



BORDERlands

News from across the border

May 2011
Volume 14 Issue 2

Borderlands Co-operative Ltd.
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Dear members, friends, supporters and all others interested in Borderlands,

Thank you for continuing to be a member, be you a subscriber or shareholder of Borderlands Cooperative. Our members sign up to be active members, and we are interested in finding out about how you are active. and promoting it in this very newsletter. So please, forward your information about your activities to us here at Borderlands Cooperative..

For those of you, who may be feeling 'underactive', have I got a project for you! I am Vicky O'Dwyer, an RMIT Social Work student here on placement, and am looking forward to immersing myself in some Borderlands projects; it's important to begin, to be the change. The aim of the project I am proposing is to pull members of the community together, in self-designed, satellite groups to explore what community is and what you can do as a collective, to improve your community for yourself and others. After agreeing upon a focus issue, I hope to help you plan and take steps to address the issue – with the support of Borderlands Cooperative, of course.

Check this out to get motivated www.care2.com/causes/environment/blog/sigourney-weaver-accepts-audubons-rachel-carson-award-video/

“Groups built on a foundation of cooperation are uniquely capable of solving difficult social, political, and economic problems, generating high-quality outcomes, and prove viable and robust in the face of setbacks over time” (Sullivan, Synder & Sullivan, 2008, p.7). To harness this group potential it will be important to reflect upon any concern/s that you have for yourself and your (local, national, global) community, so that collective and invested group power can be exerted upon the concern. We ask that over your kitchen or work table, with a group of relatives, friends, acquaintances or colleagues, that you take part in an investigation into what matters to you and your community. You will be included, respected, valued and supported here at Borderlands Cooperative, in your adventure into community action with space, facilities, relevant literature and information..

The first meeting will ask you to explore your understanding of community or, of what does 'community' mean to you? What feelings or emotions should 'community' engender? What should be the philosophical underpinnings of 'community'? What should be the practical functions of 'community'? What role should 'community' play in a person's life? What role should 'community' have in the big (societal/political/global) picture? Which forces represent the status quo in your community? What issues are 'community' issues and what issues do we want to leave in the hands of others? What issues are we concerned about?

If you are concerned and motivated then please nominate your group's table or interest in participating in a table. We hope to hear groups responses to the above questions, by the end of July Email your interest to borders@borderlands.org.au or phone us on 9819 3239. Please do forward this invitation to people and groups not yet linked into Borderlands Cooperative.

Much love from me, Vicky, and all the 'regulars' at Borderlands...

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(More information on events inside)

- June 19 Creative Parenting Workshop**
With Carol and David Liknaitzky
- June 25 Peace-Building Workshop with Jill Jameson**
- June 29 Melbourne Conversations @ Community Development with Lucy Fiske**
- July 2 Oases Breakfast**
- Eleni Rivers
- Aug 6 Oases Breakfast**
- Jacques Boulet
- Sept 10 Oases Breakfast**
- Kanyini
- Oct 1 Oases Breakfast**
- Dr Nick Coleman
- Sept 10 Oases Yearly Graduation Dinner**

Newsletter Deadlines

This newsletter is to inform you of all the Borderlands happenings. We need your input! Please send articles or details of your latest events etc. (preferably in electronic format) to the Editor at: borders@borderlands.org.au

Deadlines for the next issues are:

September Issue: 20th August

December Issue: 20th November



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2011 Program now available!

[Oases Saturday Breakfasts](#)

See our website for details!

<http://www.oases.edu.au>

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL



New Community Quarterly

NCQ is an Australian journal of community development with a history spanning 25 years. The website (www.newcq.org) provides information about the journal,

including subscriptions, contributions and back-issues as well as an archive of all previous publications by issue and subject.

To subscribe, contact Ben Leeman

benleeman@iinet.net.au

or call Borderlands: 9819 3239

Borderlands Newsletter

Volume 14 Issue 2 — June/July 2011

Published by Borderlands Cooperative

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www.borderlands.org.au

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Martha Hills and others.

Please send articles, letters, poetry, creative writing,
artwork for inclusion in the newsletter.

In this issue...

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5. Employment Expo MIC

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11. The New Atheism

12. Don't be that guy

14. Not Tokenistic, Just Good Manners

15. Surplus Fetish

16. 4 Degrees Hotter

Being a member of Borderlands is great.

Not only do you get to support one of the most down-to-earth, ecologically healthy, sustainably conscious, social theory drenched, community focused, participatory / democratically in-tune and generally wonderful place, you also get *membership goodies*.

Membership goodies include:

- Reduced subscription rates to New Community Quarterly (the only Community Development Journal in Australia)
- Variable discounts on lectures and workshops
- Cheaper rates to oases Breakfasts
- Use of Borderlands Spaces for your events, meetings, chats*
- Broadened borrowing opportunities at the 11,000 volumes (and counting) Borderlands Library.

Now is the time to renew your membership – or become a brand-shiny-new member (or shareholder) of this wonderful **independent network for holistic community activism, sustainability and action research**.

We'd particularly love your membership if you have been receiving newsletters and correspondence from Borderlands for a while and haven't yet renewed your membership.

Please help keep Borderlands vibrant and active.

Membership is easy; just fill out the 'Membership, Shareholders and Subscribers Form' at the back of this newsletter and send / email it to us at:

borders@borderlands.org.au

Borderlands Cooperative
PO Box 3079,
Auburn VIC 3123.

QUOTE OF THE ISSUE

*Amateurs built the Ark,
professionals built the Titanic*

I. **Borderlands Cooperative:** **Independent network for holistic community activism, sustainability and action research**

Be a part of a sustainable future!

By making a gift in your will to Borderlands Cooperative you are sustaining your values and ideals into the future.

Planned financial amounts can be donated for charitable purposes tax-free. And you do not need a great deal of wealth to make a difference. Every dollar helps to keep this non-profit organization alive and vibrant.

Your will is a very important document – it may be difficult to think of preparing it now – however, it protects your family and your assets for the future. A will gives you the opportunity to decide where your assets and possessions will go and how they are to be used. Preparing a legal will can potentially remove unnecessary stress, expense, and legal problems in future times.

