once a month in a spot along the Cooks River to toss bottles from the bank of the river up to the path where people can see them. Their aim is to shock people into phoning the local council and writing to the Premier to support the 10c refund solution. Kate Maclean, a founding Bottle Tosser, reported that this month they tossed 1570 bottles (over two mornings)!

Another proactive group called the Responsible Runners, started in Bondi by Justin Bonsey, now has meetings on Sunday afternoons in eight locations (Bondi, Manly, Bronte, Coogee, Balmoral, Newcastle, Whitsundays (QLD) and Horseshoe Bay (SA)). They run and spend 30 minutes picking up rubbish, which they document and add to the data used by the Australian Marine Debris Initiative. They also put photos on facebook and meet with local MP's.

"Besides cigarette butts, bottles and cans are the major constants across beaches, waterways and streets – they are simply everywhere," said Justin in a recent media release.

Lane Cove Sustainability Action group have gone above and beyond for the campaign by staging their own local actions such as letter-writing stalls, and banner-making groups. Most notably, Sjirk Bangma, has led a team to create a giant Coke bottle with campaign messages ("Coca Cola Stop Trashing Australia") on it - which he brings on a car trailer to key events

- like the Federal court Action, Martin Place Kicking the Can Launch, Bondi Beach and Shelly Beach.

These are just some of the groups around the country giving time and energy to the campaign for a 10c refundable deposit on bottles and cans.

The Boomerang Alliance has been extremely active too. The Kicking the Can project comprised 16 days of events in Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle spreading the campaign message and maximising local and national media coverage. We had a great team running Kicking the Can challenges, clean ups and exposing

**"The pointy end of the campaign is upon us"**

some of the worst litter hotspots in our communities.

TEC's two Coastal Campaign kits have also been travelling around the coast, one clockwise, the other anti-clockwise, having started in Darwin last September. One is now in Perth, the other in Newcastle, with surf-lifesavers, Girl Guides, marine scientists and school groups among their caretakers. Each caretaker has organised group photos with the 10m banner which reads "10c SOLUTION TO MARINE POLLUTION" and collected messages of support in the journal that will be presented to Tony Burke, the Federal Environment Minister.

At a political level all Australian governments have agreed to reinstate the NT Cash for Containers legislation by granting it a permanent exemption from the Mutual Recognition Act that Coca Cola, Schweppes and Lion used to challenge its validity. The Victorian Premier has made a public statement in support of a national Container Deposit System and the Tasmanian Parliament has restated its willingness to look at a state based system.

Greenpeace also attempted to run a TV advertisement about Coca Cola's plastic pollution and their opposition to the 10c refund solution, during the Friday night football – only to be rejected by Channel 9, then 7 and even SBS as 'inappropriate' and not 'commercially prudent'. Social media activity has indicated that thousands of people are outraged and frustrated about the broadcasters' response to this ad, which has attracted over 1.3million views on Youtube.

The pointy end of the campaign is upon us with a decision potentially in July. It is time to call your local Member of Parliament again, express your support for a Container Deposit System and ask if you can meet with them. We can send you some background information or you can simply take a look on [www.boomerangalliance.org.au](http://www.boomerangalliance.org.au).

Keep up with the latest campaign news on facebook: cash for containers.

**Bev**



# TONY ABBOTT'S SOIL MAGIC

*TEC's energy market advocate, Mark Byrne, sorts the pay dirt from the top soil in this nifty guide to carbon sequestration and a renewable future*

If the pundits and soothsayers have their way, we will have a federal government on 15 September whose 'blood pledge' is to legislate the carbon price away. Assuming that either on that day or after a subsequent double dissolution election, the Coalition is able to make good on this promise - what impact will this have on the energy sector - and in particular, on electricity prices?

After all, skyrocketing electricity bills have been a big political issue over the past year. The Coalition has made merry with the added (albeit mostly compensated) impost of the carbon price on bills, while the government has stressed that putting a price on carbon and then creating a market for emissions permits - is likely to be the cheapest and most effective way to reduce emissions - especially alongside the supposedly bipartisan Renewable Energy Target of 45,000 gigawatt hours per year by 2020. (This was originally projected to be about 20 per cent of total generation in 2020, but with falling demand in recent years it's likely to be more like 25 per cent.)

