

# AJASN Newsletter

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Contributors: Thanks to Dr Rhyll Vallis & Dr Stuart Pearson

## The Public Sector

This Australian Human Right Commission [report](#) assesses how the Australian Government identifies and manages immigration detention risks.

A [new report](#) from the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) says Australia is failing to produce effective Indigenous policy. It comes on the same day as an [audit report](#) which revealed the Indigenous Advancement Strategy's evaluation framework is only in its "early stages" despite the [strategy being introduced](#) five years ago. The APS has the opportunity to "Indigenise" the Public Service Act 1999 – some suggested changes are outlined in an ANZSOG submission to the Independent Review of the Australia Public Service (APS) entitled [Indigenous Values for the APS](#). The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's (PM&C) Indigenous Affairs Group is to become the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) from 1 July.

The 2019 update of the COAG Performance Reporting Dashboard was released - [here](#).

NZ public service reforms will make groups of chief executives jointly accountable for delivering on complex government priorities. The changes aim to support whole-of-government action – shifting agencies from working as single departments to working as one, unified public service, to quickly mobilise and tackle specific issues" and give public service leaders *collective responsibility* for the nation's biggest policy challenges. [Speech](#): explaining the ideas behind the reform. [Here](#) too. Senior New South Wales public servant Dr Caralee McLiesh has been appointed as the next Secretary to Te Tai Ōhanga, the [Treasury of New Zealand](#), which will also make her chief executive of the department when she makes the move later this year.

This [research article](#) 'Are public managers more risk averse? Framing effects and status quo bias across the sectors' found that they are not more risk averse.

This [paper](#) identifies ten strands of continuity and change in the use of evidence (to improve policy making and service delivery) over the past two decades. For example – there has been a gradual shift to an 'evidence-informed' as opposed to an 'evidence-based' discourse. This highlights more realistic assumptions about the contribution that evidence and experts can make alongside other influences such as ideology, stakeholder interests and public opinion.

[Selling public assets](#) has created unregulated monopolies that hurt productivity and damage the economy, according to Australia's Consumer and Competition Commission chair, who says he is on the verge of becoming a privatisation opponent.

