

# THE CLIMATE COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2014–2015



The Climate Council is an independent, crowd-funded organisation providing quality information on climate change to the Australian public.

[CLIMATECOUNCIL.ORG.AU](http://CLIMATECOUNCIL.ORG.AU)

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# Executive Summary

The Climate Council has been functioning as a formidable not-for-profit organisation for just under two years thanks to a community of over 18,000 community givers and a small number of large donors.

The Council has carved out a clear niche as a respected and impactful climate change communications organisation that offers accurate, trusted and compelling information to the public. The Climate Council has become renowned for our excellent spokespeople, clear communications, prolific output and cut through online content. Our work is utilised by a wide cross-sector of the community including: the media, schools and universities, NGOs, health organisations, emergency services, government and individuals.

Since our launch in September 2013, The Climate Council has played a significant role in shaping the public conversation on climate change in Australia. Our work has played a crucial role in:

1. Moving the public debate from a false debate of the science and whether or not climate change is real, to a discussion of solutions, like renewable energy.
2. Shifting the public understanding of extreme weather and climate change with public polling showing that increasingly the public link the two. Essential Media found that in December 2014, 76% of people thought that climate change and extreme

weather were linked (compared to 52% in January 2014). This has been crucial to elevating the importance of climate change in the national debate.

3. Elevating renewable energy to a top tier political issue in the last 12 months.

Our impact in the media far exceeds similar sized organisations. As of July 2015 we have cumulatively reached 193 million people by producing over 15,000 media items since our inception. We are punching well above our weight, as this sort of reach is equivalent to a large government department or major not-for-profit. We have also built an enviable online presence reaching 6 million people per month with climate change information.

We're a rapidly growing organisation whose priority remains fundamentally shifting the conversation.



**40 research publications**



**193 million cumulative readers, viewers & listeners**



**Over 15,000 media articles**



**100 million reached on social media**



**18,000 community givers making it all possible**

# Message from Climate Council Chair Gerry Hueston

The Climate Council is soon approaching its second birthday – for such a young organisation it is incredible to reflect on what has been achieved in just under 2 years.

The Climate Council has continued its critical work on the focus areas of climate change and extreme weather, renewable energy and international climate change action. Through the Council's strategic media work it has gained over \$34 million worth of media coverage on these issues, whilst providing a platform for those on the frontline of climate change to speak in the media, including health professionals, emergency service workers, farmers and rural communities. This is an incredible return on investment for our supporters.

The Council has now released 40 research publications, which have provided Australians with an independent, authoritative, and up-to-date source of information on climate change science. The Council's reports provide critical information to politicians, policy makers, local councils, environmental organisations, teachers, emergency services, doctors, nurses and members of the public. Information from the Climate Council's reports is now reaching 6 million people per month on social media – which has been a key growth area for the Council.

Moving forwards into the Climate Council's third year of operation, there are many exciting new strategic projects in store, including the launch of our brand new Climate Media Centre and the Council's Global Digital Strategy. These projects will see the Council going from strength to strength.

**Right now, it is critical that we keep climate change front and centre.**

With the Paris Climate Conference being held in December this year, the team at the Council will be working harder than ever to ensure climate change is in the headlines – and that the most reliable and up-to-date climate change information is available for the Australian public.

I've been delighted to watch the Climate Council grow throughout my second year as its Chair. My special thanks goes to my fellow Directors, the Climate Councillors, and to our members, staff and volunteers. On behalf of the Board, I am proud to present the Climate Council's 2014–2015 annual report.



**Gerry Hueston**  
Climate Council Chair

# Message from the CEO and Chief Councillor

The Climate Council has achieved an incredible amount in just under two years. We have undertaken ground-breaking media work, reached millions of people through our world-class digital content, and we've been out in the community engaging directly with those on the frontline of climate change impacts like emergency services personnel and health professionals.

**Most importantly, we've been doing what we set out to do: providing the Australian public with the most accurate, independent and up-to-date information on climate change. Day by day we are changing the public conversation.**

Most importantly, we've been doing what we set out to do: providing the Australian public with the most accurate, independent and up-to-date information on climate change. Day by day we are changing the public conversation.

