



Schedule of Services

Services are held every Sunday at 10:30 at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre

7 August, Martin Horlacher: "Nous: Intellectuals and Modern Society"

In a society ruled by dumbed-down attitudes to culture and five-second sound bites, the role of the intellectual - be it in a public or private capacity - has never been under greater threat. This talk will examine what can possibly be done to combat this problem.

14 August, No service owing to markets at Kirribilli.

21 August, Ginna Hastings: "How do we deal with evil in our world?"

Tragedies abound, world peace seems a lost cause, selfish aggression is rampant. What do we do?

28 August, Rev. Geoff Usher: "Fungi, Rabbits and Sheep"

Beatrix Potter is best known as an author and illustrator, the creator of Peter Rabbit, Jemima Puddle-duck, Tom Kitten and Mrs Tittlemouse. She was also a farmer, sheep-breeder and respected show judge. And she was a generous supporter of the National Trust, to which she bequeathed most of her estate.

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**Professor Brian Cox:**

**"The problem with today's world is that everyone believes they have the right to express their opinions AND have others listen to it.**

**The correct statement of individual rights is that everyone has a right to an opinion, but crucially that opinion can be roundly ignored and even be made fun of, particularly if it is demonstrably NONSENSE."**

**Don't we need a limit to the "making fun" though? Some making fun is just cruelty. Jan Tendys.**

# Energy from Waste

*This article is taken from the website of Energy Victoria*

Remember the scene in “Back To The Future” where Doc Brown uses banana peels to fuel his time-travelling car? Well, the idea is not as far fetched as you might think.

We haven’t discovered the secret to time travel, but we can generate electricity and heat from waste or convert it to a synthetic fuel. There are a number of ways we can do this, but some of them carry significant risks.

## **Organic and inorganic energy**

Energy from waste can be organic or inorganic.

**Organic energy** is produced when organic waste is converted into a fuel, usually methane. The process helps us safeguard our environment because it recovers a valuable resource (methane) and reduces pollution in the atmosphere.

**Inorganic energy** is produced when high calorific materials, such as plastics, are recovered from existing materials. The plastics used to generate inorganic energy are most often those that can’t be recycled. By the time they are available to generate energy, their exact composition and origin is often unknown.

## **Thermal energy conversion**

There are three principal ways in which we can convert waste to energy using thermal energy: combustion, gasification and pyrolysis.

**Combustion** involves incinerating organic waste, and substances like plastics and textiles. The incineration process turns the waste into heat, which in turn can be used to generate electricity.

**Gasification** converts materials containing carbon, such as coal, petroleum, and organic waste, and plastic, into carbon monoxide and hydrogen. It does this by converting the raw material at high temperatures with a controlled amount of oxygen. The resulting synthetic gas

(syngas) is itself a fuel. Gasification is a very efficient method for extracting energy from many different types of organic materials.

The third process – **pyrolysis** – uses heat in the absence of oxygen to decompose organic waste. It can convert complex materials such as organic and product waste into synthetic gas.

## **Biochemical energy conversion**

Biochemical conversion uses microbes to convert organic waste into energy sources such as methane-rich biogas and ethanol. There are a variety of technologies based on this biological treatment, including anaerobic digestion and fermentation.

**Anaerobic digestion** uses microorganisms to break down biodegradable material in the absence of oxygen. This creates a gas that is rich in carbon dioxide and methane and not only reduces the mass of organic waste, but also leaves a nutrient-rich residue that can be used as fertiliser.

**Fermentation** converts organic waste into an acid or alcohol in the absence of oxygen. This releases energy from the organic material, leaving a nutrient-rich residue.

## **There is a catch**

Thermal energy conversion, such as incineration, is the focus of most environmental concerns around turning waste to energy. Thermal technologies emit microscopic particles of matter and liquid suspended in a gas (particulates) and pollute our air.

These particulates can be toxic and increase the risk of heart and lung disease, diabetes, damage to thyroid and death in humans. In animals, they increase the risk of cancer, hormone disruption and birth defects.

In addition, incineration facilities produce a large amount of fly-ash (a residue of incineration) that contains accumulated toxic materials such as dioxins and heavy metals that must be disposed of in hazardous waste facilities.

