

AJASN Newsletter

July 2020

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Thanks to Brett Pepler and Dr. Stuart Pearson for their contributions to this newsletter.

Next Meeting 13 August 2020

The Public Sector

The global [Sustainable Development Report 2020](#) ranks Australia third among OECD countries for the effectiveness of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, beaten by only South Korea and Latvia. Australia is 37th in the world on its overall progress in achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals; Australia's worst results are in climate action and the environment, where we rate well below most other OECD countries.

A new peer reviewed [study](#) finds that "the negative signal of formalization" in public sector job advertisements makes jobs less desirable to potential applicants. This narrows the recruitment pool of people interested in public sector employment.

This [opinion piece](#) says (about the U.S.) that 'Policy moves to restrict immigration combined with financial problems at the country's universities threaten to disable the wheels that make economic growth run.' i.e. innovation.

For the first time in over a decade, Australians are exhibiting [relatively high levels of political trust](#) in the federal government (from 29 to 54%), and the Australian Public Service (from 38 to 54%). Related: 'Report shows dramatic spike in [Canadian public's trust](#) in government during Covid 19.'

This [working paper](#) strongly suggests that income management has failed to achieve any systematic community level improvements in outcomes for the Indigenous population of the Northern Territory.

This [article](#) is about a new book on the psychology of British politicians. This [book chapter](#) looks at the question: Should an Ethical Public Servant Nudge? Here is a [paper](#) on the effectiveness of the two largest nudge units in the United States (paywall.)

New Zealand says it is the first in the world to produce a set of standards for how public agencies should use [algorithms](#) (that increasingly drive decision-making by officials about every area of public life.) This [article](#) discusses if public accountability is possible in algorithmic policymaking; it makes the case for a public watchdog.

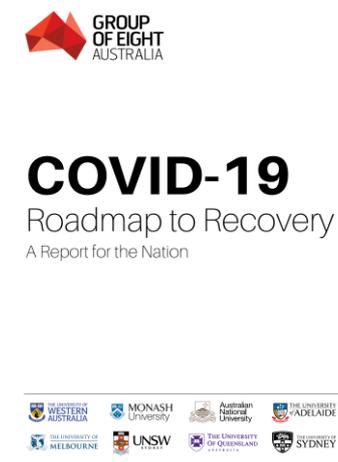
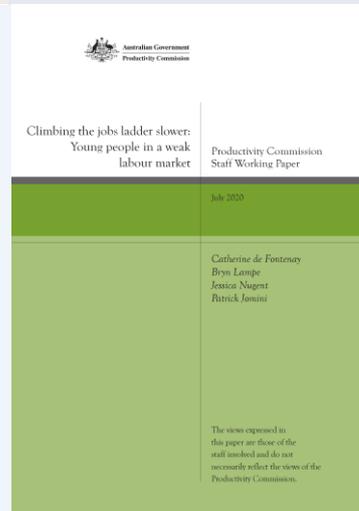
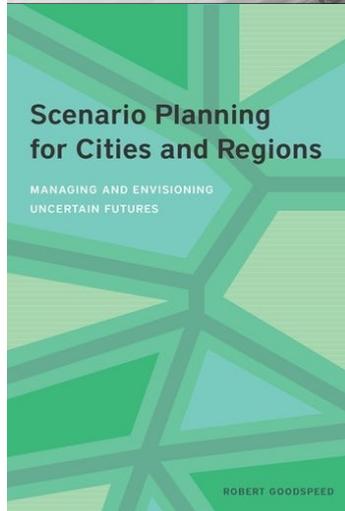
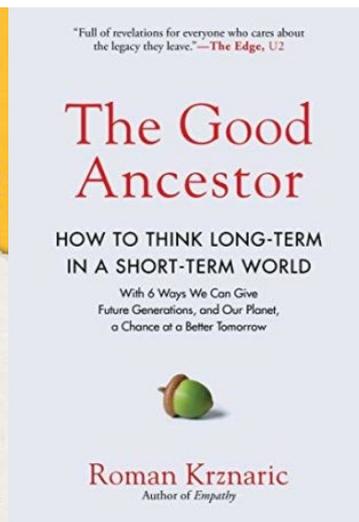
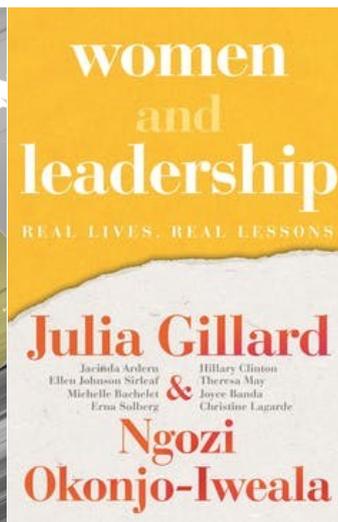
The Australia Institute is proposing a National [Climate Disaster Fund](#), funded by a levy of \$1 per tonne of all coal gas and oil produced in Australia to help pay for some of the increasing costs of these climate disasters. It is receiving some support from emergency managers but not the Commonwealth Government.

