



Next meeting

Our first meeting for 2015 will be at 5:30pm, Thursday 15th January at the South Wagga Public School. From the car park on Edward Street, head across the lawn and when you see the canteen, head a bit to the left. We will be discussing our community solar project and other plans for the year.

2014 – a few loose ends

[New data shows record fall in carbon emissions](#)

December 23, 2014 - 6:07PM

Environment Minister Greg Hunt has quietly published data, just two days before Christmas, showing the second year of operation of Australia's carbon price was more successful at reducing emissions than the first.

New data from Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Inventory show emissions declined across Australia by 1.4 per cent over the 12 months to June.

That compares to a decline in emissions of 0.8 per cent for the previous 12 months.

The carbon price was introduced by the Gillard government and began operation on July 1, 2012. It ended on July 1, this year after the Abbott government fulfilled an election pledge by abolishing it.

And if anyone tells you the fall was just because of falling economic activity, ask them to explain this:

[Emissions for power sector jump as carbon tax ends](#)

The carbon intensity of Australia's main electricity grid has surged since the end of the carbon tax, undermining the Abbott government's efforts to cut national emissions.

On an annualised basis, emissions from the National Electricity Market serving eastern Australia have risen by 3.9 million tonnes since June, while the sector's emissions intensity has risen 11 per cent, according to the latest Cedex report, compiled by energy consultants Pitt & Sherry.

The share of black and brown coal in the generation mix rose to an 18-month high of 74.5 per cent by the end of 2014 even as gas-fired power reached a record 13.3 per cent of the market.

[Australia named worst-performing industrial country on climate change](#)

Performance index released at Lima climate talks puts Denmark in the best-performing slot, followed by Sweden and Britain

Graham Readfern

Australia has been named the worst-performing industrial country in the world on climate change in a report released at international negotiations in Peru.

The climate change performance index ranked [Denmark](#) as the best-performing country in the world, followed by Sweden and Britain.

Among the world's top 10 emitters, Germany was ranked the highest at 22. Australia was second bottom overall, above [Saudi Arabia](#) – which was not classified as industrial.

The report states: "The new conservative Australian government has apparently made good on last year's announcement and reversed the climate policies previously in effect. As a result, the country lost a further 21 positions in the policy evaluation compared to last year,

thus replacing Canada as the worst-performing industrial country.”

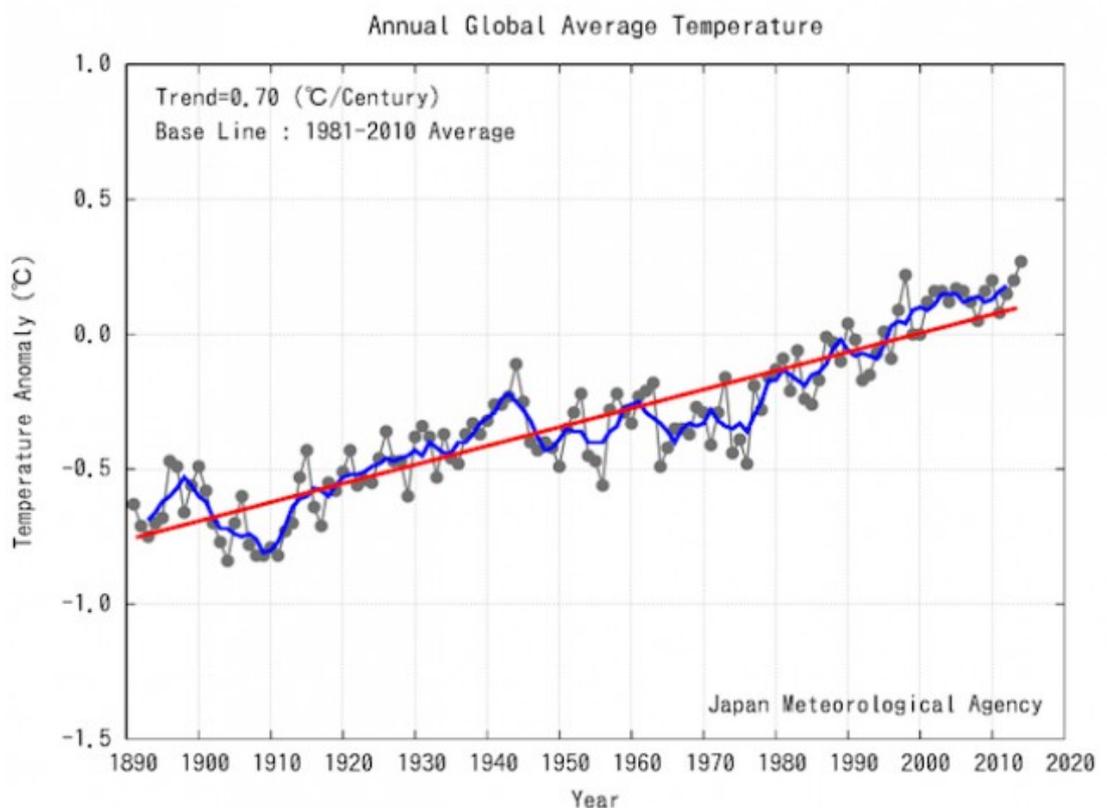
Annual climate statement 2014

Data collected and analysed by the Bureau of Meteorology show that 2014 was Australia's third-warmest year on record while rainfall was near average nationally.