The work of the Climate Council has been critical in providing an opportunity for those on the frontline of climate change impacts to get out in the media. We've been busy working with doctors, nurses, farmers and renewable energy workers to ensure that climate change is in the headlines, and to dispel myths and misinformation.

Throughout the increasingly volatile political environment, the Climate Council has remained independent, committed to clear communication, and has continually acted as a champion for accurate scientific information. The Council has opened up the Australian discourse on climate change, and has brought extreme weather, renewable energy and international action into the spotlight in ways that would not have been possible before the Council's inception.

We have an incredibly dedicated, robust and nimble team, which has grown over the past year to incorporate a broad range of experiences and expertise. We're both incredibly excited for the year ahead, with the Council going from strength to strength and a number of new projects under way. We believe that next year will be even bigger and better for the Climate Council, and we are looking forward to both the achievements and challenges

that lie ahead. We are sure that in 2016 the Climate Council will have a bigger impact than ever before!

As Chief Councillor and CEO, we are delighted to present the second annual report of the Climate Council to our supporters, members, and Founding Friends. We would like to thank the Climate Council staff, Councillors, our Board of Directors, members and volunteers for doing an amazing job throughout the Council's second year of operation.

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**Amanda McKenzie**  
CEO



**Tim Flannery**  
Chief Councillor

# Landmark Reports

In just under two years of operation the Climate Council has released 40 publications, including 25 landmark reports which have underpinned the Climate Council's media success.

The reports translate complex science, economics and energy policy to create an engaging story for as large an audience as possible. The test of how well we have done is the reception of the report in the media and by the public.

Reports receive significant traction on social media and are distributed to the Climate Council's email supporter base and key stakeholders such as politicians, health and emergency services, educators, planners and local governments.

Reports are used as authoritative information for years after their publication, for example: briefings for politicians, emergency services and health services; schools and universities using our materials as part of their curriculum; and media using our reports as background for subsequent stories.



CEO Amanda McKenzie, Climate Councillor Professor Will Steffen & Chief Councillor Tim Flannery launch the Galilee Basin – Unburnable Coal report.



The Climate Council's reports focus on the four theme areas – climate change, extreme weather, renewable energy and international action.

# Media Coverage

As of July 2015, the Climate Council has generated over \$34 million worth of media coverage, reaching a cumulative audience of more than 193 million readers, viewers and listeners. Since inception, the Climate Council has been featured in over 15,000 media articles.

The Climate Council regularly features on high rating programs such as Channel Seven's Sunrise, the 7.30 Report and The

Project. We are increasingly featuring in international news coverage including in the New York Times and BBC.

Our media numbers are very significant, higher than any similar organisation in the sector, and more akin to a large not-for-profit with a substantial communications team or a government department. Increasingly media from Australia and around the world are approaching the Council as a go to source of information.



Professor Will Steffen launching the Climate Council's Coastal Flooding Report in Sydney Harbour. Journalists were then taken on a boat tour to demonstrate the impact of climate change on Sydney harbour ensuring excellent coverage across Australia.



Professor Tim Flannery speaking about coastal flooding on Channel 7's Sunrise Program.



Professor Lesley Hughes on ABC's 7.30 report with Leigh Sales.



CEO Amanda McKenzie speaking on ABC's breakfast program about climate action in the USA.

# Social Media and Online Content

The Climate Council now has a direct online audience of over 173,000 people, allowing us to reach an average of 6 million people per month through social media with information that is not only important, but sharable and engaging.

Since launching, the Climate Council has reached more than 100 million people online through our digital platforms and directly engaged (through likes, shares and comments) more than 1 million people. A key insight for our social content is that positive content shares much more effectively than negative content reflecting the community appetite for solutions.

Over 60% of traffic to the Climate Council website is being driven by social media, so we're successfully creating strong pathways from short,

sharp, digestible information to longer form articles that link to our reports and deeper analysis.

Outside of distribution through our own social media channels, we've also been building a strong network of organisations both locally and globally who distribute our content to their networks. Having built a reputation for being a trusted and engaging voice in climate science communications, our partners feel confident in sharing the work we put out there.

We will continue to invest in reaching the community through social media in the coming year, with plans to not only expand the number of channels we distribute to, but increase the amount of video content we're producing. Increasingly our digital content is shared outside of Australia and in the year ahead we will be creating more content relevant to communities outside Australia.