However, we believe your will can do even more – it can also be your legacy, passing on not only physical assets, but also your values and ideals. A bequest is as simple as it is powerful; with a few words in your will, you can continue to be an advocate for community activism, healthy ecologically, sustainability and participatory democracy.

A bequest is a gift nominated in your will to one or more non-profit organizations. Your bequest can take any (or a combination) of the following forms:

- Cash
 - A percentage of the overall value of your estate
 - Retirement plan or life insurance beneficiary designation
 - Securities
- Personal property (artwork, jewelry, etc)

Due to the complexity of planned giving, we strongly suggest that you contact your tax advisor and/or legal advisor to begin the process. We encourage you to provide us with a copy of the relevant pages of your will, trust, or beneficiary designation form. All information will be kept in our secure files. You can send this information to us at:

Borderlands Cooperative
PO Box 3079 Auburn 3123
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Tikkun's Spiritual Response to the Assassination of Osama bin Laden

by Peter Gabel and Michael Lerner

<http://www.tikkun.org/nextgen/tikkuns-spiritual-response-to-the-assassination-of-osama-bin-laden>

May 2, 2011

From Peter Gabel, Associate Editor:

There is no question that Osama bin Laden, as the leader of al-Qaida, was implicated in or directly responsible for the deaths of many, many people, most likely including the more than 3,000 American and, women, and children who were killed in the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001. But it was nevertheless upsetting and shocking to witness the exultation in the media last night when bin Laden's killing was announced. Never should the killing of a human being be an occasion for such celebration — even in circumstances that involve actual self-defense against mortal danger. Not only does such a raucous display of pleasure in response to the killing of another disrespect the sacredness of every human life; it also inherently undermines the moral character and worthiness of those responsible for the death itself. If the United States seeks to place itself on a higher moral ground than those who commit immoral acts against our people, we must all conduct ourselves in a way that manifests our empathy and compassion for all of humanity, for every human person, and also manifest our awareness of the tragic distortions in human relations across the globe that still hurl human beings into the horrors of ongoing violence and war. President Barack Obama's statement to the American public and the world announcing bin Laden's death was far more sober and expressive of human depth than was the unseemly cheering of major media figures in the hour preceding Obama's address, or the crowd shouting "U.S.A, U.S.A" outside the White House gate with the kind of hardened false elation in response to a killing that often is seen on the face of hatred. Nevertheless, we wish President Obama had at least included one phrase that said, "Even though we never take pleasure in the loss of a human life..." before stating why he felt bin Laden's death was important and just.

From Rabbi Michael Lerner:

I agree with Peter Gabel, and would only add the following: The Jewish tradition has much to say on the killing of our vicious and even murderous enemies. When Pharaoh's troops were drowning in the Reed Sea as they sought to re-enslave or kill the Israelites, the angels began to sing praises (the Hallel prayers: Psalms 113-118). God proclaimed: "My children (the Egyptians) are sinking in the sea, and you are singing praises?" Yet God did not silence the Israelites, knowing that at that moment it would be hard for humans not to celebrate the death of an oppressor. Nevertheless, the Jewish tradition then instituted two practices in accord with God's response: First, that the Hallel prayers would be cut down to a partial saying of some of the psalms on the last six days of Passover. And second, that when we do the Seder on Passover and recite the plagues that were used against the Egyptians to get them to free the Jews, we put our finger in the cup of wine, symbolic of our joy, and dip out a drop of wine for each plague — this symbolizes that our cup of joy cannot be full if our own liberation requires the death of those who were part of the oppressor society.

It is the loss of this consciousness by almost every society on the planet that is a real source for concern and mourning. For far too many people, the war on terrorism seems to be an extension of the football games where we cheer on our team: "USA! USA! Hey, you are tough!" The task of spiritual progressives at this moment is to reaffirm a different consciousness — to remind ourselves that we are inextricably bound to each other and to everyone on the planet.

The struggle against terrorism will not be won through killing, no matter how many people we assassinate. It will only be won when we in the West can show genuine love, caring, and generosity toward everyone else on the planet. Now that Osama is dead, let's get our troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan *now!* The money saved from that alone would make a great down-payment on the [Global Marshall Plan](#) we badly need (and we could start it in the Middle East). Congressman Keith Ellison has already introduced this plan as House Resolution 157.



(Over page...)

I understand very well the need for self-defense in a violent world, as well as the rage and upset felt by many, including me, at the murder of innocent civilians on September 11 and on many other occasions. Within the current distorted framework of military conflict in which we are to some degree entrapped, I also understand the strategic importance of capturing or, if there is no other way to stop them from sending more murderers to kill innocent civilians (and every other possible route has been tried), then self-defensively killing the leaders of those who seek to kill or terrorize our own people. But the fact remains that it is through new policies of generosity and caring for others, not through killing the bad guys, that we will create a world of peace. To the extent that Americans celebrate the death of bin Laden because they believe that it will bring peace to the world, I want to acknowledge the goodness and decency of that aspiration. Yet we as spiritual progressives must simultaneously help our fellow Americans, indeed, our fellow human beings in every society, see that it is the path of nonviolence and the Strategy of Generosity that is the only path toward lasting peace on our planet.

So this is a moment to pray that this new consciousness will spread quickly through our planet, and a moment when all of us can and should renew our dedication to promoting a spirit of love, caring for others, and true generosity. Let us pray that that becomes the path of all countries on our planet.

Peter Gabel, the associate editor of Tikkun, is a law professor, therapist, and a founder of the critical legal studies movement. **Rabbi Michael Lerner**, author of "The Left Hand of God: Taking Our Country Back from the Religious Right," is rabbi of the Bay Area congregation Beyt Tikkun and head editor of Tikkun.