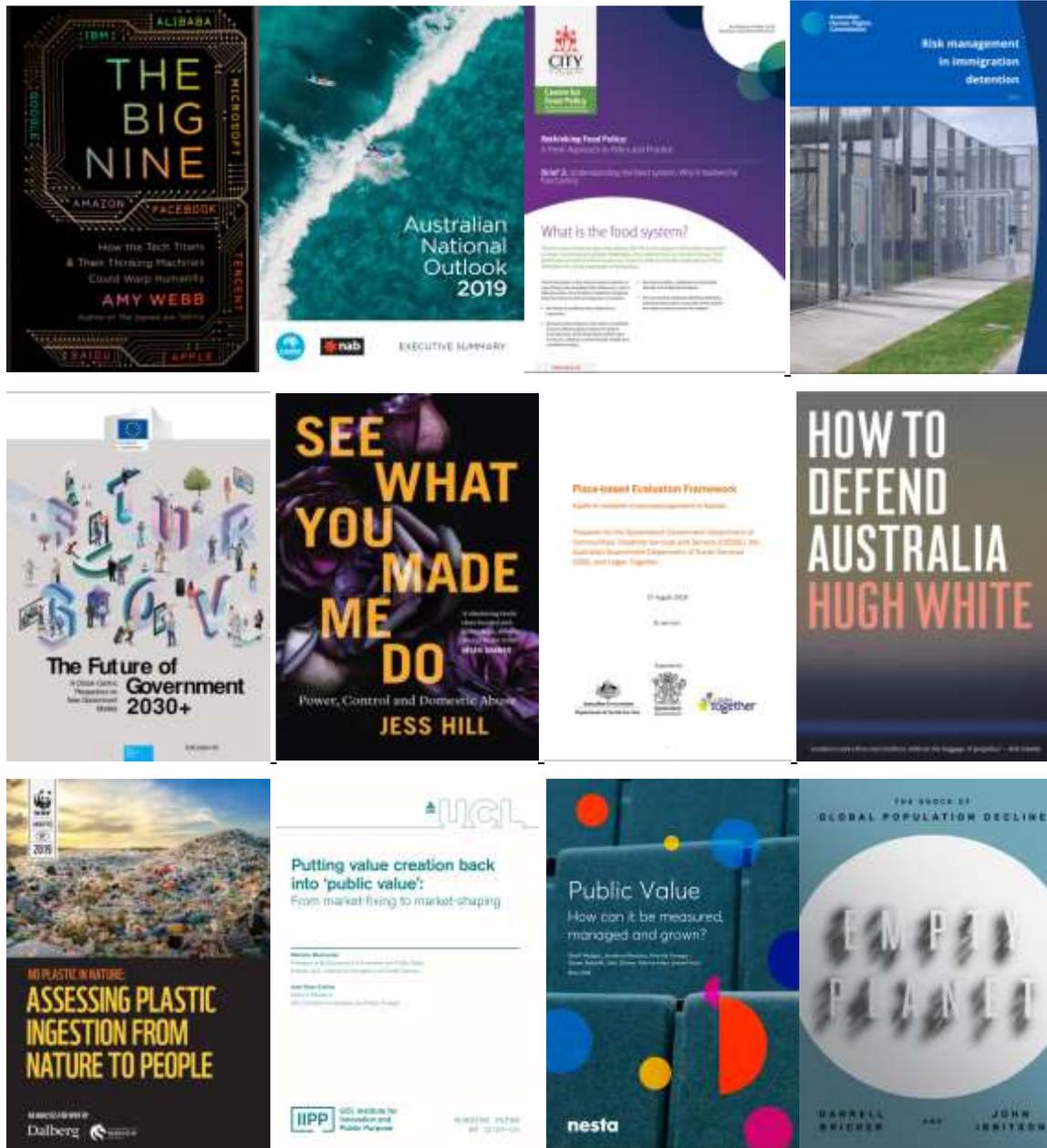
**ICYMI:** This paper suggests that writing in a more narrative style increases the uptake and influence of articles in climate literature, and perhaps in scientific literature more broadly. Hillier A, Kelly RP, Klinger T (2016) Narrative Style Influences Citation Frequency in Climate Change Science. PLOS ONE 11(12): e0167983.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0167983>

**THE PUBLIC SECTOR FORESIGHT NETWORK (PSFN)** meeting is on 31 July. It is a joint meeting of three foresight networks (the Public Sector Foresight Network, the Association of Professional Futurists and the U.S. Federal Foresight Community of Interest). The meeting will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. EST in the DC metropolitan area (northern Virginia). Contact Kate for more detail.



Read



\*Click on image to be taken to the actual document or an access related link

**Agriculture (& food)**

Most of the meat people eat in 2040 will not come from slaughtered animals, according to a report that predicts 60% will be either grown in vats or replaced by plant-based products that look and taste like meat. The report by the global consultancy AT Kearney, [based on expert interviews](#), highlights the heavy environmental impacts of conventional meat production and the concerns people have about the welfare of animals under industrial farming.

Four out of five employees at [USDA's Economic Research Service](#) might quit the agency rather than relocate to Kansas City, according to a survey from ERS union leaders. A related article is about [research](#) suppression by USDA.

## Defence (National security, Emergency Management & Defence)

A [new analysis](#) in Nature finds that climate change has likely played a relatively small role in driving armed conflict so far. But if temperatures reach more than 2 °C above preindustrial levels, it may substantially increase violence around the globe. The New Zealand Ministry of Defence has highlighted the security threat of climate change in their new [Defence Capability Plan](#). The Pentagon continues to botch its stated plans to fortify military bases and infrastructure against the looming threat of climate-related threats, a report from the independent Government Accountability Office ([report](#).)

In June, the US Commerce Department [imposed new restrictions](#) on American companies from doing business with five Chinese entities that make supercomputers and supercomputer components. The Commerce Department said the companies use their supercomputers and components for military and nuclear purposes. US companies won't be able to export components to the five listed companies without a license. The restrictions are similar to the ones the United States recently placed on Huawei.

