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# Making the connections

Appropriately, this issue covers more ground on climate change and mitigation measures. Our switch of government comes in parallel with confirmation of accelerating climate change effects (see page 4) and, significantly, the fourth meeting of the IPCC Kyoto framework nations in Bali, at which a new urgency for immediate and coordinated emissions reduction was to be committedly addressed.

On page 15, Ian Dunlop reflects on what he calls the 'short-termism' of environmental policy vision and campaigns during the recent election run-up, and refers to international pace-setting in encouraging deeper thinking and longer-term prioritising of environmental planning from the new government. Commitments in the next year will likely shape the crucial decade ahead, and there are outstanding opportunities for both historic leadership and economic reward in the mix.

In part two of our series on Australia's energy future, Mike Smith and Karlson Hargroves discuss the fundamental role that more responsive electricity demand management could play in both reducing national emissions and allowing renewable energy options to play their part in national strategy. The great news is that such initiatives are practicable measures with an immediate impact.

With money pouring into the burgeoning carbon offsets market, pages 12–14 review the arguments for and against different offset types, discussing the new certification standards being applied to what has been a rather wild new frontier, open to liberties and lacking guarantees.

The provision of the \$50 million National Environmental Stewardship



Programme by the federal government last year acknowledged the responsibility that private landholders must be supported to take in biodiversity conservation across Australia. It

was a watershed in conservation initiative, helping to provide the means by which the vulnerable habitat remnants scattered across our states can be protected, managed and potentially connected up to form vital corridors for biodiversity exchange.

As climate change kicks in, these linkages with reserves and national parks will form vital refuge buffers for native plants and animals. James Woodford (page 25) reviews how the land stewardship program works and discusses why private landholders are a crucial part of the new habitat corridors being developed on each side of the country.

Finally, my thanks go to Mary-Lou Considine who did an outstanding job producing *Ecos* over the last two issues during my absence in Asia on post-tsunami work. Pages 8–11 begin a series of articles over the next six months on tsunami relief operations I visited in Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Enjoy your reading.

**James Porteous**  
Managing Editor

*Our planned Murray–Darling Focus has been postponed due to political sensitivities.*



CSIRO

## Next, in issue 141

Following the theme of private landholder participation in environmental management, the February–March issue discusses new 'carbon farming' initiatives being trialled around Australia to take advantage of the huge potential sequestration role that our pastures can play.