Also supposedly bipartisan is the modest goal of reducing Australia's national greenhouse emissions by 5 per cent on 2000 levels by 2020. Nevertheless this does not mean our domestic emissions will be any less, as we can buy up to half of the necessary permits from cheaper offshore sources.

The Coalition intends to reduce emissions not by taxing big polluters, but by spending \$3.2 billion per year of taxpayers' money over 4 years on an Emissions Reduction Fund that is supposed to create emissions reductions of 140 million tonnes of carbon abatement every year. More than half of this money is to be spent on purchasing abatement from "soil carbon" for less than \$10 a tonne.

Agricultural scientists reckon soil sequestration is more likely to cost around \$30 per tonne, and the readiness of such a program to scale up to millions of tonnes every year is

seriously in question. No-one is against using carbon to help restore our heavily degraded soils, but farmers are by no means united in their willingness or ability to sequester, measure and sell their carbon for a

**“- the whole policy is a grab-bag of shiny goodies hand-picked by people with little real understanding”**

mere \$10 per hectare. It has never been done on a large scale anywhere in the world, and the recently published results of a three year CSIRO found no clear evidence that new farming techniques resulted in higher soil carbon sequestration.

Then there is the measurement issue. Soil carbon can vary greatly even in small areas of the same farm, and accurate measurement can be time consuming and expensive. There is still no methodology for soil carbon sequestration under the Carbon Farming Initiative (which the Coalition has pledged to keep) - so how it will be measured is anyone's guess. Making it the centerpiece of a nation's greenhouse abatement strategy is a bold — or reckless — move.

As for the rest of the money, the

**“- the Coalition intends to 'pick winners' by giving handouts to big polluters”**

Coalition intends to 'pick winners' by giving handouts to big polluters like Victoria's brown coal power stations to close down, or at least clean up their act a bit. Yes, that other silver bullet, carbon capture and storage, will be back on the agenda, notwithstanding the coal industry's spin and lack of success to date.

Meanwhile, the chances of installing 45,000 GWh of renewable energy by 2020 have been made slimmer by the opposition of the NSW and Victorian

governments to wind farms.

And what of electricity prices? Sure, there will be a short-term reduction as the wholesale price goes down. But the biggest cause of rising prices has been over-investment in poles and wires, and the Coalition shows no signs of a creative solution - even though energy market managers admit the scale of the problem.

The bigger problem is, as economists like Stern and Garnaut have pointed out, that the sooner you tackle a major structural problem like climate change mitigation, the cheaper it is over the long term. A 2011 report by SKM/MMA for the Investor Group on Climate Change found that delaying the introduction of a carbon price would, in the words of The Australia Institute, "push up the price of electricity and reduce the competitiveness of the same businesses the Coalition says it is so concerned with."

There are some positive elements to the Coalition's Direct Action policy, including funding for another 1 million 'solar homes' by 2020. But with the prices of panels plummeting, the solar industry doesn't need more handouts. It needs governments to either unblock some of the regulatory barriers and gaps (like the absence of feed-in tariffs in NSW) or to get out of the way and just provide long term policy certainty — which would be a novelty in the renewable energy sector in Australia.

Likewise, what is the point of promising to plant 20 million trees in 'available public spaces' without legislation strong enough to prevent broadscale land clearing, which can account for much larger losses in tree cover?

The whole policy smacks of a grab-bag of shiny goodies decorating a shallow approach. The Coalition may be priming us for the sugar hit of a few bucks of cheaper electricity for a few years at the expense of sensible public policy for the future of Australia and the world.

# One Water Win

TEC's urban water campaigner, **Leigh Martin** has some good news for a change

There has been a breakthrough for sustainable water management with the rejection of new dams as water supply options for the Lower Hunter region.

The NSW government recently released a short list of supply and demand options to be considered for inclusion in the Lower Hunter Water Plan over the medium to long term. Crucially neither Tillegra Dam nor a proposed "Native Dog Creek Dam" (located only 700 metres away from the original Tillegra site with a capacity up to 60% that of the Tillegra Dam) have been included in the list of options.

