



# **THE HON PETER GARRETT AM MP**

MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND THE ARTS

**SPEECH AT THE LAUNCH OF: *CLIMATE OF AUSTRALIA*.**

**PARLIAMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA**

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**[CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY]**

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Can I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the country. Can I also acknowledge all those senior members of the Bureau, and others that are here.

Thank you for the opportunity to launch this wonderful book – *Climate of Australia*.

This well written and beautifully illustrated book provides a glimpse into the vast landscape of our extraordinary country and the climates that shape it.

It is a credit to the Bureau of Meteorology, and its release could not be more timely. The community's appetite for information about our climate has never been stronger, as we continue to understand the serious threats posed by dangerous climate change.

There is growing concern over the increased frequency and intensity of drought, the increasing threats of severe bushfires, and the reduced availability of water in our rivers and catchments – and the extent to which this is the result of human-induced climate change.

Rural communities in particular are very aware of what is happening with weather and climate - rainfall and water availability are key factors in determining the size of crops, the availability of grazing pastures, and our farming sector's bottom line. Conversely severe weather brings flood and fire - catastrophic events that can destroy livelihoods, property, and life.

The disastrous Victorian bush fires of February 7 are a stark reminder of the kind of fury that our climate can unleash.

It's a shame then that the notional representatives of rural Australia – the National Party – do not have any appreciation of these risks. They are stuck in the past on climate change.

Indeed the Senate Leader Barnaby Joyce says they don't want any more bad experiences with their own constituency. Well Barnaby wake up, because it's coming.

While there are some amazing photographs in *Climate of Australia*, it is the explanatory information about how our weather works which also impresses – things such as how the Walker Circulation impacts El Nino and La Nina events, how the greenhouse effect works, how

lightning and thunder are produced and the inner workings of a tropical cyclone. I'm looking forward to learning more myself.

The science of weather and climate has been transformed in recent years, with the advent of satellites, radars and computer models. It's barely recognisable from the humble practices of the Bureau at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The modern Bureau has been transformed by the processing power provided by modern supercomputing and developments in Numerical Weather Prediction.

At the beginning of this month the Bureau began phasing in a more powerful computing model that will provide greater detail for weather forecasters, promising even greater accuracy.

Called ACCESS, or the Australian Community Climate and Earth-System Simulator, it uses data from the atmosphere, land surface, ocean and sea-ice, aerosols, carbon cycles and atmospheric chemistry in order to more realistically replicate actual earth system processes and feedbacks.

From simple rainfall observations often taken by volunteer observers to the complex data received from Doppler radars and satellites, the Bureau manages an incredible network of environmental readings.

Using its new computing capacity, it can draw together all this information to make better forecasts.

And the publication of this edition of *Climate of Australia*, continues a public education commitment that began more than sixty years ago when the first edition was published in 1942. Since then it has been published in a range of forms but none so easy to embrace as this latest one.

There is a lot for people to learn about Australia's climate and I encourage you open up *Climate of Australia* and really enjoy the experience.

I now declare this fantastic new publication officially launched.

Thank you.

**[ENDS]**