- Another year of persistent warmth; spring was the warmest on record nationally, with autumn the third-warmest on record
- Overall, 2014 was Australia's third-warmest year on record: the annual national mean temperature was +0.91 °C above average
- All States, except the Northern Territory, ranked in the four warmest years on record
- National rainfall was near average for the year, with 478 mm (1961–1990 average 465 mm)
- Rainfall was below average along the western coast of Western Australia and over much of the eastern States

In the has-anyone-seen-that- global-warming-pause department:

2014 Was The Hottest Year On Record Globally By Far



Anomalies are deviation from baseline (1981–2010 Average).
The black thin line indicates surface temperature anomaly of each year.
The blue line indicates their 5-year running mean.
The red line indicates the long-term linear trend.

And, just to round off the year, this little pearl, not mentioned in the mainstream media.

[Abbott loses anti-climate ally as Harper flags carbon price rethink](#)

By [Sophie Vorrath](#) on 22 December 2014

In the same week that Tony Abbott [declared the dumping of Australia's carbon price](#) as his greatest achievement for women for 2014, one of his greatest allies in climate denial – Canadian PM Stephen Harper – has made what appears to be an about face on pricing carbon, conceding in an interview that he would be open to the idea of such a policy mechanism for the whole of Canada.

In Alberta, energy heavy polluting companies are required to reduce their energy intensity, or improve their energy efficiency, annually. If they don't, they must contribute to a technology fund at \$15 a tonne for carbon emissions.

"I think it's a model on which you could go broader," Harper said in Wednesday's interview. "It's not a levy, it's a price. And there's a tech fund in which ... [the] private sector makes investments."

2015 – and some hopeful beginnings

Australia continues to lead in clean energy innovation

[Households to use solar + storage to trade electricity with grid](#)

A Canberra-based company is to introduce new technology that it says could help turn electricity markets on their head – by allowing households to buy and sell electricity on the market.

The buying and selling of electricity has hitherto been the province of large or specialised companies such as electricity retailers. But Reposit Power says that homes and businesses can and should be able to trade electricity with the help of battery storage, and production facilities such as solar panels.

[Reposit Power](#) plans to install battery storage in six homes around Canberra to run a six-month pilot of its technology, known as GridCredits. The Australian Renewable Energy Agency is contributing \$445,000 to the \$900,000 project.

Reposit Power says GridCredits is a world-first energy storage program that will put consumers in the driving seat and will "transform the grid forever."

The construction industry is paying much closer attention to sustainability and energy efficiency, using financial options only available for low energy, sustainable projects.

[Property developer turns over a new "green" leaf](#)

One of Australia's largest developers has recently issued the first green bond that will fund investments in construction and refurbishment projects that achieve a minimum of 4 green stars. Sydney based Stockland's recent announcement of the AUD\$432 million bond issued under Stockland's Euro Medium Term Note program will provide additional funding and enable investors to gain a financial return that is also environmentally friendly.

The A-rated bond is underwritten by HSBC and UBS and will be listed on the Singapore Stock Exchange. One of the projects likely to receive part funding from the bond is Stockland's \$222 million redevelopment of their Wetherill Park shopping centre in Sydney which has a goal of achieving a 5 green star rating. The redevelopment will include a cinema, gym and children's playground.

John Quiggin

John Quiggin is a Professor of Economics at the University of Queensland, author of the entertaining critique of neo-conservatism, [Zombie Economics](#). He quite often writes a lot of

sense about the economic aspects of a sustainable future, Here are two of his recent articles.

As always, click on the title for the complete article.

[Tell them they're dreaming](#)

Quiggin begins by saying that “(W)ith Australia’s energy and climate-change policy in a state of chaos, it’s not surprising that we are seeing [renewed calls](#) to pursue nuclear energy. And given the urgency of reducing global carbon dioxide emissions, it would be a mistake to dismiss the nuclear option out of hand. But in thinking about the possibility of nuclear power, particularly for Australia, it is important to avoid wishful or magical thinking.”

He then examines those places (France and China) where nuclear power has worked well or is growing, and the various types of reactor available or planned and relates all that to the Australian context. His conclusion?

“There is still a chance for nuclear power to contribute to decarbonisation of the global economy in China and other countries with an existing program or the state power to force through a crash program. But these conditions don’t exist in Australia, and there is no serious prospect that they will do so in time to play a substantial role in decarbonisation. Anyone who pretends nuclear power is a serious option for Australia under current conditions is dreaming or, worse still, deliberately diverting attention from the real issues”.

[Only a mug punter would bet on carbon storage over renewables](#)

In the second article Quiggin compares the practicality of solar/wind with Carbon Capture and Storage.

He lays out the problem in an interesting way:

“A future based on “clean coal” can only be achieved through the large-scale implementation of [carbon capture and storage \(CCS\)](#). That is, the carbon dioxide generated by fossil fuels must be captured at the point of combustion and then stored indefinitely in underground repositories, or perhaps in biomass such as trees.

On the other hand, the main renewable energy sources – wind and solar panels – face a different storage problem. Wind is intermittent and solar power is generated only during the day, as well as being affected by cloud cover. So a system dominated by renewables must either use variable pricing to manage demand, or include some form of energy storage.”

Again, after carefully considering the issues, his conclusion is:

“To sum up, if investing in energy storage is like backing every horse on a race, investing in CCS is like a parlay bet, which pays off only if we can pick the winners of several races in succession.

When you think about it like that, it’s not surprising that the smart money is on storing energy, not carbon.”