Peace-Building Workshop

This workshop offers an opportunity for experiential learning and understanding and transforming conflict. Through a conflict transformation framework, applied to social organisations, communities and families you will explore the internalisation of conflict, working with fear, analysis of power and going beyond power games. Working with cross cultural settings and acknowledging difference will be important components. Frameworks and tools for analysis you will experience include: mapping conflict; personal and structural sources of conflict; levels of conflict; what is invisible; responses to conflict; listening and mediation skills; and the cycle of revenge and reconciliation.

Your facilitator, Jill Jameson, has been offering conflict transformation workshops over the past 15 years to community organisations such as Metta Development Foundation in Burma, Community Aid Alliance in India and Foundation House in Melbourne. Jill was a founder of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship Melbourne in 1993, and has been actively involved with the International Network of Engaged Buddhists.

Contact: 9819 3239 **Cost:** \$35pp \$25Concession **Date:** 25th June 2011 9.30-4pm **Venue:** Borderlands/Augustine
BYO Lunch



Cultural Briefings and Cultural Awareness Training

The new calendar and registration form for cultural briefings and training is available at <http://www.micestmelb.com.au/meap.htm#Training>

Lighter Footprints



[By way of introducing a local group with whom we would very much like to enter into a partnership... **Lighter Footprints** have been active in the local area to generate awareness about climate change and our general human impact on our ecology, local and global... They recently received a big 'kudo' from Labor MP Anna Burke and this is their thank-you response to Ms. Burke as well as the Hansard quote of the latter... It really deserves to be widely spread. As well, check the website and the things this local group has been and continues to be up to... quite amazing! Jacques Boulet]

Dear Anna,

How terrific to read the Hansard below - and how rare is it for a group such as ours to receive such comment.

The 100% Renewables Campaign has put it on their blog and it has received comments wishing they had an MP like you!

Thank you so much for your words of support. It makes such a difference. We hope that we can slowly begin to make a difference at the local level by plugging away, and that we will all reap the benefits.

Carolyn Ingvarson on behalf of all **Lighter Footprints** supporters

Hansard, 30 May 2011. Page: 122

Chisholm Electorate: **Lighter Footprints**

[Ms BURKE](#) (Chisholm) (10:33): Today I want to get up and say congratulations and thank you to the members of the **Lighter Footprints** group, a climate action group that has been operating around my electorate. They are actually based in Kooyong but since late 2006 many of the members of the group have come from the Chisholm electorate. This group has come together to focus their energies on action towards pending climate change. It is not a political group. It is a group of concerned citizens who have been seeing for years that climate change is real and that, without action, we will not be able to leave to our children a society and environment in which to live.

The **Lighter Footprints** webpage is very good, and I commend people to look at it to get some ideas about you as a local community getting together to do something about your own environment. On their opening page, they quote George Monbiot:

The real issues are not technical or economic. The crisis we face demands a profound philosophical discussion, a reappraisal of who we are and what progress means. Debating these matters makes us neither saints nor communists; it shows only that we have understood the science.

This is a group of individuals from around Surrey Hills, Canterbury and other local areas who have come together since 2006. They meet each month and they are very active in the local community. At every community event I go to—a fete or whatever—they have a stall. They are out there in the community and they are pushing this barrow as concerned citizens. They are not pushing a political agenda; they are doing this because they want to ensure an environment for their children and grandchildren to live in. On Saturday they took part in what is now known as the 100% Renewable campaign and they organised an enormous group of volunteers—who used my office as their focal point to meet at because my office has a rather large sign. So they all said, 'Meet at Anna Burke's office'—to go out and spend most of Saturday doorknocking to be part of the 100% Renewable Energy campaign. The aim is to take the time to have more than just a cursory glance at this issue, to try to have 20,000 conversations Australia wide about the use of renewable energies.

If you go to the 100% Renewable website, it talks about how people and communities across Australia share a vision for a 100 per cent renewable future, an Australia powered entirely by clean renewable energy. In a country like Australia, where the sun beats down every day, where the wind always blows, where there are hot rocks under the ground creating heat and where waves on our long coastlines keep rolling, renewable energy just makes sense. So they were out there doorknocking on Saturday. It was not the best day in Melbourne; sadly in winter there are not too many best days in Melbourne. It was raining and it was inclement, but they all went out—a huge group of volunteers—of their own volition to doorknock houses. They went out to talk about climate change, not with hysteria and not to talk about the political aspects but to say that we as individuals can take action, that we can take action now and that we need to ensure we have a future for our planet.

The Lighter Footprints NEWS group provides occasional updates on the group's news and activities; visit us at:

<http://groups.google.com/group/lighterfootprintsnews?hl=en> Our WEBSITE: <http://www.lighterfootprints.org>

To Everyone whom I hope I may call Friend,

From Margot Fitzpatrick (Borderlands member, ARIA member and presently on AVI volunteer placement in Timor-Leste)

You'll be surprised to hear from me after so long. It's months since I last sent a Letter from Timor-Leste (T-L), but it's hard to concentrate on more than one activity a day, a week. Thinking doesn't come easily in this heat and humidity, and I realised when my AVI colleague David left a few weeks ago, it's even more difficult when you haven't got someone of like mind to talk over the curious things that happen each day, and when you do have someone to talk to, you don't feel like writing... [The monkey tied up in the compound over the road enticed a passing pig to stand still, then lie down, while it groomed the pig for fleas or lice, monkey sitting on the pig's back, pig passively enjoying a good scratch. You see captive monkeys occasionally around the place but I've never seen any in the wild although people say there's a large community on the road to Balibao.]

Slowly I'm learning about the culture and traditions of T-L. It's so easy to make mistakes. Recently, an Australian volunteer came for 3 months to help install some rain water tanks here, a project proposed and planned in Australia. Some other people who've been here long term say there've been problems with similar projects because local people believe water should come from the ground so rain water is not acceptable. This is changing, but what do our patients and the locals think? Did anyone ask them?

Will they use the water out of the tanks?

