

Celebrating 35 years



This is the 150th issue in *Ecos*'s 35 year history. There are few other magazines in Australia that have spanned such a range of years, let alone one covering environmental research.

As such, the magazine's archive represents a fascinating chronology of evolving subjects stretching from 1974 (when the environment barely rated a mention in the main media) to 2009 (when it is never out of the media). On pages 18–21 we mark the issue milestone by providing you with a cross-section of that chronology. Previous editors also reflect on their time at *Ecos* and some content highlights.

The launch of Safe Climate Australia in Melbourne this month (page 5) was noteworthy because the founders – who include

business and social entrepreneurs, leading scientists, former resources executives and leaders of major financial institutions – have felt compelled to act, independently of government, on what they see as today's emergency climate change scenarios.

It's a significant new signal from the community, coming from a view that safe levels of climate have already been exceeded. With the latest data and scientific opinion on climate trends emerging ahead of December's COP15 climate meeting in Copenhagen, their rationale isn't far-fetched.

We also report (page 16) on research which indicates the massive vegetation clearing in Australia over the last 200 years is likely to have significantly altered rainfall patterns, intensified local drought conditions and potentially contributed as much to climate change as large scale climate oscillations such as El Niño and La Niña. Is that so surprising? Replanting Australia has multiple benefits – we need to accelerate it.

In our 'Definition of Sustainability' instalment (page 30), social analyst Richard Eckersley notes how millions across the globe have been able to use communication and information technology (ICT) to exchange information and set up virtual communities such as GetUp and WiserEarth. But as our focus article (page 24) points out, 24/7 connectivity has come at a cost, with huge server 'farms' sucking up enormous amounts of energy, and with the high rate of computer product churn leaving a mountain of toxic e-waste to dispose of. Thankfully, the green IT movement, involving manufacturers, service providers and users, is addressing some impacts of ICT.

Enjoy your reading.

James Porteous
Managing Editor

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