**See p.4**

## Kiva update from Senegal.

You are receiving this update because you made a loan to a Kiva borrower through our Field Partner UIMCEC, a partner of ChildFund International. Thank you for supporting an entrepreneur in Senegal.

Dear Kiva Lender, Hello from Senegal!

Thank you so much for making a loan to a borrower in Senegal. As a Kiva Fellow who has spent the past four months meeting with borrowers and helping to advance Kiva's mission here in Senegal, I've had the pleasure of meeting the recipients of your loans, who are some of the most hard-working, welcoming people I've ever met.

Through my visits, I've heard about many difficulties that borrowers in this country face, and I've also heard many success stories.

I met with Anna, the representative for a group of borrowers who raise livestock in a small village. She said that her Kiva loan offers her and her fellow borrowers a longer loan term than most other loans she could get, which makes a huge difference when your business takes some time to mature – literally!

I met with Mbeye, a fisherman who usually starts his day at 5 or 6 in the morning, and finishes as late as 8 or 9 in the evening. He's using his Kiva loan to build a second fishing boat in his spare time, and he will use it to expand his fishing business.

Many borrowers I met with, including Aissatou, Bineta and Maimouna work in "petit commerce," for which there's not a great English equivalent, but retail comes close. They sell various goods in their neighborhood markets, but they frequently change what they're selling to adapt to changes in demand. So, someone might sell carbon for cook stoves one week and then vegetables the next, but also sell breakfasts outside her home on weekday mornings. Many of these women work at the local market all morning, return home around midday to make lunch for their families, and go right back to the market afterward. I can't possibly imagine cooking a meal for a family of 8 on my lunch break, so I was in awe.

I met with a group of women, including Awa and Fatou (featured above), who live in a seaside village and make their livelihood from smoking and drying fish. As a lover of smoked fish, I asked to see their work and they took me on a tour of the town's fish smoking operations. From the area where they buy fresh fish to the grills where they cook it to racks where they leave it to dry for several days in the sun to the smokers, it was so interesting to learn about all the different steps in the process. Afterward, they invited me to join them for a lunch that included fish they had smoked – it was delicious!

I hope this update gives you a taste of the stories and successes of the borrowers you've lent to. It was a pleasure to meet all of them, and I thank you, on their behalf, for the loans that have helped to make their successes possible.



## Energy from Waste continued from p. 2

Pyrolysis and thermal gasification carry many of the same risks.

We (Energy Victoria) support the development of organic waste to energy facilities

But we do not support the development of inorganic waste to energy facilities until there is:

A comprehensive understanding of the material that would be used in such facilities and the by-products of its conversion to energy; and

A comprehensive range of waste reduction and resource recovery measures that, in combination, provide 'upstream' incentives for manufacturers and producers to move towards a sustainable production and consumption model.

***The above is taken from the website of Energy Victoria , an independent, not for profit environmental organisation.***

***<http://environmentvictoria.org.au/content/energy-waste>***

***If you wish to learn more about the possibilities and limitations of these techniques Wikipedia is a good place to start:***

***<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waste-to-energy>***

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Comment by John Tendys

At the moment in Australia most waste is separated into organic, metal, and plastic streams. The organic material is put into bio-reactors (i.e. will generate methane and compost). Metals and plastics are recycled if possible, and the rest is buried. There may be some burning of paper, wood and plastic type wastes to recover the energy. A well-maintained modern incinerator should not generate significant pollutants, but they are socially very difficult to site.

Using incineration to generate energy could

displace some fossil energy, though it is to be noted that the plastic is equivalent to fossil energy. (Plastic is made from oil; burning plastic is the same as burning oil.) Burning organic material simply recycles atmospheric CO₂.

From the point of view of CO₂ emissions, burying the plastic (and, indeed, wood and paper) is better than burning it, since this stores some of the fossil CO₂ embedded in the plastic in the ground.

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## Nuclear waste to energy.