A new Lowy Institute [poll](#) finds that Australians' attitudes to China have soured dramatically. The poll found that only 32% of Australians trust China to act responsibly in the world, which is a 20-point fall since 2018, and the lowest ever recorded by the annual poll.

Intelligence work is no longer the sole preserve of intelligence agencies. The perpetrators responsible for shooting down Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 (MH17) will be put to trial next March (2020.) A report was released identifying further suspects responsible for [escorting the missile to and from the launch site](#) – the report was a result of the work of civilian investigators i.e. a large group of mostly volunteers working from laptops using only information available to anyone with an internet connection.

This article ['Are fire services 'extremely gendered' organisations? Examining the Country Fire Authority in Australia'](#) argues if the 'extremely gendered' nature of organisations like the CFA continues to be ignored, it may prevent more varied, and ultimately less risky approaches to bushfire response from being adopted, or even openly discussed in the future.

The US Air force is planning to shift from a war of attrition mindset to a [war of cognition mindset](#).

## Economy

Here is a [review](#) of the dozens of explanations for the productivity paradox. (The recent slowdown in productivity growth in leading economies has been described as a puzzle or paradox, leading to extensive research into possible explanations.)

The world's largest economies took a step toward effectively taxing tech giants like Facebook and Google, by compiling rules that would close loopholes used to avoid corporate taxes. Such a crackdown could make it harder for multinational tech firms to reduce their tax burden by booking profits in countries that have low tax rates, [according to Reuters](#), citing a draft communique by G20 finance ministers, who met in Japan.

An [ANU analysis](#) ANU analysis shows that Coalition tax policies would favour higher income households and lead to a slightly less progressive tax system. A different [analysis](#) says that Coalition's tax plan would benefit men almost twice as much as women and that the Government's proposed third-stage tax cuts entrench gender pay gap.

This [issues paper](#) from Melbourne University's Sustainable Society Institute finds that developing clean economies, while tackling climate change, will deliver economic benefits. Climate change will have the greatest impact on those living in poverty, but also threatens democracy and human rights – UN [report](#) released in June.

Unsure how a basic income could work? Here is a short [clip](#) of economist Guy Standing explaining how. Here is a related [article](#). An [article](#) saying universal basic income is a bad idea. This [article](#) says rather than pitting them against each other, UBI and UBS (services) should be interlocking elements of a new social contract.

Universities have been admitting too many students, a greater proportion are now struggling, their debts have soared, and the payoff for those that graduate has waned, according to the [Productivity Commission](#).

The Climate Council says [nuclear power stations](#) are not appropriate for Australia – and probably never will be. A Rolling Stone [article](#) pans the Adani coal mine. 'The World's Most Insane Energy Project Moves Ahead.'

After a 3 year downward trend between 2013 and 2016, government support for fossil fuel production and use has risen again, according to a new OECD-IEA [report](#) prepared for the G20.

The world is [running out of sand](#), at least the type (from rivers in particular) used to make concrete and smartphone screens. It's so valuable that black markets and sand mafia have emerged in many parts of the world.

The Aspen Institute [report](#) is divided into two sections. Part I, *Automation and a Changing Economy: The Case for Action* explores the history of automation and how it may impact the economic security and opportunity of the American worker in the future. Part II of this report, *Automation and a Changing Economy: Policies for Shared Prosperity*, outlines a program to address automation's challenges and opportunities

## Environment

This [analysis](#) published by the Breakthrough National Centre for Climate Restoration, a think-tank in Melbourne, Australia, describes climate change as 'a near- to mid-term existential threat to human civilisation' and sets out a plausible scenario of where business-as-usual could lead over the next 30 years.

