

# CASPI: NEWS

## Climate Adaptation - Science and Policy Initiative

June 2007



### A Busy Climate

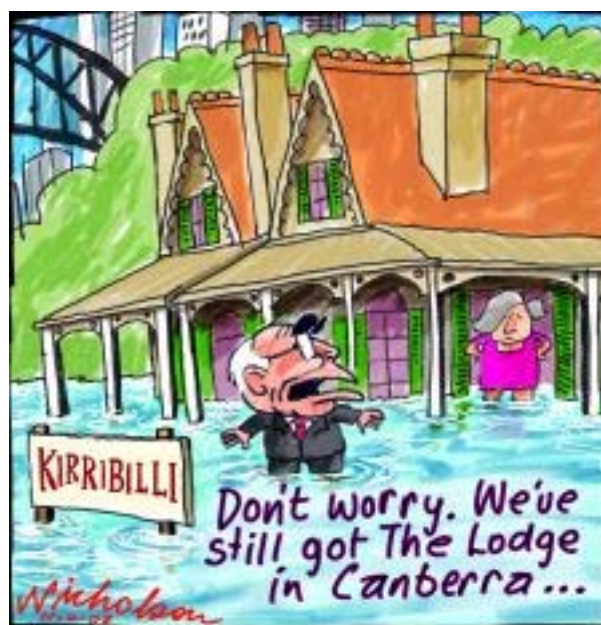
CASPI has continued to be busy. Our May newsletter 'went to press' during an exciting final week, with two important pieces of work completed:

#### EOI for DPC

On Monday 28<sup>th</sup> May Prof Jim Falk, Roger Bodman & Mike Waller attended a talk at Treasury to listen to an invitation for an Expression of Interest in a Princeton style wedges study for the Victorian State Government. This was to be a 10 week study to consider business-as-usual and alternate scenarios to achieve a 60% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions for the State by 2050. Due date: Thursday 31st 2pm. An intensive effort was made to get together an impressive case, based on a collaboration of researchers from across the University of Melbourne in partnership with Energy Strategies (for energy expertise), Heuris Partners (strategic advice) and Climate Risk (with an existing Monte Carlo wedge model).

#### Garnaut Review

On the same day the EOI was due, Prof Jim Falk and Dr Beth Webster joined with Dr Graeme Pearman (Monash), Prof Philip Adams (Monash) and Dr Penny Whetton (CSIRO) to present information on the range of climate change research capabilities located here in Victoria to Prof Ross Garnaut at a meeting convened by the Office of Climate Change in the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Prof Garnaut has been tasked by Federal Labour to produce an equivalent type of study to the Stern Review for Australia.



Courtesy: Nicholson ([www.nicholsoncartoons.com.au](http://www.nicholsoncartoons.com.au))

#### CASPI & APRU Progresses

A proposal for a climate research theme of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) World Research Institute has been accepted (initiated by Prof Jim Falk and carried forward by Prof Frank Larkins). The inaugural Climate Research Program (<http://www.apru.org/>) will be drawn from the 37 leading research universities across the Pacific Rim which form APRU, and will be jointly directed by Jim and Prof Lisa Schaffer, Executive Director of the UC Revelle Program on Climate Change and Policy at the SCRIPS Institute for Oceanography, The University of California at San Diego.

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### CASPI & the NCCA

At this stage there have been no formal requests for participation by the Commonwealth Government or further announcements in relation to the proposed National Centre for Climate Adaptation (NCCA). However, following the COAG announcement for this Centre, two processes are underway to connect the University of Melbourne into this opportunity:

#### Victorian Government

CASPI, with Professors John Mckenzie and Richard Roush, has successfully raised with the Victorian Government the desirability and feasibility of a bid for a significant part of the \$126 million allocated for the NCCA. Work on this is now being carried out by CASPI for DSE and the Department of Premier and Cabinet. This is taking the form of an Expression of Interest to present the climate adaptation research capabilities in the State, with the University of Melbourne, Monash University, RMIT University, CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research, the Bureau of Meteorology and four State departments all involved.

#### University Consortium

ANU, UNSW and Monash have announced the formation of a Climate Research Consortium for the purpose of seeking a role in the new Centre. Discussions are continuing about possibly partnering the University of Melbourne's climate research with this Consortium with the support of the Vice Chancellor. There was a meeting in early June to discuss Melbourne's addition to the existing tri-university structure (Jim Falk & David Karoly, Will Stefan, Amanda Lynch, and Andy Pittman). There was agreement to continue in this direction.