[What have we learned from a decade of nudging?](#) The overview concludes nudges are worthwhile, but should not stand alone as a policy tool: their effects are modest and heterogeneous, not effective at the extensive margin, and liable to unexpected spill-over.

The Productivity Commission produced a 300 page report on the vocational education and training in which it mentioned [women](#) just five times.

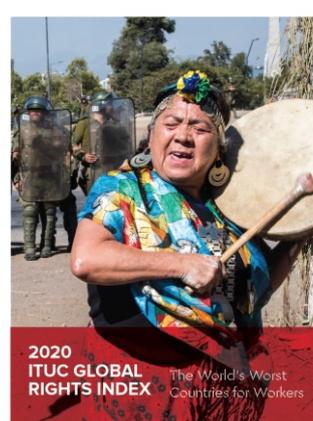
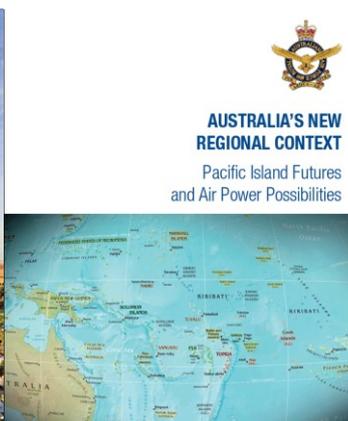
The Australian Government recently announced a Higher Education Reform Package that has the overarching objective of incentivising students to 'make more job-relevant decisions about their education.' This [analysis](#) suggests some unintended consequences.

Read



*Click on the image to be taken to the actual document or to access a related link.

See article related to *The Good Ancestor* book here - [link](#)



Peter Layton



INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

***Click on the image to be taken to the actual document or to access a related link.**

... [Window Swap](#) allows us to look through someone else's window somewhere in the world for a while.

Agriculture, food ...

An [article](#) which is a part of an opinion series offering analysis of the post-pandemic world discusses zoonoses and One Health. This [column](#) identifies 7 trends driving the increasing emergence of zoonotic diseases - including climate change & increased demand for meat.

A knock to food consumption in a global recession triggered by a coronavirus epidemic could produce a market shock of [tumbling agricultural prices](#) according to the FAO and the OECD. The impact on vegetable oil and animal-based products would be greater than for staple crops like rice and wheat. [[OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2020-2029](#).] NZ's [revenue](#) from dairy, meat and horticulture exports are soaring amid the coronavirus pandemic.

In a new [article](#) published in *Issues in Science and Technology*, researchers unpack the history of what they call the great fish pain debate (i.e. animal welfare.)

There is more evidence of [plastics making their way into the food chain](#) via wheat, lettuce & treated wastewater.

Major agricultural countries provide \$600 billion in annual subsidies, 30% of agricultural production. A [report](#) for World Bank finds subsidies do little to address climate change or even increase production, but there are chances for improvement.

Companies seeking to commercialise seafood products made from the cells of fish or shellfish should use the [term cell-based](#) on product labels, according to a new study. Do you want wild-caught, farm-raised, or cell-based seafood?

Corona virus (not exhaustive)

The [lineage that gave rise to the SARS-CoV-2](#), the virus that is responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic, has been circulating in bats for decades, researchers report. They also warn it likely includes other viruses with the ability to infect humans.

This [article](#) 'Covid-19 multi-hazard responses' looks at the pandemic and co-occurring e.g. wildfires (and has some scenarios etc.) Related [video](#)

German parliamentarian and health expert Karl Lauterbach says Germany's coronavirus strategy must change. [Instead of contact tracing](#), he demands that more attention be focused on super-spreaders.

