

Village Eco News

A publication of Bangalow Land and Rivercare.

Environmental News is Rarely Good

From an article by the Australian National University, Canberra

This is the main conclusion from the Australian National University addressing 'Australia's Environment in 2018', the latest in its annual series of environmental condition reports. Every year, they analyse vast amounts of measurements from satellites and on-ground stations using algorithms and prediction models on a supercomputer.

These volumes of data are turned into regional summary accounts that can be explored on the Australian Environment Explorer website. They interpret this data, along with other information from national and international reports, to assess how our environment is tracking.

Globally, the increase of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere accelerated after slowing down in 2017. Global air and ocean temperatures remained high, sea levels increased further, and even the ozone hole grew again, after shrinking during the previous two years.

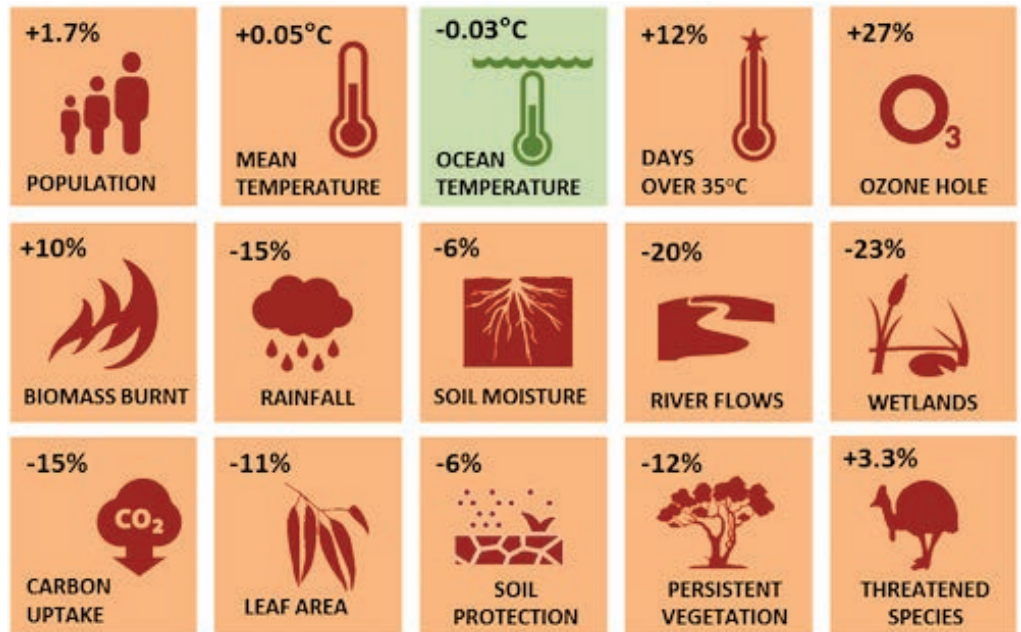
While previous environmental scorecards showed a mixed bag of regional impacts, 2018 was a poor year in all states and territories. Particularly badly hit was New South Wales, where after a second year of very poor rainfall, ecosystems and communities reached crisis point. Unfortunately the first months of 2019 continued as badly as 2018 ended.

National Environmental Indicators for 2018

Whereas 2017 was really quite bad however 2018 saw many indicators dip even further into the red.

Temperatures went up, rainfall declined further, and the destruction of vegetation and ecosystems by drought, fire and land clearing continued.

Soil moisture, rivers and wetlands all declined, and vegetation growth was poor. Since then we have seen bushfires, heat waves and fish kills.



Landcare Working Bee

Our team of friendly volunteers work every Saturday morning, weather permitting from 8.30am to 10.30am rotating through the various sites around Bangalow. All welcome.

Australians care about animals – but we don't buy ethical meat

If we care about the welfare of the animals we eat, why don't we buy foods that come from animals that were treated well? And why are we buying eggs that reflect higher welfare but not other animal-based foods?

Many of us love animals, but buy the cheapest meat at the supermarket. When a researcher asks shoppers if they'd pay more for free-range, we say yes, until we are forced to put our money where our mouth is.

When it comes to pork and bacon, Aussie consumers are afforded no legally enforceable definitions for pig husbandry systems. Currently, upwards of 95% of all pigs grown in Australia have no outdoor access often being raised in stalls, see below, that are highly confined.