#### Complimentary Processes

These two processes are seen as complimentary rather than competing. It is hoped that, from the evolution of these initiatives, the University will achieve a significant involvement in the NCCA.

### CASPI Workshops

CASPI and the members of its steering committee initiated a series of workshops and discussions during May & June to assist in identifying key research questions to which it can make a significant contribution. The outcomes of these will also assist in developing an overall capability statement for input to the National Centre for Climate Adaptation as noted above.

- Biodiversity - The Natural Environment. Talks with Melbourne & Monash staff took place in May and a summary paper was produced, coordinated by Prof Ary Hoffman.
- The Built Environment - Urban Sustainability went ahead as planned on May 29th. Prof Nick Low has drafted a paper to record the outcomes.
- The Rural Landscape - Food and Water workshop did not eventuate. However some capability statements have been produced for this area: one from DPI and one from UniWater.
- Institutions and Policy - did not eventuate due to conflicting staff schedules.
- Energy - Efficiency/Alternatives/Renewables/Distributed systems. A paper on Sustainable Systems has been produced from Engineering (coordinated by Prof Ian Bishop and Prof Andrew Western). The Victorian Eco-Innovation Lab project is also working on this theme.
- A rural and regional health seminar is being organised for August 22nd by CASPI (Prof John Wiseman and Roger Bodman).

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### Other Workshops

#### Health Symposium

CASPI is also planning a symposium on "The Challenge of Climate Change for Health in Rural and Regional Victoria" for August 22nd. This is being financially supported with a \$10,000 grant from the Menzies Foundation. Speakers include the Minister for Health, the Honourable Bronwyn Pike, Professor David Karoly and Professor Steven Leeder.

#### Human Rights and Climate Change

The Human Rights Forum (Faculty of Law) will be holding an exploratory workshop on issues relating to climate change and human rights on Thursday 23 August at 4.00-5.30pm in Room 920 of the Melbourne Law School. Members of the University are invited to submit proposals for brief (5 minute) informal presentations on work that they are undertaking on issues relating to this theme. The aim of this exploratory workshop is to canvas the range of work that is currently being undertaken on climate change and human rights and discuss the issues that are raised by this topic. The workshop also aims to stimulate discussion on the way in which the human rights implications of climate change can be further explored. (contact details are on the CASPI website)

### Conference on Non-CO2 Greenhouse Gas Emissions - a report

Researchers at the University of Melbourne held a conference on the importance of soil based greenhouse gas emissions in Melbourne on 15 and 16 May this year. Drs Steve Livesley, Stefan Arndt and Richard Eckard from the Faculty of Land and Food Resources invited people to discuss the importance of greenhouse gas emissions from soils. 60 partici-

pants representing over 20 academic and research institutes attended, principally from Australia and New Zealand, but also from China and Germany.

Greenhouse gases are not only emitted by industry, cars or households. In addition to carbon dioxide, other greenhouse gases are emitted by soils as part of the natural cycling of nutrients and decomposition. These so called non-CO2 greenhouse gases are more potent than carbon dioxide with regards to global warming, and already make up one quarter of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions.

At the present time there is not much knowledge about the magnitude of these non-CO2 emissions, the processes that control them and the possible strategies to lower these emissions. "The conference indicated that we have made significant research progress in Australia and New Zealand in the last few years" says Dr Arndt. "Together with delegates from the Australian Greenhouse Office we were able to identify future research needs and to discuss appropriate strategies to lower these emissions in Australian and New Zealand landscapes."

A full report will appear in a special issue of the *Plant and Soil* journal later this year or early 2008.

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## Related Sites

ACSIS: [www.acsis.unimelb.edu.au](http://www.acsis.unimelb.edu.au)

VEIL: [www.ecoinnovationlab.com](http://www.ecoinnovationlab.com)  
[www.sustainablemelbourne.com](http://www.sustainablemelbourne.com)  
[www.sustainablecities.com](http://www.sustainablecities.com)



## Events

- \* 3 July - George Monbiot -What Australia Should do to Stop the Planet Burning.
- \* 3 July - Institute of Australian Geographers
- \* 22 Aug - The Challenge of Climate Change for Health in Rural & Regional Victoria - CASPI
- \* 23 Aug - Workshop on Human Rights and Climate Change - Law Faculty
- \* 19-23 September - Conference on Spatial Information Theory - COSIT

Details: [www.caspi.unimelb.edu.au](http://www.caspi.unimelb.edu.au)

Please forward any comments, suggestions, and information about related events to:

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