

## **Update from Jennifer Marohasy**

*19 October 2008*

Since my last update in September, the financial markets have crashed... "The Dow is down. Wall Street needs a bailout. But in the Washington area and across the country, there is still a bull market in environmental guilt", according to David A. Fahrenthold writing for the Washington Post. He explains that, "Sales of carbon offsets - whose buyers pay hard cash to make amends for their sins against the climate - are up. Still. In some cases, the prices have actually been climbing. In other words, when nearly everything seems to be selling for less, thousands of individuals and businesses are paying more for nothing, or at least nothing tangible."

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/05/AR2008100502518\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/05/AR2008100502518_pf.html)

Meanwhile in Australia, the Federal Government's climate change advisor, Ross Garnaut, has suggested that reducing sheep and cattle numbers and replacing them with 175 million farmed kangaroos would help to dramatically reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions. This is because ruminant animals, like sheep and cattle, produce methane which is a potent greenhouse gas. But of course there are other forms of agriculture that produce methane, in particular rice agriculture. Furthermore, we all know that there are a lot of Chinese and they eat a lot of rice. In the scheme of things, if Australians are to give up their lamb chops then perhaps there should also be some pressure brought to bear on the Chinese to stop eating rice. Just how much methane does rice agriculture produce? Find out in my recent column for The Land here:

<http://jennifermarohasy.com/articles.php>

The Head of Climate Analysis at the Bureau of Meteorology, David Jones, has been lamenting Melbourne's apparently sunny weather. He recently complained in The Age that: "These days, it can be hard to imagine how Melbourne ever earned a reputation as the gloomy, rain-filled capital of the south. But, growing up in the 1970s, my memories are full of muddy ovals, local creeks in flood and catching tadpoles in puddles that lasted for months on end. How things have changed..."

Dr Jones went on to blame climate change for the drought and warned that there is worse to come. Of course climate always changes, and in a country like Australia climate tends to naturally cycle between periods where there is a dominance of wet La Nina conditions and then dry El Nino. The 1950s and 1960s were very wet along the entire east coast of Australia, but since 1976 the median state of the Pacific Ocean has been towards El Nino; that is dry conditions. Indeed Dr Jones was a young boy when it was relatively wet while his adult life has been dominated by El Nino conditions. Of course the built environment has also changed. Melbourne is a much more affluent city now than it was 30 years ago and along with affluence comes laser leveling of sporting venues and much improved drainage and flood mitigation so ovals dry out relatively quickly, creeks are slowed, and puddles in public places become a thing of the past.

But what does only the last ten years of rainfall data look like for the Melbourne catchment anyway? You can see the chart here:

<http://jennifermarohasy.com/blog/2008/10/how-melbourne%E2%80%99s-climate-has-changed-a-reply-to-dr-david-jones-part-2/>

Many practical environmentalists gathered in Canberra for the annual Australian Environment Foundation (AEF) Conference a weekend ago and Kerry Miller and David McMullen reported on the event at their blog here:

<http://strangetimes.lastsuperpower.net/?p=139>

While in Canberra, conference speakers Stewart Franks, Bob Carter and I also spoke at Parliament House. The evening was organised by Dennis Jensen, the member for Tangney in Western Australia. There is a picture of me chatting with Brendan Nelson and Nick Minchin here:

<http://jennifermarohasy.com/blog/2008/10/jennifer-visits-the-australian-parliament/>

Aynsley Kellow, Professor and Head of the School of Government at the University of Tasmania, recently gave the 2008 Harold Clough Lecture in Perth. Entitled 'The Politics and Science of Climate Change: The Wrong Stuff' the lecture can be downloaded from the IPA website and is worth a read:

<http://www.ipa.org.au/publications/1405/2008-harold-clough-lecture-%27the-politics-and-science-of-climate-change-the-wrong-stuff%27>

My blog has been completely revamped with a new banner and layout. There is now a new community home page where you can scroll down to see more photographs of people, pets and gossip.

<http://jennifermarohasy.com/blog/category/community/>

The most recent more technical blog posts are still at the front page and still attract a lot of discussion with my recent comments on a paper by physicist Arthurs Smith entitled 'Proof of the Atmospheric Greenhouse Effect' gathering over 400 comments.

<http://jennifermarohasy.com/blog/2008/10/proof-of-the-atmospheric-greenhouse-effect-arthur-smith/>

If you want some in person discussion on climate change, as opposed to blog discussion, Bob Carter will be speaking this Thursday evening in Brisbane on climate change as a natural hazard. If you are quick you might be able to secure one of the few remaining places:

<http://www.ipa.org.au/events/information/event/brisbane-club-lecture-with-bob-carter-global-warming-cool-science-or-hot-air->

Until the next update...

Kind regards, Jennifer Marohasy

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