When pigs are reared indoors, their stocking densities (number of animals per unit floor area) have a direct impact on farmers' profit margins. But there is a growing trend towards use of the rather opaque term "outdoor-bred". This denotes that piglets are born outdoors, but when weaned, at about 21 days of age, they are transferred to sheds where they spend the rest of their lives. Unfortunately, most consumers are unaware of the true conditions behind this label and think it indicates that the animals spend all of their lives ranging freely.

The next time you buy pork or bacon ask your butcher, or read the labels, to ensure the product complies with the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme, Humane Choice or FREPA.

Source: The Conversation



Above: The Marine Sanctuary in the Bight and below Seals affected by an oil spill in the Atlantic



The Fight for the 'Bight'

The Great Australian Bight is under threat from the Norwegian oil giant Equinor who wants to commence ultra deep sea drilling, a new and high risk operation, off the shores of the Bight.

The weather in the Bight comes up from the Antarctic and has a treacherous reputation as can be seen by the number of ship wrecks along the coast.

Equinor's own modelling shows an oil spill from a blow out in the Bight would impact anywhere along the southern coast line from Esperance in WA to north of Sydney and even Tasmania.

Opposition to the drilling has resulted in 30 000 submissions along with 28 surfing legends and two local councils joining the fight with everyone well aware of the catastrophic 2010 Deep Water Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Wilderness Society's Peter Owen claims that "the fight for the Bight is now the biggest environmental protest Australia has ever seen. Equinor will be shocked if it thinks the protests will disappear if it gets approval"

While Warrnambool and Mt Barker Councils have expressed serious concern and direct opposition to the proposal.

Source; The Wilderness Society



Eucalypts

by Dawn Lotty

Many local residents participate in the Bangalow Koala Tree Planting working bees, mainly planting Eucalypt trees to provide our Koalas with food (see above). But did you know that Eucalypt trees dominate Australia's landscape like no other plant group in the world.

Research has sequenced the DNA of more than 700 eucalypt species to map how they came to dominate the continent. It found eucalypts have been in Australia for at least 60 million years, but a comparatively recent explosion in diversity 2 million years ago is the secret to their spread across Australia.

Many species growing in southeastern Australia are new in evolutionary terms (10 million years or less) and not ancient remnants from Gondwana, a super continent that gradually broke up between 180 and 45 million years ago.

At some point in the last 2-10 million years the Eucalyptus arrived in the new, drier environmental conditions. They thrived, they most likely helped spread fire to wipe out their competition, and then rapidly changed their physical form to give us the many species that we see today like the Tallow Woods in the background of our photo.

Very few other groups in the world have made this amount of change so quickly, and arguably dramatically. The east coast of Australia would look very different if it wasn't dominated by gum trees.

Patrons Programme 2019

By Liz Gander

The major source of funding for Bangalow Land and Rivercare over the past 8 years has been our Patrons of the Environment Programme. It was borne of the idea that it is our community we are helping so if everyone assisted with as little or as much as they could we can keep improving our outdoor space and fight climate change at a grassroots level. An example of this is the work we have done at the sports fields and at the All Souls planting made possible by the support of our community.

Changes are coming as some may be aware. Due to aging of our group and the lack of interest in Landcare work by the younger generation the continuation of the maintenance we now carry out will become a year by year prospect. One option is that the group will become caretakers of the existing work but nothing new will be started. We have already hired a professional bush regenerator to help us with weed control along the creeks.

However we still need the help of the community to fund our work. During the coming year we will be working hard to get all our plantings to a stage where they are close to being completed. The lovely soft rain of the last few weeks has allowed us to start re-planting where needed including on the lower levels of the canopy where shade exists. We are aiming to have the plantings naturally regenerate reducing the need for maintenance.