<http://www.world-nuclear.org/information-library/nuclear-fuel-cycle/nuclear-wastes/radioactive-waste-management.aspx>

This **World Nuclear Association** site points to:

**“Advanced electrometallurgical reprocessing which removes uranium, plutonium and minor actinides together for recycling in a fast reactor. The wastes then only need 300 years to reach the same level of radioactivity as the original ore. This is not yet operational on any commercial scale.”**

See also the work being done by **Transatomic Power** on a modern kind of molten salt reactor:

<http://www.transatomicpower.com/the-science/>

They say:

**“The waste from conventional nuclear reactors can be used as the fuel for our reactors. Light water reactors consume only about 4% of the energy in their uranium fuel, which means that their spent fuel rods contain vast amounts of untapped energy and remain radioactive for hundreds of thousands of years. Our reactors can use this waste, generating enormous amounts of electricity.”**

Work on this intrinsically safer reactor is well underway. **Jan Tendys**

## Asylum seekers, can we make any progress?

### Policy priorities

The government's first priority should be to improve conditions in offshore detention facilities in Nauru and Papua New Guinea.

The government has argued the Australian public widely supports its "tough" border policies, but there is evidence of growing disquiet about aspects of offshore detention. These include the detention of children, the mental health of detainees and inadequate standards of medical care. The government will therefore need to put in place measures to ensure greater oversight over operations in its offshore detention centres.

Specifically, the government must deal with two urgent policy matters relating to offshore detention as a priority.

First, it must formulate a plan to deal with the repercussions of the PNG Supreme Court's decision in April this year. The court found detention of refugees and asylum seekers in the Australian-funded centre on PNG was unconstitutional under the right to liberty in the PNG Constitution.

The Australia government has not yet released a proper response. Immigration Minister Peter Dutton has simply argued that the PNG court decision is not binding on Australia, and that the asylum seekers and refugees in the centre are PNG's responsibility.

However, the legal position is far more complex than that. Further litigation on this issue has begun in both PNG and Australian courts. The government must develop a policy response to this litigation to ensure its offshore centres operate within the law.

A second urgent matter will be for the government to agree on how to resettle those asylum seekers who have been recognised as refugees by authorities in Papua New Guinea and Nauru.

Previous policies that have used developing nations such as Cambodia have clearly not

worked. There is also evidence that PNG and Nauru are not suitable resettlement places for refugees. As a result, these refugees are living in limbo.

Turnbull must find a workable solution. This may require him to change tack to allow those persons recognised as refugees in the offshore processing centres to be resettled in Australia.

***The reality is there is simply no political will in our region to take refugees who are seen as Australia's responsibility. This will be a test of Turnbull's ability to persuade his party of the moral and political need for a change in policy.***

### Long-term, creative solutions

In addition to these urgent policy matters, the government needs to rethink its approach to resettlement.

Official Liberal Party policy states the government will maintain the resettlement quota at 13,750 places per year for the next two financial years, increasing to 18,750 places in 2018-19. While this is a positive move, the government needs to find more creative ways of providing avenues to refugees to come to Australia, particularly given the great international need for resettlement.

One example of a creative policy solution is the Canadian model of private sponsorship. This allows organisations like church groups to sponsor refugees. Under this program, the relevant group agrees to fund a refugee's resettlement costs for one year. This also has the advantage of providing a personal contact for the resettled refugee, which in turn assists with community integration.

Australia's **Department of Immigration** conducted a similar pilot in 2012. Its 2015 report on the pilot suggested such a program:

"... could provide an additional resettlement pathway."

Given the support for refugees expressed by community groups, particularly churches, the government should pursue this policy option in the next year. It also has the advantage of

perhaps being politically acceptable to all factions within the Coalition – even those that are against any increase in the official resettlement program.