In [a study](#) in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine researchers that a coronavirus vaccine's effectiveness may have to be higher than 70% or even 80% before Americans can safely stop relying social distancing. An [article](#) in BMJ: 'Drug treatments for Covid-19: living systematic review and network meta-analysis.' (Published 30 July 2020) Researchers at the University of Veterinary Medicine in Germany found that dogs are able to sniff out the coronavirus that causes Covid-19 with astonishing accuracy after being trained a week, [Bloomberg reports](#). And an [article](#) about how hydroxychloroquine became ideology rather than a potential cure for Covid-19

A [super-spreader-event triad](#) seems to rely on three V's: venue, ventilation, and vocalisation. 'Most super-spreader events occur at an indoor venue, especially a poorly ventilated one (meaning air is not being exchanged, diluted, or filtered), where lots of people are talking, chanting, or singing.'

Some newer studies highlight the potential for long-term heart complications in recovered COVID-19 patients. The research suggests the virus can damage cardiovascular muscles with inflammation detectable months after recovery, even in mild cases e.g. [CMR study](#) and [autopsy study](#). And there may be [long-term hearing loss](#) as well. And, [mental health](#).

[Emirates \(Airline\)](#) will pay for your medical treatment, hotel quarantine, and even your funeral if you catch COVID-19 while traveling (via coronavirus [insurance](#).) [Fiat](#) is offering job loss protection on cars.

Defence, National Security, Geopolitics, Emergency Management, etc.

A report outlines four possible [scenarios for China's](#) future – triumphant, ascendant, stagnant, and imploding – and concludes that either an ascendant or a stagnant China is most likely. A grim possibility is a global Covid19 decoupling, where much of Europe and Asia is mostly able to keep epidemics at bay but the U.S. can't, and sees higher and persistent infection and slower GDP growth; and has a [cordon sanitaire](#) imposed from other nations. [Water wars] A new dam will give [Ethiopia](#) control of the Nile, and imperil Egypt's security. Will the two come to blows? Nouriel Roubini [identifies](#) several geopolitical and environmental tail risks that equity markets have continued to discount ('white swans' or foreseeable disasters.)

In this [podcast](#) a senior scientist at the United States Army Research Office talks about his research including about how the future status of the Army may change. A number of military officers and defence civilians have been imagining what the future of warfare might look like, through the lens of science fiction. The result is FicInt (Fictional Intelligence) – an [article](#).

Here is a transcript of the [speech](#) given by Major General Copinger-Symes to the inaugural UK Strategic Command Conference on 18 February 2020 (focusing on three facets of digital disruption.)

[Vladimir Putin](#) secured constitutional changes allowing him to rule until 2036.

Does right-wing violence constitute a [fifth global wave of terrorism](#)?

Economy

An [EU tax crackdown](#) might involve member states not financial supporting companies shifting profits to tax havens; and digital platforms paying fair tax.

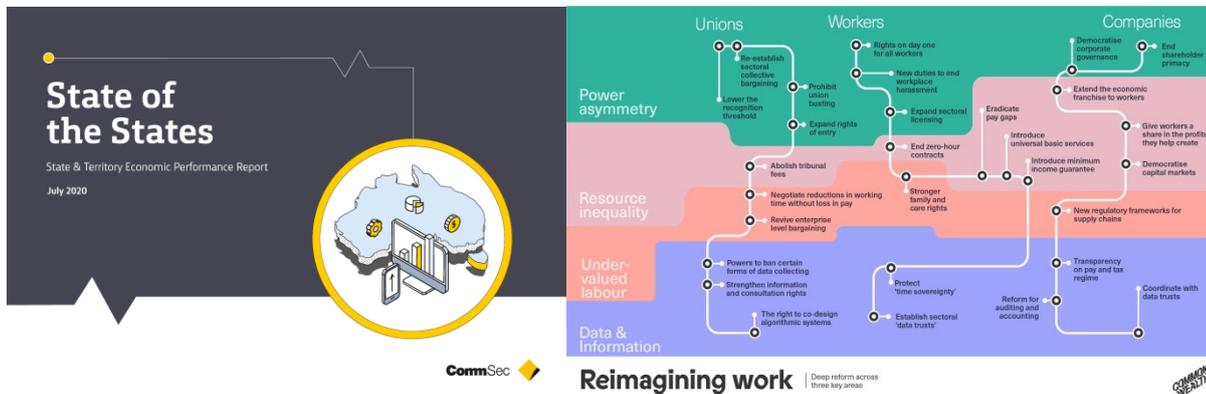
This [paper](#) looked at the question 'how many jobs can be performed at home?' It found that 37 per cent of jobs in the United States can be performed entirely at home, with significant variation across cities and industries. These jobs typically pay more than jobs that cannot be done at home and account for 46 percent of all US wages. Applying their occupational classification to 85 other countries reveals that lower-income economies have a lower share of jobs that can be done at home.