Traditional law still has a strong influence. For example, senior males in a T-L family have customary rights and responsibilities for looking after females and younger relatives. Our neighbour and work colleague, Maria is a widow with 3 young children. Her husband's family has the right to take her children as their own, and especially if she were to remarry. A few months ago she sent the kids to live with her family in a village about 6 hours from here, partly because she is worried her in-laws will want to take them. She took me to visit the family one weekend, a long, long drive and a most friendly, welcoming family, mother, father, one brother and his family and one sister living in the same compound, related / connected to most other people in the village. The family's well has run dry so they have to carry all their water from a well about 100 metres away, the kids do this before school each day. This family is well educated, several teachers and administrators, kids at university or graduated and working around the world, but no running water and no reliable electricity. Typical for practically every T-L family, poverty and malnutrition everywhere, poor infrastructure, terrible roads, but lots of celebrations and special events for anniversaries, saints' days. I often feel bad about what we waste on food and drink and travel – is it just self-serving rationalisation to say our spending helps the local economy?

A young mother, a friend of an Australian friend, brought her 2 year old here as an inpatient recently. He has TB and she hoped the quiet environment and treatment at Klibur Domin would help him get well again. Her in-laws demanded that she take him back to their home where, she says, they will use traditional medicines and not Western drugs. Joaquim, the Director here spoke to the mother-in-law and the young mother for a long time especially about the very real risk of multi-drug resistant TB if the 6 to 8 month treatment regime is not followed but in the end the m-i-l won and the baby went back to the in-laws' home. The m-i-l said they will follow the drug treatment but the record shows this often fails. Joaquim said, "The husband's family pays for the woman and then think all the children belong to them." The young mother is well educated, understands about TB but could not fight the family.

A few weeks ago a colleague and I went to the university to meet some senior academics about a new course for local rehabilitation workers. This informal meeting included an Australian academic with a very long involvement with T-L, who proceeded to criticise the T-L government, the T-L national university, Indonesia's and T-L's education systems and named specific people as the main obstacles to implementing her recommendations, and talked over the top of everyone else in the room. I was embarrassed and appalled but the locals who know this person very well, were calm and unyielding. A few days later, one of them said, "We tell XX this is not Australia and we need to find our own education system that suits our situation. XX has problems with that." I sometimes see that passive resistance against imperialistic foreigners in other places and although it can be infuriating, I also think "Good on you!"

Life chugs along here, I love the work but it gets boring while I wait for the local staff to have time for me. I'm determined that it's at their pace, not mine and not my ideas. I suspect the boss hoped for more directive effort on my part but I learnt the hard way in China and I won't do it again. I play a lot of Spider Solitaire and I do feel guilty about that and think a lot about what else I could be doing. A major indication that I'm right to wait – in the past at general staff meetings, I heard "Mana Margot" repeated lots of times as they explained various things in Tetun – all Mana Margot's fault that things have to change. At the most recent general staff meeting when the senior guys were explaining new rules about staff entitlements, use of work vehicles and other things, I heard "Senior Staff Meeting" repeated many times. You can't imagine what a step forward that is, for the senior staff to accept the changes as their own work!

A teenage girl from the house across the road died last week, of leukemia, I think. They follow set days of mourning and ceremony that everyone participates in, even people who work here who didn't know the girl or her family. A big funeral will leave the family in debt for years to the point of not having enough food. I guess all cultures have these social obligations.

Enough for now! If you have time, please let me know what you're up to. I'm in early wind-down mode now, not much more than 3 months before I go home, so I want to prepare for seeing many of you again. **Margot**

Wind Supporters Project

Dear friends,

In all the debate about wind energy, we know that the views and voices of supporters sometimes get lost. So we're on May 26 we're launching our 'Wind Supporters Project' featuring people like you on our yes2renewables website. <http://yes2renewables.org/>

These supporter snapshots will show the government the breadth of support from across Victoria, connect wind supporters with each other and show the wide range of reasons for community support for wind energy.

How to get involved:

1. Do a profile for our website: wherever you live or whatever you do, we'd like to hear from you! Tell us a bit about yourself, and why you think wind energy is a good idea.

Send, with a photo, to Ellen Roberts at ellen.roberts@foe.org.au. Check below for one from Wind Energy Supporter Peter Cook.

2. Come to the launch of the Wind Energy Supporters project at 1pm, May 26 Parliament House steps, as part of the month of 'Deckchair Democracy' at 1pm.

Details on the 'deckchair' event can be found here.

<http://www.melbourne.foe.org.au/?q=node/910>

From Peter Cook:

Tell us a bit about yourself

I am President of the Dandenong Ranges Renewable Energy Association. I spend a fair bit of my time helping organize and promote local renewable energy projects. Also, for many years I have been campaigning for the introduction of a refund system on cans and bottles like they have in South Australia.

Why do you think wind energy is important?

Without wind energy it will be impossible for Australia to quickly transition to 100% renewable electricity. One reason why I like wind energy and wind farms is because they give landowners an additional income stream and help make their farms more sustainable. I think this is really important because it enables farmers to become part of the solution to climate change.

See you on the steps!

Ellen Roberts

Borderlands Library report

The library seems to have no limit to its hunger. More and more books are being added and shelves are bulging at the seams. The catalogue contains over 12,000 records and this is after Jacques painfully reviewed the collection and withdrew over 1,000 titles.

Our new library computer system is up and running. Although we have been using it for cataloguing for over a year, the modules for public searching and borrowing are just this week fully operational.

If you are a member of the Borderlands community, you can use our library. Sorry for those in other states or even farther away, but you would have to sign up in person. Even if you do not want to borrow, you can sit in one of the library rooms and read (as long as it's not being used for a meeting).

Many, many thanks to Bronwyn Leslie for her recent generous donation of 800 wonderful books to our library. Thank you for thinking of us.

Continued Page 14



Melbourne Conversations about Community Development - 2011

Wednesday 29th of June 2011 from 5:30 till 7:30

At the home of the Borderlands Cooperative
The Augustine Centre, 2 Minona Street Hawthorn

The Seeking of Asylum in the land of OZ: Detainees taking action ...

Lucy Fiske reports about her PhD research work with and her advocacy for Asylum Seekers in Australia; Lucy recently visited Christmas Island and will describe her experiences and impressions of as well as her encounters with detainees.

