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A platform for growth

The recent astronomical spike in the price of oil re-attuned Australia to the growing potential of national renewable energy industries. Solar is arguably the most immediately accessible and fastest evolving sector, however, commentators still say that despite a change of government, eager Australian solar companies and pioneers continue to be confounded by barriers to feasible operations.

But with tenacity, Australia's solar entrepreneurs are slowly getting traction, leveraging their increasing influence in the US, Europe and Asia which has been eked out by the growing belief that solar's time has come.

In our Focus on pages 14–16, Robin Taylor provides the personal perspectives of some of Australia's best known solar innovators, as they discuss the recent circumstances for the development of solar businesses, comparing them to the expansive situation in other more supporting countries.

Have you considered moving to an ecovillage? Well, you're not alone.



Significant numbers of people each year are either buying or moving into established or new estate ecovillages as the appeal of sustainable, community living broadens.

However, ecovillage life is perhaps not all that you've imagined. Rachel Sullivan peered into the social mechanics of communities in some of Australia's best known ecovillages, and reports the illuminating pros and cons on pages 23–25.

Our cover story in this issue is from Vianne Mischon, who travelled to north Queensland for an experience she will never forget: snorkelling with the inquisitive dwarf minke whales which return annually to the outer Great Barrier Reef, where they interact with swimmers and divers.

A team of scientists and doctoral students behind the Minke Whale Project are providing the world with invaluable insight into the life of these majestic creatures, who, it seems, are willing ambassadors for the cetacean community in remarkable encounters of mutual respect.

Ecos 145 also reports on Green Cross Australia's efforts to accelerate the planning for regional sea level rise impacts, and asks whether kangaroo meat is a sustainable dish.

Enjoy your reading.

James Porteous
Managing Editor

Ecos launches its new website

As part of a staged online content development program, *Ecos* is launching its newly designed website in late-October at www.ecosmagazine.com.

Aside from a lively design update, there will be weekly news, podcast and article updates, as well as a growing sustainability resources guide.

Please provide us with your invaluable feedback on the site – it'll be taken on board. We've aimed for the site to be simple but rewarding, and it will provide a platform for the further development of *Ecos* as a community resource.



Robert Churchill, iStockphoto

Next, in issue 146

Our forthcoming December–January issue will examine the growing concerns around food security and sustainability, and provide an overview of reactions and implications from the Garnaut Review's final report.