***More broadly, the government must take a longer-term, global view of asylum policy that results in durable solutions for refugees. This includes developing a greater understanding of the position of countries in our region, as well as a more realistic awareness of Australia's responsibilities as a wealthy, industrialised nation in a globalised world.***

**From The Conversation: What's next for asylum seekers under a re-elected Turnbull government?**

by

**Maria O'Sullivan  
Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Law, and Associate, Castan Centre for Human Rights Law, Monash University**

Read whole article at  
<https://theconversation.com/whats-next-for-asylum-seekers-under-a-re-elected-turnbull-government-62357>

(Emphases by present editor *JT*)

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There is no going back

I No, no, there is no going back.
Less and less you are
that possibility you were.
More and more you have become
those lives and deaths
that have belonged to you.
You have become a sort of grave
containing much that was
and is no more in time, beloved
then, now, and always.
And so you have become a sort of tree
standing over a grave.
Now more than ever you can be
generous toward each day
that comes, young, to disappear
forever, and yet remain
Un-aging in the mind.
Every day you have less reason
not to give yourself away.

~ Wendell Berry ~

Seeing, in Three Pieces

Somehow we must see
through the shimmering cloth
of daily life, its painted,
evasive facings of what to eat,
to wear? Which work
matters? Is a bird more
or less than a man?

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There have been people
who helped the world. Named
or not named. They weren't interested
in what might matter,
doubled over as they were
with compassion. Laden
branches, bright rivers.

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When a bulb burns out
we just change it--
it's not the bulb we love;
it's the light.

~ Kate Knapp ~

("Wind Somewhere and Shade")

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### **Another Night in the Ruins**

How many nights must it take  
one such as me to learn  
that we aren't, after all, made  
from that bird that flies out of its ashes,  
that for us  
as we go up in flames, our one work  
is  
to open ourselves, to be  
the flames?

~ Galway Kinnell ~

("A New Selected Poems")

## The Gift

Time wants to show you a different country. It's the one  
that your life conceals, the one waiting outside  
when curtains are drawn, the one Grandmother hinted at  
in her crochet design, the one almost found  
over at the edge of the music, after the sermon.

It's the way life is, and you have it, a few years given.  
You get killed now and then, violated  
in various ways. (And sometimes it's turn about.)  
You get tired of that. Long-suffering, you wait  
and pray, and maybe good things come - maybe  
the hurt slackens and you hardly feel it any more.  
You have a breath without pain. It is called happiness.

It's a balance, the taking and passing along,  
the composting of where you've been and how people  
and weather treated you. It's a country where  
you already are, bringing where you have been.  
Time offers this gift in its millions of ways,  
turning the world, moving the air, calling,  
every morning, "Here, take it, it's yours."

~ William Stafford ~

("The Way It Is")

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## Earth Song

Listen to things more often than beings.  
Hear the voice of the fire, hear the voice of the water,  
Listen in the wind to the sighing of the bush:  
This is the ancestors breathing.  
Those who are dead are never gone;  
The dead are not down in the earth:  
They are in the trembling of the trees,  
In the groaning of the woods,  
In the water that runs, in the water that sleeps,  
They are in the hut, they are in the crowd.  
Those who are dead are not ever gone;  
They are in the woman's breast, they are in the wailing of a child,  
They are in the burning log and in the moaning rock.  
They are in the weeping grasses, in the forest and the home.  
Listen to things more often than beings.  
Hear the voice of fire, hear the voice of water.  
Listen in the wind to the sighing of the bush.  
This is the ancestors breathing.

(Traditional from Senegal, translator unknown)

Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known.

~ Blaise Pascal ~



### **Would you care to join Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship?**

**Membership is open to all adults and includes this newsletter.** *Full membership \$50 concession \$20* . If you would like to join us as an active member of Spirit of Life, please ring **0466 940 461** or consult our website [www.sydneyunitarians.org](http://www.sydneyunitarians.org) . Please note that all membership applications are subject to approval at a meeting of the Committee. Ask Rev. Geoff Usher for an application form at the Sunday service.

***If you have a news item or written article you believe would be of interest to the congregation, we invite you to submit it for Esprit.***

It would be helpful if items for publication, including articles and talk topics with themes could reach Esprit editor by the 15th of each month: [jtendys@bigpond.com](mailto:jtendys@bigpond.com) or hand to Jan Tendys at the Sunday service.

***Do you have a topic of a spiritual / ethical nature that you would like to share with the congregation?*** As Unitarians, we support an "Open Pulpit" and invite members of the congregation to lead the service if they so wish. *Please see Caz Donnelly at the Sunday service*

**Fellowship contact 0466 940 461**