Oases breakfasts for 2011

Saturday Breakfasts:

Conversations for Critical Times

First Saturday of every month

9am for breakfast, program commences
approximately 9:40 am

2 Minona Street Hawthorn

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL: 9819 3502

\$25 waged/ \$15 concession

- **July 2: Eleni Rivers**
*topic: Parallel Landscapes:
Why the arts are important in
the creation of a rich commu-
nity!*
- **August 6: Jacques Boulet**
*topic: 'Relating' in the modern
world: the re-invention of the
social... ?*
- **September 10: Stories from
the Kanyini intensive by par-
ticipants**
- **October 1: Dr Nick Coleman**
topic: TBC
- **October 8: Annual oases
Graduation Dinner (evening)**
- **November 5: Professor Joseph
Camilleri, La Trobe University
School of Politics and Director
of the Centre for Dialogue**
topic: TBC
- **December 3: Oases 4th Year
participants**
*topic: Stories from the partici-
pants' projects & journeys*

Oases -

Programs in Integrative and Trans-
formative Studies - Learning for
personal growth and global re-

For the children

*For the children
Who will live after us
We care
For our children
To have a safe climate
Is only fair
For us adults
To fix our own mess
Is only right
But our 'leaders'
Instead shuffle deck-
chairs
Increasing the plight
So we the people
Must take the lead
We have the right*

*From Deckchair Democracy project, 2011
Deborah Hart*

U.N. Says World Vulnerable to Food Crises

By Caroline Henshaw

LONDON—The world has become increasingly vulnerable to food crises in the wake of the global financial crisis and the commodity boom of 2007-08, the United Nations' food body said Monday. In its flagship report, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said while world food prices fell after spiking in 2008, they remain elevated and volatile, a situation likely to continue owing to rising production costs, growing demand from biofuels and pressure on supplies from a rapidly-expanding population.

"The experience of the food price and financial crises have provided a sharp reminder of the vulnerability of world food security to shocks in the global food system and the world economy," said the report. Some food prices have more than doubled this year after weather problems in key producers curbed the global production of wheat, corn, cotton and sugar. The FAO's food-price index rose 2.2% on month in February, the eighth-consecutive monthly rise, to the highest level in real and nominal terms since the FAO started monitoring prices in 1990, according to data from the body.

Charities warn the rising cost of staple foods could push the number of chronically-hungry people in the world above 1 billion, as happened in 2009. "Millions more people are sliding into poverty as they struggle to afford basic food supplies and more and more are at risk of going hungry," said Oxfam's food-policy adviser Thierry Kesteloot.

The FAO report said that with global food consumption outpacing supply, "prices are projected to increase over the next decade and to continue to be at levels, on average, above those of the past decade." World food production, as measured by the FAO's production index, is forecast to have grown 0.8% in 2010 after rising 3.8% in 2008 and 2.6% in 2007, as producers responded to the high prices of the food crisis. Global food consumption, which has been rising at an average of around 2% a year, was only marginally dented by the recession, the FAO said. Trade in food is expected to have contracted again in 2010 after increasing 4%-6% annually before the financial crisis. "Episodes of high prices are detrimental to food security, and the high uncertainty associated with price volatility affects producer viability and may lead to reduced agricultural investments," said the report.

Problems such as climate change are also expected to leave markets more vulnerable to shocks: the number of Asian countries affected by food crises doubled from five a year in 1981-2002 to 10 in 2003-2009, for example. "Since the mid-1980s, the general trend has been towards an increase in the number of countries affected by emergencies," the report said. In the face of such growing pressure, the FAO said governments must boost investment in agriculture. It highlighted that closing the gender gap in agricultural production by empowering women could potentially boost developing countries' output by 2.5%-4% and feed an extra 100-150 million starving people. "The recent food and financial crises, the uncoordinated policy responses and continuing fears over global food-market turmoil have underscored the need for action by the international community," it said.



The New Atheism – Just another dogma?

Adapted from **Angus McLeay (Director of 'IsiahOne')**

Humanist and Atheist Evaluations of the New Atheism Movement – Melbourne, 2011

This event was run by the Hegel Summer School (at Borderlands early February) and was described as a critique of the New Atheism (NA) movement. A diverse group of people attended, including Christians, philosophers – professional and amateur, philosophy students and a significant number of humanists and atheists. Four presentations were given, lecture-style, followed by questions from the audience. Angus McLeay was there for CPX and here he considers three of the presentations in limited detail.

Deakin University PhD philosophy candidate, **Petra Brown**, gave the first presentation. Brown shared that upon reading the NA literature in preparation she initially wrote a scathing review. With her Dutch Reformed background she saw how NA had failed to grasp the actual nature of religion as a lived reality. Yet Brown rejected her first approach and instead presented an insightful analysis of the problems besetting the debate, which stem from human nature. She set a tone of warmth, honesty and humility that was inspiring. Brown advanced the view that what she called 'logos', or cognitive systems, and 'mythos', or imagination and art, were equally important to being human. She argued that both the New Atheists and some religious traditions err by imposing logos over mythos, or what theologian John Haught has called 'cognitive Puritanism'. Cognitive Puritanism functions to abstract truth from its embodied context and idolises truth in its propositional form. Brown illustrated this problem by comparing two very similar denunciations of religious imagery, one found in a passage by Christopher Hitchens, the other taken from the 16th century Reformer, John Calvin. She employed ancient Greek Orthodox theologians to illustrate the integration of logos and mythos. Brown suggested that the division between logos and mythos could be healed through humour and by affirming imagination, art, music and ritual.

