

# The Big Picture

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"News to use & amuse"



Editor: Mike Bolan

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## Editorial

Of real interest to informed Australians might be the strategies and approaches proposed to deal with some of our more obvious problems. These might include climate and population changes, food and water supplies, global economic difficulties and energy costs.

Suggesting a need for focus, scientist James Lovelock (Gaia) has stated the nature of the problem pretty clearly.

Over the coming decades soaring temperatures will mean agriculture may become unviable over huge areas of the world where people are already poor and hungry; water supplies for millions or even billions may fail. Rising sea levels will destroy substantial coastal areas in low-lying countries such as Bangladesh, at the very moment when their populations are mushrooming.

Numberless environmental refugees will overwhelm the capacity of any agency, or indeed any country, to cope, while modern urban infrastructure will face devastation from powerful extreme weather events, such as Hurricane Katrina which hit New Orleans last summer.

James Lovelock, the scientist and green guru who conceived the idea of Gaia writes: " Before this century is over, billions of us will die, and the few breeding pairs of people that survive will be in the Arctic where the climate remains tolerable." [TerraNature](#)

One might be forgiven for thinking that such a bleak forecast would be worthy of discussion, at least in the media. But it seems that our governments are stuck firmly in the past, wishing to sign economic agreements that could place Australia at a major disadvantage by undermining our ability to look after ourselves.

As the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network - which represents a wide range of union, church, health, environment and pensioner groups - points out, US business wants to dismantle the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, local-content rules for the media, labelling of GE food, regulation of foreign investment and government purchasing policies that support local employment. They also want an investor complaints process that will give special rights to international corporations to sue governments for damages if legislation to protect the environment or human health undermines profitability.

The government says that all these issues "are on the table for negotiation". Why? Well, that's a secret. Further, any agreement made under this process will be signed off by cabinet before it is presented to parliament as a fait accompli apart from "procedural" matters requiring parliament legislation. [TheAge](#)

At the home of New Labor in the UK, Council authorities have been busy protecting everyone from sales of goldfish to minors.

Joan Higgins, a UK pet shop owner, was caught selling a goldfish to a teenager in a 'sting' operation by council officials. She was then prosecuted in an eight month court

process estimated to have cost the taxpayer more than £20,000.

Under new animal welfare laws, passed in 2006, it is illegal to sell goldfish to under 16s. Offenders can be punished with up to 12 months in prison.

Mrs Higgins, 66, who thought the boy was much older than 14, escaped jail but was instead ordered to wear an electronic tag and given a night time curfew. She was also fined £1,000 by Trafford Magistrates Court. [TelegraphUK](#)



## Urgent action needed to avoid setting a terrifying precedent?

The Hey Hey It's Saturday host needs a special licence in every Australian state and territory to include the popular segment when the show returns on April 14.

Chook Lotto, where funny girl Jacki MacDonald collects numbered frozen chickens from a large cage to award prizes to contestants, is now subject to the same rules as any lottery because it is considered a game of luck rather than a game of skill.

Somers also had to apply for permits for Plucka Duck. He said the cage that holds the frozen chooks now had to meet health and safety guidelines. [HeraldSun](#)

I feel nothing but protected.

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# That Was The Week That Was

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