[Skilled immigration restrictions](#) in the United States may have secondary consequences: multinational firms faced with visa constraints have an offshoring option, namely, hiring the labour they need at their foreign affiliates. A [paper](#) in The Lancet explores potential deviations from a heavily-populated future Earth. Basically it suggests that continued global population growth through the century is no longer the most likely trajectory for the world's population.

Categorising workers' needs by generation such as Baby Boomers or Millennials is not supported by research or useful for workforce management – [research](#).

[Insurers](#) are rethinking their approach to systemic risks (including pandemics/epidemics. (Sign in required) BP and Shell wrote-off billions in [assets](#), citing Covid-19 and climate change. Will the broader industry also say that real assets with real dollar figures associated with them are likely to be 'stranded' or left undeveloped? This [article](#) speculates on 'How Covid-19 will change air travel as we know it.' This article touches on the 'complete reconfiguration of the [work technology landscape](#).'

Maricá, near Rio de Janeiro, is using its own digital currency to fund one of the world's largest [basic income programs](#).



COVID-19 may accelerate the [automation of jobs](#), as employers invest in technology to adapt the production process to safeguard against current and potential future pandemics. The United States' sluggish pandemic response has forced [movie studios](#) to release big movies abroad first; a highly unusual move for the industry. A Michigan [jewellery store](#) forced to close by the pandemic has come up with something far better than a going-out-of-business sale: a treasure hunt; it has buried remaining inventory around the state and is charging would-be pirates \$49 for a set of clues on how to find the valuables. The research firm Forrester predicted last week that [advertising spending](#) in the United States would decline by 25% this year and would not recover until 2023. In 2020 and 2021, agencies will shed 52,000 jobs and it is estimated that half the jobs will not return

Environment

'[Green' economic growth' is a myth](#), according to this article,

Australia's Chief Scientist called for [national smoke plume forecasting](#), after large parts of the country were choked by hazardous air during the 2019-20 bushfires.

This article is on [connecting the dots](#) on biodiversity loss, ecological threats and future pandemic risk. Governments may be able to prevent future pandemics by investing as little as \$22 billion a year in programs to curb wildlife trafficking and stem the destruction of tropical forests, according to this [analysis](#). Oxpickers Investigative Environmental Journalism has been developing new tools to cover the [illegal wildlife trade](#). There's a heatwave at the Arctic '[Doomsday Vault](#).'

The Samuel review finds that Australia's environment is in an unsustainable state of decline; and, laws set up to protect unique species and habitats are ineffective according to a major [review](#) (June interim report) of the national environmental framework (EPBC Act.) It recommends sweeping changes, including the establishment of a set of legally enforceable national environmental standards. The [Trase](#) Earth Yearbook 2020 looked at commodity-driven deforestation and where it might have the biggest impact for supply chain sustainability. Northern Australia's mammals have suffered catastrophic declines over the last 30 years. A [study](#) has found that protecting and recovering habitat by improving fire management and reducing feral cattle, horses and buffaloes is the best approach to address the crisis (and a related [study](#).) In Australia, [coastal flooding](#) is expected to be worse along the northern coast in Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. [By the end of the century, increased coastal flooding driven by swelling ocean levels will endanger more than 250 million people and nearly \$13 trillion worth of coastal buildings and infrastructure.]

A study represented as CSIRO work that showed that fracking was "safe for the environment" was actually overseen by the gas industry, and was based on just six of Queensland's 19,000 coal seam gas wells, according to new [analysis](#) by The Australia Institute.

The Decoupling Advisory Group in Scotland just published their latest [report](#): 'Building Back Better: Principles for sustainable resource use in a wellbeing economy.' The (UK) Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity (CUSP) presented 3 [strategies for moving beyond GDP](#): (1) changing the way we measure success; (2) building a consistent policy framework for a 'wellbeing economy;' (3) addressing the 'growth dependency' of the economy.

A [major new assessment](#) has now calculated a range of 2.6 – 3.9°C. This implies that alarmingly high estimates from some recent climate models are unlikely, but also that low estimates from other studies are even less likely. The trend towards worsening heatwaves is accelerating this 2020 [research](#) finds. A related [post](#) explains the article. An [active leak of sea-bed methane](#) has been discovered in Antarctica for the first time. The new [Global Methane Budget](#) was published. A [newly-published paper](#) sets out the results of the largest-ever study of what happens to emissions from fuel combustion when they attract a charge; [it works.]

