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Forward thinking

This issue contains some heavier reading in our two Focus topics but we hope you'll agree that it is both informative and relevant as everyone contemplates another opportunity to choose government leaders.

Infrastructure (page 10) and leadership (page 22) are topics inseparable from any consideration of progress on national sustainability. The aim here is not to cover these big subjects comprehensively, but rather to present select provocative overviews of particular aspects. These should help paint a picture of some key priorities.

Ecos was a supporting partner at the National Business Leaders Forum on Sustainable Development in Melbourne on 2 September. I can report that, from those decision makers in attendance, it seems leaders of key organisations in Australia do have a growing, positive approach to sustainable practice. This is reflected in the solid participation of companies in the inaugural Corporate Responsibility Index (see page 26), and bodes well for wider national uptake given industry's fundamental influence. Page 7 also reports an encouraging 49% pick-up in the number of Australian companies reporting their sustainability commitments, although by international standards, things could be better. The annual progress is, however, a great sign and should be acknowledged.



Claire Peddie's report on Rob Fitzpatrick's crucial contribution to the assessment and restoration of Iraq's marshlands (page 16) is a highlight of

the issue. It is poignant, considering the immediate horrors of conflict and a lot of negative press, that an opportunity has arisen out of the war – and been quickly embraced – for an international team of experts to work openly with the Iraqi people to try to understand and salvage the remnants of one of the globe's key wetland areas.

Finally, the impact of the cooperative research being done in Australia to develop parameters for measuring sustainable progress (page 28) can't be underestimated. Being able to calculate and integrate into national planning the true worth of our natural and social 'capital' is a dramatic and historic step forward. It signals a significant change to our longer-term thinking.

Enjoy your reading.

James Porteous
Managing Editor



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A part-time opportunity has opened at *Ecos* to assist with broadening the national profile of the magazine. We are seeking a dynamic, lateral thinker with good connections and editorial, marketing, and business- or industry-facing experience.

If you would like more information about the role, get in touch by emailing ecos@csiro.au.