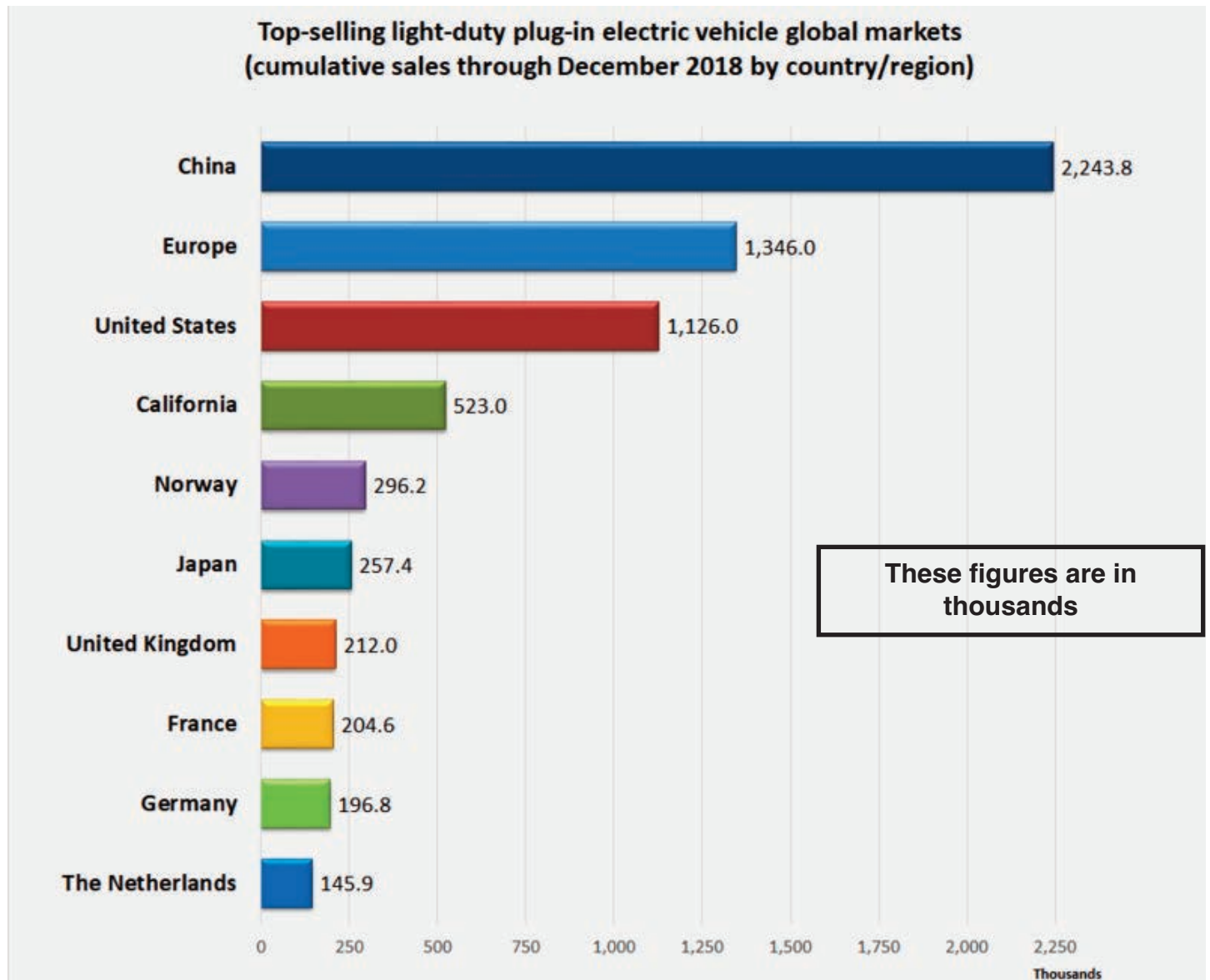
We hope your support will continue this year and would like to reach out to more residents, with that support we can do so much more. All funds are spent locally to ensure we support those who support us. For more information contact Liz on bangalowlandcare@gmail.com



*Our team: Anne, Noelene, Liz, Cici & Robert
absent Val, Don, Chris & Enid*

Electric Cars

The announcement of a proposal that 50% of all new car sales in Australia should be electric by 2030 has generated a plethora of lies and hysteria. Thankfully the motor industry and the rest of the world is just getting on with it, for example, currently the Chinese government is combining with Elon Musk to build the largest electric car plant in the world.



Other countries, often offering government incentive include: Andora, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Albania (all Police vehicles), Brazil, Bulgaria, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia (the first country to deploy a nationwide charging network), Finland, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Kosovo, Lithuania, Mexico (all local governments), New Zealand (EV programme launched in 2016), Pakistan (including motor-bikes) Phillippines, Poland, Portugal, Singapore Sth Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzland, Ukraine.

Source: multiple websites

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Our aim is to inform, interest, amuse and educate our readers on all things environmental. We welcome you to submit your contributions or to subscribe to this free Newsletter send your name and email address to:

bangalowlandcare@gmail.com

Please pass this publication on to your family and friends. Receiving our Newsletter online will help to save the environment we work to preserve.

editor, design and layout, Dawn Lotty

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Contact Details:

President: Noelene Plummer 6685 4470

Secretary: Liz Gander 6687 1309

Email: bangalowlandcare@gmail.com

www.bangalowlandcare.org.au