In the second paper, Melbourne University Continental philosopher, **Cameron Shingleton**, took up the critical gauntlet left by Brown when he delivered a withering review of Richard Dawkins', *The God Delusion (Delusion)*. Shingleton's presentation was as erudite as it was rhetorically incisive. The gist of his attack was that Dawkins claimed to be representing scientific and rational principles, but had abandoned those same principles in terms of philosophical argument. While Shingleton praised Dawkins' arguments against Intelligent Design as specific, rationally clear and evidence-based, he described the remainder of the book as a collection of speculative, half-developed and analytically unsound arguments. The problems with *Delusion* begin, Shingleton argued, when Dawkins grounds his major argument on faulty premises. Specifically, Dawkins limits religion to a variety which suits the type he wishes to attack. Dawkins dismisses all forms of religion which don't suit his purposes. For example, Indian and Chinese religions are relegated to 'sub-religious' belief systems so they don't cloud Dawkins' preferred religious target of Shingleton's frustration with Dawkins was his view that rigorous philosophy would have done a far more thorough and complete job in critiquing religion than Dawkins' ham-fisted, inconsistent attempts.

Melbourne University philosopher **Tamas Pataki** described the NA movement as a reaction to religiously-motivated violence and bigotry as seen in the September 11 attacks as well as a sense that the relationship between religion and politics under US President George W. Bush was threatening secular, democratic values. The New Atheists were, Pataki said, responding to a "fierce irrationalism" inherent in religion. Pataki's analysis of religion was both un-scientific and philosophically unsound; the connections between a comment by Pat Robertson on Hurricane Katrina to "evangelicalism" to "Christianity" to "religion" were not justified by sound analysis or empirical evidence. NA appears to assume that, stripped of religion, humanity would by default move up to a higher ethical and intellectual plane.

Supposing religion was magically extirpated - what forces would humanity face post-religion? Would human need for transcendence give legitimacy to destructive nationalistic or utopian ideologies? Would instrumental state policies become justifiable in the name of utilitarianism if religious stories or communities were absent? What civil society groups would restrain the seemingly limitless power of neo-liberal market ideology? Who would step into the gaps left by religion in social welfare and voluntary work? In defending the NA agenda, Pataki gave no hints how NA could demonstrate empirically or analytically that the disappearance of religion *in toto* would lead to humanity's greater good.

Ultimately it helps Christians, humanists, atheists and philosophers to meet one another in the flesh in order that two dimensional depictions in paper and ink are enlarged by the three dimensional realities of the human beings who inhabit differing views.



*"Just because she isn't saying no...
Doesn't mean she's saying yes."*

*"Just because you help her
home...*

*Doesn't mean you get to help
yourself."*

*"Just because she's drunk doesn't
mean she wants to f**k."*

Those are some of the messages scrawled across posters for a new anti-rape campaign being launched in Ottawa, Canada under the slogan "Don't Be That Guy." The campaign is designed to be a shift away from the "No means no" campaign, which puts the onus on the woman to say no.

This campaign recognizes the significant role that alcohol plays in sexual assault and aims to have young men act responsibly. According to [back-ground information on the campaign from Crime Prevention Ottawa](#):

For years we've been telling young women that it's up to them to avoid sexual assault. This campaign breaks the mold by speaking directly to young men. The images are intentionally graphic to emphasize the bottom line, which is that sex without consent is sexual assault. And being drunk is no excuse for committing a violent crime.

According to organizers, the message of the campaign is clear:

- Don't be that guy who doesn't take responsibility
- Don't be that guy who doesn't make sure his partner is consenting.
- Don't be that guy who sexually assaults a young woman too drunk to consent to sex.
- Don't be that guy who uses alcohol as a tool to sexually assault.
- Don't be that guy who believes it is not rape.

These posters will be placed in men's washrooms at bars and in a variety of other places that young people go. <http://www.care2.com/causes/womens-rights/blog/edgy-new-dont-be-that-guy-anti-rape-campaign-launched-in-ottawa/>



Creative Parenting workshop

This participatory and fun workshop will focus on the developing child's needs, and how to support children appropriately at each stage. The workshop also includes creative ways of encouraging positive behaviour in children, without resorting to punishment, as well as tools for loving and conscious parenting.

Sunday 19 June, 2.00 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.

(Both parents / caregivers are encouraged to attend both sessions of the Creative Parenting workshop)

Venue: Main Hall, Augustine Centre

Cost: \$130 per person for both sessions (or \$70.00 per person for one session); Couples: \$190 per couple for both sessions (or \$130 per couple for one session)

(Concessions available)

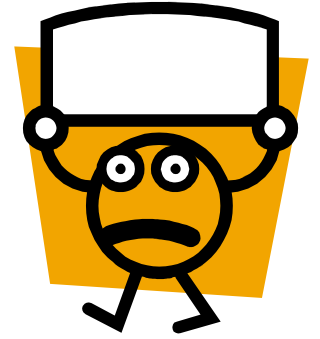
Facilitators: Carol & David Liknaitzky

RSVP to OASES 03 9819 3502 or email info@oases.edu.au



Get Up! Action for Australia

GetUp is an independent, grass-roots community advocacy organisation giving everyday Australians opportunities to get involved and hold politicians accountable on important issues. Whether it is sending an email to a member of parliament, engaging with the media, attending an event or helping to get a television ad on the air, GetUp members take targeted, coordinated and strategic action. GetUp does not back any particular party, but aims to build an accountable and progressive Australia - an Australia with economic fairness, social justice and environmental sustainability at its core. GetUp is a not-for-profit organisation and receives no money from any political party or the government. We rely solely on funds and in-kind donations from the Australian public.



GET UP and Get Involved in their current campaigns: <http://www.getup.org.au/campaigns>

Borderlands Congratulates The Age (Finally)

Not tokenistic, just good manners

Editorial; May 23, 2011

THE custom of acknowledging traditional Aboriginal land owners at public events is a meaningful and important protocol: a process of recognition of this country's original custodians that is a small but significant way of reminding us of our heritage and history. It should not be seen as an example of political correctness that itself requires the sort of correction made last week by Premier Ted Baillieu.

Within days of the state funeral of Lionel Rose - an event attended by the Premier, and which began with a traditional welcome-to-country ceremony - Mr Baillieu has scrapped the mandatory acknowledgment established, with good reason, by the state Labor government. Instead, Mr Baillieu says it is more appropriate as a matter of discretion; of "doing it in a way where it's engaging and inclusive and the language is actually heard rather than just delivered". He has been backed by one of his Liberal predecessors, Jeff Kennett, who, presumably without Yes, Minister overtones, describes it as "a courageous decision". "I've been embarrassed by the welcome-to-country," Mr Kennett says. "I felt it was being given for the wrong reason."