**136,406 Facebook Page Likes**



**18,657 Twitter Followers**



**580,517 visits to [climatecouncil.org.au](https://climatecouncil.org.au) & 1,853,347 page views**



**173,000 Direct online audience**



Examples of the Climate Council's positive focused social media content.

Having built a reputation for being a trusted and engaging voice in climate science communications, our partners feel confident in sharing the work we distribute.



# Community Engagement

## EVENTS AND SPEECHES

The Climate Council has engaged a direct audience of over 10,000 people by giving speeches at over 100 community events and forums. We have focused on reaching health professionals, emergency service workers and businesses.

## BRIEFINGS AND MEETINGS

The Climate Council has provided briefings for a range of stakeholders including:

- › Fire fighting groups
- › Farming groups

- › Health professionals
- › Ambassadors and business leaders

## CLIMATE COUNCIL SPOKESPEOPLE

The Council has engaged a number of highly respected community spokespeople to attend our press conferences and comment on our latest reports, including:

- › Health Expert and 2003 Australian of the Year, Professor Fiona Stanley.
- › Firefighter Union NSW Secretary, Jim Casey.
- › John Grimes, CEO of the Australian Solar Council.



### QUOTES FROM COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS:

**Jim Casey** – Fire Brigade Employee’s Union State Secretary

“The Climate Council has played a vital role in raising awareness of the impact climate change has upon extreme weather behaviour, and consequently the increasing duration and intensity of bushfires. This is a pressing issue for firefighters - we are seeing our workplace become more unsafe, and we thank the Climate Council giving us a voice on this.”

**John Grimes** – CEO Australian Solar Council

“Renewable Energy has enjoyed an increased public profile, which has been helped by the media work of the Climate Council.”

#### Images L to R:

Firefighter, Jim Casey launching the Climate Council’s NSW Bushfire report.

Tim Flannery, Australian Solar Council CEO John Grimes and a Victorian Solar installer launching the Australian Renewable Energy Race report in Melbourne.

Farmer Lynne Strong, Health Professional Dr. Liz Hanna, Firefighter Dean McNulty, & Climate Councillor Professor Will Steffen with CEO Amanda McKenzie.

# Community Giving and Philanthropy

From the very beginning the Climate Council was established by thousands of Australians making a contribution. In September 2013 over 16,000 Founding Friends donated \$1,100,000 to create the Climate Council. Since that time, 2,600 committed Founding Friends have donated regularly and nearly 5,000 have donated on a one-off basis. This has provided the lion's share of the Council's funds which enable us to change the debate in Australia. The Climate Council cannot exist without our community that's been behind us all the way!

Being funded by the community ensures that the Council remains absolutely independent and can continue to be the trusted voice of science in the public conversation.

With the ongoing support of our community and philanthropic donors together we continue to provide relevant and up-to-date authoritative information on Climate Change.

Our financial management continues to be best practice with continued investment in robust financial and donor management systems overseen by the Finance Committee, the Board and our staff team. Our financial management is supported by a strategic plan and we maintain strong financial and compliance controls as well as prudent budgetary and cash management review processes on a monthly basis.

The financial information in this annual report has been extracted from the Annual Financial Report which has been audited by Thomas Davis & Co, Chartered Accountants. The auditor provided an unqualified audit report. Our accounts are general purpose financial statements that are prepared in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards – reduced Disclosure Requirements of the AASB and the ACNC Act 2012.

We comply with the ACNC requirements in relation to disclosure of our company and financial information on an annual basis.

# Finances

## INCOME FROM DONORS

In the 2014/15 financial year we received a total of \$1,853,397 in community and major donations from more than 7,500 supporters.

The 2014/15 financial year saw the Climate Council's number of core regular (weekly and monthly) donors grow to over 2,600 people, the average regular donation grew to \$31 per month.

## SUPPORTER FUNDRAISING

Dedicated Climate Council supporters have put in incredible efforts this year to raise funds for the Council.

We launched a campaign for our first fundraising trip to the Kimberley with Professor Tim Flannery. This trip occurred in August 2015. This trip raised over \$100,000 in revenue for the Council.

We will be launching two additional fundraising trips in the next year, one to Lord Howe Island with Professor Lesley Hughes and another trip with Professor Tim Flannery next financial year.