This marks a major victory for the long-running campaign to protect the Williams River. Despite the rejection of Tillegra Dam on planning grounds in November 2010, Hunter Water had continued to push for the Native Dog Creek Dam to be included in water supply options for the region. Significantly, demand forecasts upon which

Hunter Water had based its case for a new dam have been found to be excessive. Demand growth is lower than predicted and no major supply augmentation is required in the short to medium term. These findings vindicate those who campaigned against a new dam, arguing demand projections were wildly inflated.

**"The findings vindicate those who campaigned against a new dam"**

The rejection of any new dams will prevent serious environmental damage to the Williams River and RAMSAR listed wetlands in the Hunter River estuary. It will also

prevent needless price increases for Hunter Water customers.

Work on the Lower Hunter Water Plan is continuing with completion due in early 2014. TEC is campaigning to ensure that sustainable options such as demand management and recycling are at the forefront of the plan.

## Building Sustainable Economies

*Green Capital is being reimagined – we've updated our look, our audience, our research focus and our core engagements. We have a fresh and talented new team and an exciting new vision for the program. We're building a movement for change by making sustainable economics exciting and accessible.*

### The new team



**Andrew Tovey**  
**Projects & Events Manager**

"Sydney is a vibrant and innovative city full of talented, motivated and creative people. It's so exciting to be working with them and helping them to create the changes that they want to see in their industries."



**Sylvia Baumgartner**  
**Marketing & Events Manager**

"Sydney is full of creative individuals who want to make change happen. For me it's about communicating the right messages and connecting with the right people to build a vibrant and effective network."

You might be an architect who is passionate about reducing waste in the construction industry or creating greener public spaces. You might be in finance and feel inspired to put money to work for social and environmental gain. Or you might simply want to get your organisation committing to 100% recycled paper. Whatever your passion, the Green Capital Network is a space to come together, share ideas and collaborate - an interactive Network of engaged, empowered, well-equipped and active individuals.

Green Capital's aim is to help professional people working within and across multiple industries to build a brighter and more environmentally sustainable economic future. We believe that diversity, cross-industry collaboration and a people-centred approach are key to systemic economic change. We will use events,

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social media, high quality IP, cutting edge ideas and a culture of collaborative innovation to leverage real change in Australian organisations, industries and the economy.

Holding all of this together is our major new project, Sustainable Economic Frontiers. Globally, and in

Australia, a broad diversity of discourses is creating a bold green economic vision for the future based upon innovation, collaboration and optimism. Diversity is a key strength as multiple complementary frontiers open up. Green Capital's Sustainable Economic Frontiers project will map and make sense of this exciting new

landscape. We will provide a space for cutting edge debate, generate timely and engaging publications and tools and establish ourselves as a nationwide platform for innovation and action.

**Check out our new website - [www.greencapital.org.au](http://www.greencapital.org.au)**

## Time to explore *The Phoenix Effect*

By *Murray Hogarth, Senior Adviser, Green Capital*

The first major event for the new-look, new-mission Green Capital business sustainability program is about fundamental change with big implications for the economy, society and the environment.

We've dubbed it *The Phoenix Effect*. This rise of new economic frontiers out of the fires of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, and its economically destructive aftermath, and also the decline of traditional soft-side corporate social responsibility, is integral to Green Capital refocusing on Building Sustainable Economies.

With anchor funding from The Pratt Foundation, and with the active support of leading sustainability advisory firm Banarra, the new Green Capital has begun our two-year Sustainable Economic Frontiers project to track, analyse and interpret the transformation process now gathering pace around the world.

A new Green Capital Discussion Paper, also titled *The Phoenix Effect*, has been released. This paper maps the emerging forces of change in greater detail, but in brief they include:

- New economic models
- Changing capitalism itself
- Rethinking environmentalism
- Bottom up community movements
- Clean and smart technology
- Market-based solutions
- Apocalyptic visions of forced change

While the forces of change we are exploring are global, Green Capital will be approaching this work from a distinctly Australian perspective, including a particular focus on the state economy of NSW, the regional economy of Greater Sydney, and the civic economy of the City of Sydney.

Originally this new two-year initiative was to be called The Australian Green Economy Project; however, it quickly became apparent to our team that the menu of sustainable economy change possibilities that is taking shape is much

broader than 'green' alone.

Articulating how change will unfold in the decades ahead is now a dynamic field for thought-leaders and policy-makers alike. What kind of dominant economic model, or models will rise in the face of a challenging trinity of mounting economic, social and environmental pressures on the world's economies, from local to global?

