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This Drought Is About Climate Change. It's Time For Government To 'Redneckonise' The Facts.



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Contributing Writer
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What would some inner west-living, green tea-sipping, designer dog-walking, TV producer know about the drought currently affecting our farmers? A bit actually.

Let me introduce you to my dad's farm at Coolabah in western NSW.



(Image: Supplied)

That large pile of red dirt is his prime grazing land. Or at least it was. Instead, his animals are now currently grazing on chopped down mulga trees or bought feed and hay bales.

That is, the ones that have managed to survive.

Here's another photo.



(Image: Supplied)

Other than Dad's thumb cameo in the top corner, what else do you see here?

Did you notice the visible outline of the cows' ribs? How few cattle remain on such a large property? Maybe the imprints in the dust that demonstrate just how dry the ground is?

Either way, you know what you're seeing isn't good.

Now have a look at this photo from my cousin Shaun's farm, not far from the NSW/QLD border. This is his wife, Kat, administering a drip to a severely dehydrated cow that became stuck in a dried up dam. It didn't survive.



(Image: Supplied)

Imagine spending your day dragging malnourished cattle out of dried up dams only to have to put them down because they're too far gone. Imagine watching your family business destroyed by heat, dust and the complete disregard of your elected officials.

So it was a big relief to hear that on Monday the [NSW government announced extra funding for struggling farmers](#).

"Great! Problem solved, crisis averted!" I hear you say. Not quite.

You see, at a time when [so many farmers are struggling](#), some even at the point where they are pleading for bullets to put down their dying stock, the government is doing little more than paying lip service to the environmental factors that create drought conditions. According to key findings from The Climate Council *"time spent in drought is expected to increase in the future across [southern Australia](#)"*.

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climate change — like droughts. In fact, when the Climate Commission was wound up, there was such a large public outcry at the time, its successor (the Climate Council) was originally started through crowd funding.

Let that sink in. Our national climate advisory body was created through crowd funding.

Speaking of funding, at least the Federal Government saw sense and [announced some emergency assistance for farmers on Sunday](#). But you have to question the priorities of a government that is forced to find urgent money for farmers and yet has no trouble splashing the cash on the following:

- \$30 million on [Foxtel](#)
- \$500k on [greyhound racing](#)
- \$250 million on [religious chaplains](#) in schools
- \$50 million on a monument to [Captain Cook](#)
- \$122 million on the [same sex marriage postal plebiscite](#)
- \$440 million on [this Great Barrier Reef funding debacle](#) which didn't have a proper tender process and is highly suspect for so many reasons...

As Journalist Jim Parker (aka [Mr Denmore](#)) so eloquently puts it, "An anonymous claim about an obscure opposition [MP not wearing undies](#) is judged more newsworthy than cabinet ministers tipping \$440m of our money unaudited into a trust run by their mates to put a fig leaf over the climate denialism destroying our biggest natural wonder."



Mr Denmore
@MrDenmore

An anonymous claim about an obscure opposition MP not wearing undies is judged more newsworthy than cabinet ministers tipping \$440m of our money unaudited into a trust run by their mates to put a fig leaf over the climate denialism destroying our biggest natural wonder.


1,392

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To add insult to injury we have LNP candidate [Trevor Ruthenberg](#) saying things like "your understanding of science... and my understanding of science, are not the same" when confronted with facts about climate change.