If this is the case, then the right reasons appear to have escaped premiers past and present, who appear to take the unilateral view that traditional acknowledgment is not always heartfelt and therefore lacks meaning: after all, the playing of the national anthem at various public events could also be regarded as embarrassing, or a matter of merely going through the notes.

Advertisement: Story continues below

Contrast these points of view with that of Wurundjeri elder Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin, who conducted the indigenous ceremony at the Rose funeral. She says of Mr Baillieu's decision: "I feel like I've had part of my heart ripped out, but I also feel more importantly for my ancestors and those involved in that very early struggle of being given recognition." Another former premier, Steve Bracks, has said of the thousands of times he began his speeches with an Aboriginal welcome: "I always felt very strongly about it and never, ever, did I feel it was a wooden or rote presentation."

In reality, Mr Baillieu's decision devalues a custom that already costs little or nothing to observe, and which deserves to continue in its present form. It is a fundamental courtesy towards the original owners of the land and their descendants. To retreat from such a custom - even by allowing politicians the option of not paying tribute at public events - is an acknowledgment of bad manners over common sense.

Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/editorial/not-tokenistic-just-good-manners-20110522-leyt2.html#ixzz1N9PmK951>



Surplus Fetish

Adapted from David Richardson, Policy Brief No. 26, May 2011, The Australia Institute, The Political Economy of the Surplus and Debt.

The notion that a big surplus is always preferable has been accepted uncritically for too long. Many economic commentators seem to want to wage war on the deficit: they might be called 'deficit hawks'. There are, however, awkward questions the deficit hawks should answer. Ironically, as will be discussed below, the financial markets actually need quite a large supply of Australian Government securities; that is, the last thing 'the markets' want is the complete abolition of public sector debt. Indeed, at times, they have lobbied for more.

Surplus thinking, primarily the confusion between private profit and a government surplus, is a symptom of private-sector principles being applied inappropriately to the public sector. The owners of a private business clearly hope it runs at a profit so that it can both survive and pay a dividend to its owners. The payment of a dividend by a private company is a distribution of profit to the company's shareholders and is not counted as a cost to the business. That is, the objective of a private firm is to generate more revenue from selling a product than the costs incurred in making that product so that profit can be generated and then distributed to the owners of the company.

The objective of a government, however, is to raise resources from the community in order to fund public activities or investments that, for various reasons, are better performed by government. The pursuit of a budget surplus is therefore the pursuit of excessive tax collections relative to the desired level of public spending. When Australia's current level of debt is compared with past levels, or considered in the international context, it is difficult to see why

prevailing debt and deficits are of so much current political interest.

Rather than offering society a choice between increased social welfare and other spending initiatives or fiscal 'discipline', the apparently objective targets seem to have been designed as some sort of quasi-scientific canon to rule out-of-bounds otherwise worthwhile objectives and conceal the available alternatives. If these rules are going to impose limits on what governments can do, there should be some solid argument behind them. Unfortunately, that is not really the case at all. An obsession with surpluses is dangerous but, when combined with arbitrary rules about the level of tax governments can collect, the result is an undemocratic attempt to conceal choices from voters.

To spend or not to spend?

Rules such as limiting spending growth to two per cent have further consequences. If something is worth doing it should be done, whether it is in the private sector or the public sector; however, by imposing a spending limit, projects that may be commercially viable are likely to be dropped merely because there is a limit on total spending.

Significantly, private companies never adopt rules that would limit their ability to invest in a profitable project. A rational private company is quite prepared to borrow and invest in a project that is expected to generate a net return. Governments should also follow that approach and judge a spending project on its intrinsic merits. It appears that there is a certain selectivity about when and how private sector approaches are advocated for government.

Projects or programs that may not be commercially viable may nevertheless generate net benefits for the country. On normal cost-benefit grounds they should be adopted, but are potentially ruled out when arbitrary spending limits exist. Limits on spending necessarily imply ruling out otherwise beneficial programs.

Continued from page 8 ... New (to us) library titles:

- Global covenant : the social democratic alternative to the Washington consensus / D Held.
- Lying : moral choice in public and private life / S Bok.
- Being a man : a guide to the new masculinity / P Fanning, M McKay.
- Burning bush : a fire history of Australia / SJ Pyne.
- Aladdin's lamp : how Greek science came to Europe through the Islamic world / J Freely.

- The story of stuff : how our obsession with stuff is trashing the planet, our communities, and our health--and a vision for change / A Leonard with A Conrad.
- Images of power : aboriginal art of the Kimberley / J Ryan with K Akerman.

As usual, many thanks to our band of delightful library volunteers. We seem to have a connection to Box Hill TAFE students.

Martha The Librarian

What Is Complementarity? Q & A with James A. Goldston

April 11, 2011 | by [Will Cohen](#)

Complementarity is really just the role of domestic courts in holding accountable perpetrators of the most serious crimes—war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Complementarity is the statute's way of talking about the International Criminal Court's relationship with national or domestic courts. The statute provides that the ICC act in a manner that is *complementary* to national courts. The thinking is, in the broad effort to ensure accountability for serious crimes, both the ICC and domestic courts have a role to play. Because the ICC is able to try only a few cases at a time, the vast majority of perpetrators of such crimes must be tried in national systems. Serious crimes like rape and murder and kidnapping that take place in the context of armed conflict or in the context of widespread and systematic abuses, like crimes against humanity. The problem is in too many places around the world, courts lack the capacity and governments lack the will to take on these crimes and we are left with an impunity gap—crimes without justice. Complementarity is about building the structures that can fill that gap. It's the effort to create domestic accountability for international or serious crimes. **So, complementarity is about expanding the reach of justice.** Complementarity is, in part, a new way of addressing a very old problem. The course of human history has largely been a history of impunity. And we have only recently been taking very small but important steps to address the issue.