For businesses, and also for governments and civil society organisations, it is no longer enough to publish a sustainability report, or to bolt on a policy or position with a three-letter acronym like CSR (corporate social responsibility), ESD (environmentally sustainable development), TBL (triple bottom line), ESG (environmental social governance), or the latest manifestation now gaining traction with Australian and international business, CSV (creating shared value).

These discussions were once niche, and when Green Capital started back in 2002, a common

business view was that the environmental and social change agendas were simply the enemies of the capitalist system. In 2013 and beyond, however, they may be its salvation, hence *The Phoenix Effect*.

It is now clear to many in the economic mainstream – from the likes of the IMF and the OECD, to the International Energy Agency and the World Economic Forum - that the case for sweeping change is compelling. We have a global economy that has moved from a confident assumption of resource abundance in the 20th century, to a growing fear in the 21st century that key resources like oil, water and food are in fact constrained, and that there really are limits to growth.

Proof points that real change is building are emerging. Look no further than declining demand for electricity in a still growing Australian economy, a million solar PV systems on Australian rooftops, the rise of the green building sector and the growing pressure on investors to heed the dangers of the 'carbon bubble'.

It's time to understand *The Phoenix Effect*, and then to work out how to act on it.

**“This rise of new economic frontiers out of the fires of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis...”**

# WASTE NOT GOES GLOBAL

TEC's award winning documentary film about resource efficiency and the beauty of garbage is reaching audiences from Beijing to Istanbul, LA to St Jose, Barcelona to Dungog, reports communications director, **Ruth Hessey**.

When we scored the original grant from City of Sydney to make a short film about recycling, no one at TEC guessed how far Waste Not was going to travel.

It's been two years since the film was completed in time to make it into the Flickerfest International Film Festival. We were thrilled and surprised when it was Highly Commended by the judges, but that was only the

beginning winning Best Doc at the St Kilda Film Festival and Best Cinematography at WOW.

Waste Not has now been screened at over 25 international film festivals and just a few months ago Waste Not was translated into Chinese for the Asia Pacific market. Last year the World Bank toured the film round South America

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## TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION

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Yes, I want to help the environment campaign work of TEC.

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Please send me regular email updates to

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**The Administrator**

**Total Environment Centre Inc**

**Suite 2, 89 Jones Street Ultimo. 2007**

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**TEC and the environmental battle can be greatly assisted with your volunteer time and skills.**

If you can help, please return this coupon to:

Volunteers Coordinator,

**Total Environment Centre Inc**

**Suite 2, 89 Jones Street Ultimo. 2007**

I would like to volunteer to help TEC with:

Reception/support

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My previous work has been .....

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.....

My environmental interests are.....

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I am available (per week)  half day  one day

occasionally other .....

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## Consider a Bequest

Please remember TEC in your will. The Law Society of NSW recommends the following wording: "I bequeath the sum of \$..... to TOTAL ENVIRONMENT CENTRE Inc. for its general purposes and declare that the receipt of the Treasurer for the time being of Total Environment Centre Inc. shall be complete discharge to my executors in respect of any sum paid to Total Environment Centre Inc."

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# TOTAL ENVIRONMENT NEWS



**for the future**

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with subtitles in Spanish, and in Turkey, Waste Not screened with Turkish subtitles.

**New education website**

On June 14th TEC launched the interactive educational website created around Waste Not, which was funded by the Pratt and Myer Foundations through Documentary Australia Foundation.

The event took place at Sydney Girls High on its Marine and Green environment day and was attended by Professor David Booth (UTS), Professor Iain Suthers (UNSW), Councillor Mant from City of Sydney, Ian Kiernan AO, Chairman of Clean

## WASTE NOT



Up Australia and, Tim Silverwood from Take 3. TEC's waste campaigner Lisa Wriley brought Bev the Bottle who was joined by the school's bevy of bottles supporting TEC's Cash For Containers campaign.

"The website is timely given the imminent implementation of the Australian Curriculum in 2014, with sustainability as one of three cross-curricular priorities," said writer SGH principal Andrea Connell on the day.

**Log on! [www.wastenot.org.au](http://www.wastenot.org.au)**