The southern Indian city of Chennai (formerly Madras) is in crisis after its [four main water reservoirs](#) ran completely dry. [Desalination](#) is increasingly being used to provide fresh water in water-stressed regions with some 20,000 facilities globally now turning sea water into fresh. While costs for processing salt water have dropped, desalination remains an expensive option. And the processing plants create environmental problems that must be addressed. A [new study](#) shows that the land underneath a part of West Antarctica is rising five times faster than expected as the ice melts, revealing a surprisingly soft Earth structure beneath the ice sheet. This [article](#) looks at recent research that shows trees, especially in tropical wetlands, are a major source of the greenhouse gas methane. The growing knowledge that certain woodlands are high methane emitters should help guide reforestation projects. Researchers identified the first and only evidence that [narwhals and beluga whales](#) can breed successfully (using DNA and stable isotope analysis). It is likely a new phenomenon. (See earlier stories about the grizzly – polar bear hybrids – [example](#).)

A lack of federal funding is driving away highly qualified Canadian climate scientists and the vast majority of remaining scientists rely on resources from other countries for their research, according to a [report](#) released by two non-profit groups. This Twitter [thread](#) speculates that the U.S. right will move from climate denialism to climate fascism/ nationalism.

An [article](#) looks back at more than 40 years of fisheries conflict. The authors created the International Fisheries Conflict Databased (IFCD) using past media reports from the years 1974 to 2016. They then use descriptive statistics to examine what types conflicts happened and how they occurred.

A [study](#) shows that seed-eating birds, scavenging birds such as storks and fruit bats in Nairobi, Kenya, carry high levels of bacteria such as E. Coli that are resistant to antibiotics. While the study does not show that these resistant bacteria have been passed from wildlife to humans the study warns that a superbug could emerge from the 'brew' of wildlife, livestock and humans that live cheek by jowl in the sprawling cities of developing nations.

This virtual issue celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Animal Conservation* highlights a selection of some of the most [highly-cited articles](#) published over the past 20 years.

## Foresight

Report European Commission on Demographic Scenarios for the EU: Migration, Population and Education – download the complete report [here](#).

Here is a [scan](#) on climate change and mental health (social work field.)

## Health

Researchers are trying to [design bacteria](#) to gobble up antibiotics in the environment, before microbes have a chance to turn deadly.

A [new study](#) uncovered interesting associations between an infant's gut microbiome composition at the age of 10 weeks, and the development of certain temperament traits at six months age. The research adds to a compelling growing body of evidence connecting gut bacteria with mood and behaviour.

People who live in regional or remote areas may be at lower risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, according to this [recent research](#) (NSW Australia.) Some [previous research](#) suggests people living in rural areas may be at a higher risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.

A group of doctors and scientists have released a report highlighting that 84 percent of studies published from 2009-2015 on the health impacts of fracking conclude the industry causes harm to human health - [report](#).

Scientists identify a surprising [risk factor](#) for Alzheimer's and other dementias: environmental quality.

CSIRO's We Feel uses advanced data capture to provide an accurate, real-time signal of the world's emotional state. Take a look at the ['wheel of emotion'](#) here.

## **Innovation**

Here are eight examples of how a funder (UK) measured [innovation impact](#).

## **Nudges**

This research [Should Governments Invest More in Nudging?](#) concluded that nudging is a valuable approach that should be used more often in conjunction with traditional policies, but more calculations are needed to determine the relative effectiveness of nudging.

## **Rural**

Queensland landholders are afraid that new government mapping could lock up their land and force them to stop farming and grazing. The [protected plants flora survey trigger map](#) identifies 'high-risk' areas where endangered, vulnerable or near-threatened plant species are present or likely to be present.

## **Science & Technology**

Arguing with the anti-vaxxers/flat earthers/climate change deniers may feel futile, but [research just published in Nature Human Behaviour](#) suggests that it's actually worth it and can be effective.

Key research priorities for the future of marine science in New Zealand - <https://t.co/j9v1Jf8H3i>

Wheat plants engineered to have fewer microscopic pores (called stomata) on their leaves are better able to survive drought conditions associated with climate breakdown, according to a new [study](#).

(1) [Two recent](#) (2) [research papers](#) described ways to detect video deep fakes with flaws that can't be fixed easily by the fakers.

## **Society**

At the same time as local [news in the regions declines](#), right-wing commentary not watched by most urban Australians is becoming freely available to rural viewers.

