

Clarifying our priorities



With a confusing few months in the media for climate change topics – including swinging media debate about polar ice changes, a curiously timed Australian book attacking the consensus view on the climate picture, and significant jostling on the government’s Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme adjustments – this issue provides readers with some important updates and definition on the latest climate information. It is now crucial that society is provided with the consensus scientific perspective, free of humbug.

On page 28, Dr Bruce Mapstone, Director of the Centre for Australian Weather and Climate Research, summarises the recently convened Greenhouse 09 conference held in Perth, which drew together experts

from climate, government and industry. The overriding message was that ‘many of the metrics by which we measure modern climate change are tracking at – or above – the worst-case scenarios considered possible just a couple of years ago.’ Furthermore, experts ‘are confident about these statements because of efforts over recent years to build an expanding array of observations of our environment.’

Now that might be uncomfortable and tiring reading, but the same message is being reiterated around the globe. New projections published this month in the American Meteorological Society’s *Journal of Climate* show that without swift and massive action to curb greenhouse gas emissions, the warming of the Earth’s surface will double compared to previous projections. Debate needs to move on.

On page 31, ‘Clarifying polar ice and climate trends’ aims to set the record straight on polar ice change issues – simplistic

interpretations have tripped a few up.

Pages 22–23 review the massive collaboration behind the 160 separate projects of the International Polar Year. Most of these were focused on our immediate need to understand the rapid changes occurring in the Arctic and Antarctic regions.

This issue also reports (pages 10–13) on the crucial contribution that community participation and affordable technology is increasingly making to understanding environmental changes – at local as well as global scales.

Enjoy your reading.

James Steptoe
Managing Editor

Our coverage of the 10th National Business Leaders Forum on Sustainable Development has been moved to the August–September issue.

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