A meta-analysis finds humans are responsible for 28% of [deaths of terrestrial animals](#). New Zealanders are working with others to develop [animatronic dolphins](#) that look almost identical to their living counterparts. But they are really expensive ...

Foresight

25% of the 2019 [Fortune 500 companies](#) (United States) are practicing foresight in some capacity today.

The Monitor Institute has written a follow-up to the 2004 document '[What If: The Art of Scenario Thinking for Non-profits](#)' (written by our Diana Scarce and Katherine Fulton): '[An Event or an Era? Resources for social sector decision-making in the context of COVID-19.](#)'

A set of Eastern European Futures is here - Four [Scenarios](#) for the Eastern Partnership 2030. How the pandemic transformed the [travel industry](#) – an imagined scenario from May 2022 in the Economist.

[Early indicators](#): A U.S. study found a positive correlation between levels of [credit-card] activity three weeks ago and the spread of COVID-19 since then.' Of all indicators, 'the highest correlation ... is the level of 'card-present' (essentially in-person) restaurant spending ...' (and, a similar [study](#) in Italy.)

This [article](#) discusses 'How companies can use social media to plan for the future' with an example of a project – using Twitter – to plan for the future of food systems around Birmingham UK in 2050.

The [MIT Task Force on the Work of the Future](#) released a new research brief examining the [future of autonomous vehicles](#).

This article discusses how alternate histories often double as warnings. But they also provide space to grieve the [futures that might have been](#).

Health

Researchers have successfully bypassed the eyes with [a brain implant that allows rudimentary vision](#).

A group of chemists suggests that the [exposure hypothesis for chemicals](#) like lead in water (less is fine, more is worse) is incorrect. This might affect how regulators evaluate chemicals. Evidence has doubled in the last five years about the negative impact on our health of endocrine-disrupting chemicals in plastics, pesticides, flame retardants and other merchandise, according to a [review](#) of recent literature.

Lack of proper nutrition is a threat to national security a [U.S.] [paper](#) said. It stated that diet-related illnesses are harming the readiness of the US military and the budgets of the US Department of Defense and the US Department of Veterans Affairs.

As part of the report [Prioritizing health: A prescription for prosperity](#), the McKinsey Global Institute identified ten promising innovations, now in progress, that could have a material impact on health by 2040.

Science and Technology

A wearable [technology glove](#) translates sign language in real time.

[70 percent of research](#) in Australia is being done by fixed-term staff. (TBH it is unclear where this figure comes from although it was cited in the mainstream media at the same time as the hyperlinked article – possibly [here](#)?)

A United States health reporter found a 'willful blindness' to science when they [investigated a federal study of BPA exposure](#).

UCLA bioengineers have designed a glove-like device that [can translate American Sign Language](#) into English speech in real time through a smartphone app.

Society

There is a new [Closing the Gap](#) agreement that features 16 new Indigenous welfare targets, including suicide rates and land rights. Additional [commentary](#). This [report](#) shows that much can be done to reduce spread of Covid-19 in disability sector.

This [study](#) investigated how social housing pathways are conceptualised and constructed by housing policies in Australia; who is moving into and out of social housing; and what is the lived experience of people who have moved into, within or out of social housing. Barcelona is [requiring landlords to rent vacant units](#) to make more housing available with the threat that otherwise the city will acquire them at 1/2 the market value and rent them out as social housing. This report reflects on the experiences of young people who have an experience of [homelessness](#). And, an [article](#) on homelessness of women over 55.

A new study predicts [fertility rates will drop](#) in nearly every country by 2100.

The government should [increase the childcare subsidy](#) for families on low to medium incomes — either temporarily or permanently. This would involve increasing the highest subsidy rate from 85% to 95%.

The United Nations announced [a new initiative](#) called 'Pause,' aimed at getting people to stop and think about what they're sharing about COVID-19 on social media. The campaign is accompanied by the hashtag #takecarebeforeyoushare.

Resources

[Humanitix](#) is the first not-for-profit ticketing platform using 100% of profits from booking fees to educate the world's most disadvantaged children.

'How to use evidence in policy-making' – A short synopsis is: Know what problem you're trying to solve, find the evidence to support it through a mixture of sources, filter the information and be well connected to the community. Here is a 1 hour [webinar](#).

Readings:

The latest [shorter working week newsletter](#) is out now. It captures developments in working-time reduction from across Europe. (You can sign up for it.)

Nice [article](#) on visualisations: '3 questions to ask yourself next time you see a graph, chart or map'