Why is addressing impunity important? Because continued impunity undermines the rule of law. It prevents stability. It prevents democracy. It prevents societies from developing in an orderly way. And it has terrible human consequences. Impunity has an enormously debilitating impact on victims. For people who have suffered sexual violence or whose family members have been killed, impunity is a continuing violation of these people's rights to closure, to know the truth about what happened, and to ensure that the perpetrators of these crimes are punished.

What might complementarity look like in practice? There are actually many positive examples to build on. We've seen complementarity work well in Peru, with the trial of Alberto Fujimori, and in Yugoslavia, where domestic Bosnian prosecutors and judges were able to carry forward work that the international tribunal has not been able to do. One of the most notable recent successes has been [the mobile court project](#), which the Justice Initiative has been assisting in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

What stands between us and complementarity in practice? What are the obstacles? The two primary obstacles are, on the one hand, technical and, on the other, political. The technical obstacle is the fact that very often investigators at the national level do not have adequate training in how to investigate certain kinds of crimes. They may not be skilled in the use of forensic evidence, in the analysis of fingerprints or DNA evidence. Or there may be insufficient infrastructure to house archives or things like that. The political obstacles are, of course, ever present, because it is often the case that those who commit serious crimes have a great deal of power. In many contexts, those who commit serious crimes are senior members of governments. And obviously, when that is the case, there is an enormous political challenge to ensuring accountability for what they've done.

How do you overcome a lack of political will? There is no magic bullet. But we have learned that a combination of factors is central to generating and sustaining political will. Foremost is an empowered domestic civil society capable of demanding accountability from government. This may include human rights NGOs, independent journalists, and courageous members of the bar. Their efforts must be reinforced by consistent diplomatic pressure from the international community. Finally, concrete examples of complementarity in action—which show that it is indeed possible to bring leading perpetrators to account—are important as well.



4 Degrees Hotter

A Climate Action Centre Primer

www.climateactioncentre.org

Adapted from David Spratt February 2011

Analysis in a UNEP report released in November 2010 found that even if governments implement all they have pledged to do, that would "...imply a temperature increase of between 2.5-5C [from pre-industrial times] before the end of the century". A 4C global average rise means on average about 5.5-6C warmer over land, especially away from the coast. 4C could render half of the world uninhabitable. Populations would be driven towards the poles, and practically-speaking that means the north pole. Professor Kevin Anderson, director of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change, believes only around 10 per cent of the planet's population – around half a billion people – will survive if global temperatures rise by 4C... Anderson, who advises the government on climate change, said the consequences were "terrifying". "For humanity it's a matter of life or death," he said. "We will not make all human beings extinct as a few people with the right sort of resources may put themselves in the right parts of the world and survive. But I think it's extremely unlikely that we wouldn't have mass death at 4C. If you have got a population of nine billion by 2050 and you hit 4C, 5C or 6C, you might have half a billion people surviving." Substantial changes in the structure and function of ecosystems, including disturbance by fires and insects, are very likely for temperatures above 2C. Recent assessments of faunal change based on relatively low-emissions scenarios suggest that increased temperatures, including regional changes of up to 4C, could result in local loss of at least ten per cent of endemic vertebrates in the Americas and the replacement of 90 per cent of species in the tundra, Central America and the Andes. Although ecosystems and species can be resilient, a 4C world would require unprecedented interventions regardless of whether the choice is to maintain the current portfolio of conservation areas or to plan new conservation areas suitable for a changed climate.

Algae prosper in waters below 10C so, as the climate warms, the algae population reduces. In computer modelling of climate warming and regulation carried out by James Lovelock and Lee Kump and published in "Nature", it was found that: ... as the carbon dioxide abundance approached 500 ppm (or a rise of about 3C), regulation began to fail and there was a sudden upward jump in temperature. The cause was the failure of the ocean ecosystem. As the world grew warmer, the algae were denied nutrients by the expanding warms surface of the oceans, until eventually they became extinct. As the area of ocean covered by algae grew smaller, their cooling effect diminished and the temperature surged upwards. The end result was a temperature rise of 8C above pre-industrial levels, which would result in the planet being habitable only from the latitude of Melbourne south to the south pole, and northern Europe, Asia and Canada to the north pole. Everything in between would be desert and uninhabitable, billions of people would not be able to survive.

Restoring a safe climate means the world very quickly building a zero-emissions economy without fossil fuels, and reducing the current level of greenhouse gases. It is a vast undertaking akin to a post-war reconstruction, but we have the technologies and the economic capacity. What we presently lack is an honest conversation about where we are headed, and the political will to build the solutions that are already available to us. Our time is better spent working out how to make the impossible happen, rather than living the delusion that reasonable adaptation is possible to a 4-degree warmer world.

<http://www.climateactioncentre.org>



BORDERLANDS COOPERATIVE

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2. Membership/Shareholder. The primary activities of Borderlands are to provide consulting services, meeting spaces and to contribute to supporting ecological, social and cultural regeneration and sustainability through collaborative endeavors and critical inquiry.

All members of the Cooperative are required to be active members.

Active membership requires:

- For members payment of annual memberships fees **OR**
- For shareholders
 - ◊ Participate in at least one activity each financial year such as a meeting, or use the space or other resources of the cooperative **AND/OR**
 - ◊ Make a donation to further the activities of the cooperative

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Toil with us at Borderlands!

Project work:

This is a general open call to researchers, social workers and community workers (or other appropriately qualified and experienced people) interested and able to do project work; to seek out potential projects and write submissions - work with us at Borderlands either singly or as a team.

With Borderlands involvement, supervision and support, 20% of project income goes right back into the cooperative, so that we can pay the rent, keep computers updated, pay for general office upkeep, sustain the active work of holistic community activism, sustainability and action research going into the future.

Borderlands is a non-profit cooperative, so if you see potential projects or are thinking about writing a submission, come join us in a supportive and supervised office - either give us a call or drop in to say hello. New faces are always welcome. **If you have other skills, knowledge, wisdom, understanding, ideas and would like to be a part of Borderlands, please [contact us](#) and get involved!**

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