The UK Government policy of [limiting welfare benefits to two children](#) is having a devastating effect on families.

In June, the New York state assembly passed [legislation](#) that seeks to eliminate product discrimination, or charging different prices for men's and women's products (personal care, clothing.)

A German circus is using [holograms](#) instead of live animals.

['Metal thieves'](#) stole a 56-tonne, 23-metre rail bridge in Russia.

### **Learning resources (professional development)**

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet released a series of Regulation Impact Analysis (RIA) training videos on its YouTube channel. The [35 videos](#) cover a range of modules as well as interviews from senior public servants and industry leaders who share their advice and experience. They explore the consequences of poorly identified policy problem, the advantages of starting a regulation impact statement early, and whether an evidence-based approach to policy development is needed and so on.

A blog [post](#) looks at 'What is the difference between an impact and an outcome? Impact is the longer term effect of an outcome.'

A recent [Harvard study](#) looked at the role of asking questions in interpersonal relationships. It found the simple act of asking questions is one of the most important aspects of trusted and open relationships, higher emotional intelligence, and learning. The researchers present guidelines for how to best ask questions that form a solid foundation of bonding, trust, empathy, transparency, and emotionally intelligent intimacy. There are 'four types of questions: introductory questions ('How are you?'), mirror questions ('I'm fine. How are you?'), full-switch questions (ones that change the topic entirely), and follow-up questions (ones that solicit more information).' Follow-up questions are especially important because they signal an interest in the person you are talking to.

#### **Tools**

Here is a whole set of toolkits/playbooks/team kits/design kits/toolboxes/design guides and cards already shared with the world – The Toolbox Toolbox <https://t.co/6ve3IXZDbj>

Here are a few things you should know about complex systems (result of a worldwide collaborative effort from leading experts, practitioners and students in the field.)

<https://complexityexplained.github.io/>

The [government innovation atlas](#): the world's best tools and resources.

**Next meeting:** 25 & 26 July 2019 in Canberra

## R. Dawson list of future of government reports (consultancies)

Report Name	Organisation	Pub Date	Geography	Pages	Overview
<a href="#">Digital Government 2030: Predictive Government Anticipates Citizen Needs With Autonomous Services</a>	Gartner	January 2018	Global	5000 words	Scenario for digital government evolution by the year 2030
<a href="#">Government for the Future: Reflection and Vision for Tomorrow's Leaders</a>	IBM (Center for the Business of Government)	September 2018	Global	15	Fragment of larger report. Includes 5 predictions for the future of governments by the year 2040
<a href="#">A Blueprint for the Government of the Future</a>	BCG	July 2018	Global	19	The report identifies four fundamental changes that governments should make to better meet today's complex challenges
<a href="#">Unleashing the potential of Artificial Intelligence in the Public Sector</a>	Capgemini Consulting	July 2017	Global	10	Predictions for the economic impact of AI in the public sector
<a href="#">Government with the People: A New Formula for Creating Public Value</a>	World Economic Forum	February 2017	Global	18	The paper proposes a change from today's outdated model of government to a government that is focused on creating public value by empowering its citizens (co-creating the value)
<a href="#">Connected councils: A digital vision of local government in 2025</a>	Nesta	March 2016	UK	51	Short term vision for local governments (year 2025)
<a href="#">Next Generation Governance: Millennial perspectives on the future of governance</a>	ICSA	September 2018	Global	21	Survey results about the future of governance. A comparison between the young generation (18-35) versus 'established practitioners' (56-65)
<a href="#">The six things you need to know about how AI might reshape governments</a>	Centre for Public Impact	June 2017	Global	900 words	Predictions for the impact of AI on government
<a href="#">Designing future government jobs</a>	Deloitte	October 2018	Global	36	The authors create several personas of future government employees and describe what they think will be their skill set, experience, education and job description
<a href="#">Gov2020: A Journey into the Future of Government</a>	Deloitte	February 2015	Global	52	An analysis of the future of the government based on what the authors identify as drivers for change. The report identifies seven major trends have the potential to reshape government