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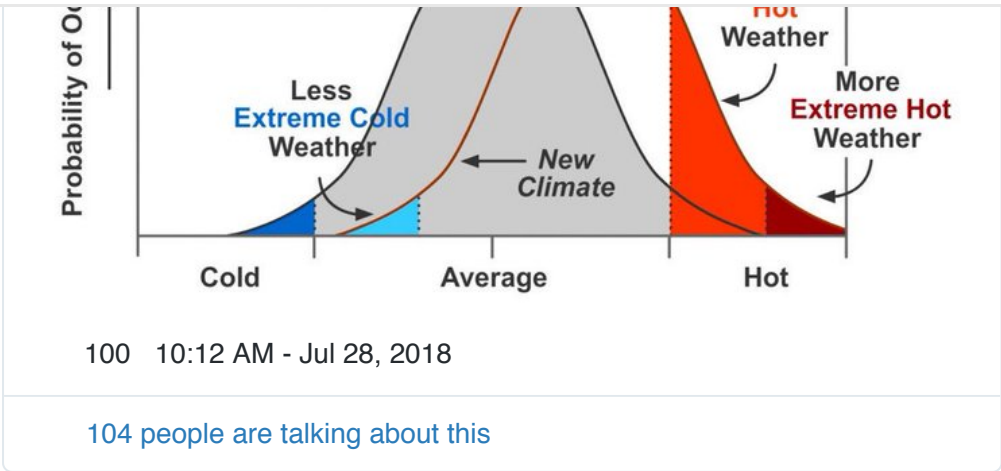
However, someone with *actual* qualifications in science — [Professor Michael Mann](#), recently told [The Guardian](#) "asking if climate change 'causes' specific events is the wrong question. The relevant question is: 'Is climate change impacting these events and making them more extreme?', and we can say with great confidence that it is."



Annie Kia
@AnnieKia

Good article

"asking if climate change "causes" specific events is the wrong question: "The relevant question is: 'Is climate change impacting these events & making them more extreme?', and we can say with great confidence that it is"[theguardian.com/environment/20...#agchatoz #nswpol](#)



If you live in the city (like me) or the suburbs and think this isn't going to impact you, think again.

In Broken Hill, a regional town with a population of nearly 20,000, residents have been leaving paddle pools of water out for the thirsty emus that are roaming their suburban streets after having been forced out of the bush to survive.

This Facebook post is no longer available. It may have been removed or the privacy settings of the post may have changed.

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This drought is impacting our economy. When farmers can barely afford to feed their animals, they can't afford to keep on their staff, and so unemployment grows.

Closer to home, businesses that supply farming equipment and manufacturing lose money when farmers can no longer afford to purchase the tools they need. For us city slickers, when local supplies of in-demand products (like beef or lamb) diminish, they become more expensive or are replaced with imported substitutes.

And don't think it ends there. Remember that epic dust storm that shrouded Sydney in red, causing severe disruption to flights, roads, ferries and sent a whole heap of people to the hospital? Well guess where that dust came from. Far Western NSW. Right where Dad's farm is located. Even more concerning is what a long, dry winter means for a country prone to bushfires.

Are you worried now? Because I am and so is Dad.



Jane Caro
@JaneCaro

I am existentially terrified about climate change. Trump, Putin, Duterte, Erdowan, ISIS, religious fundamentalism, misogyny, racism, inequality are serious but can all be fought & defeated only if we have a livable climate. Forest fires in the arctic? Can we focus?

1,506 9:11 PM - Aug 1, 2018

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Our farmers are the backbone of this country. They are hurting, they need our help and they need our government to recognise the impact of climate change on their livelihoods.

My dad is one of the lucky ones. He has a strong network of friends and family to support him through tough times but there are so many farmers out there just barely hanging on.

As Dad would say, "it's time to redneckonize the issue and do something about it."



Dad and his working pup, Phantom, on his property in 2015. (Image: Supplied)

If you want to help Australian farmers in need, you can donate to a registered charity. Donate online to Rural Aid's [Buy a Bale](#), [Drought Angels](#), [Aussie Helpers](#) or [Lions' Need for Feed](#). You can also support farmers by [buying Australian grown produce](#) at your local supermarket.

For 24/7 crisis or suicide prevention support, please call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or visit www.lifeline.org.au/gethelp.

#drought

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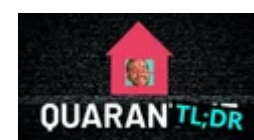
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