We have a number of supporters who have raised nearly \$20,000 in funds on our behalf this year. The majority of these funds were raised by Jen Boocock, a supporter who ran for four days through the Tasmanian wilderness to raise awareness of climate change impacts.

## PRO-BONO GOODS & SERVICES

We aim to reduce our costs as much as possible by accepting pro-bono and discounted goods and services.

This year we have received pro-bono (or discounted cost) goods and services for graphic design, legal, conference attendance, consulting fees, administration resources, creative resources as well as not-for-profit charity discounts for IT services and hardware.

We are so thankful to the organisations that have provided this vital support as it has significantly amplified our efforts.

## VOLUNTEERS

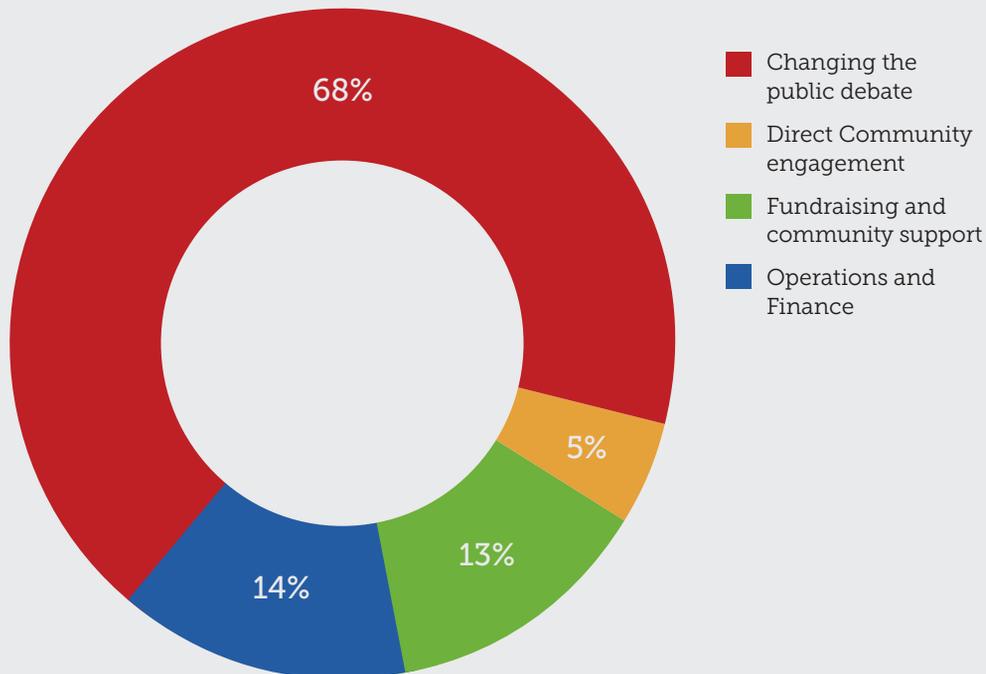
In the 2014/15 financial year we estimate that volunteers contributed \$270,000 worth of their time!

## EXPENDITURE

Climate Council expenditure in 2014/15 financial year was \$1,675,572.

- › Changing the public debate (68%) – includes expenses associated with:
  - Our communications work including research, writing and delivery of world leading expert reports.
  - Generating extensive national and international media on climate change.
  - Distribution of our information via online, digital and social media platforms.
- › Direct Community Engagement (5%) – expenses associated with communicating with a broad range of engaged audiences including the delivery of speeches to over 10,000 people by our CEO and the Councillors.
- › Fundraising and community support (13%) – expenses associated with fundraising campaigns, community support and management systems.
- › Operations and Finance (14%) – expenses related to running the Climate Council legally, compliantly and efficiently. This includes operational management, accounting, audit, compliance, insurance, legal, premises, office supplies and equipment, IT and administrative costs.

### CLIMATE COUNCIL EXPENSES



Note: salary and wage costs are allocated to the appropriate area of expense.

# Our Team

## BOARD MEMBERS

**Gerry Hueston** is currently the Chair and a Councillor of the Climate Council. He is also the current Chair of Plan International Australia and a director of Plan International. He was previously a Commissioner with the Climate Commission and President of BP in Australasia where his career spanned 34 years with BP in Australia, New Zealand, UK and Europe. He is a past board member of the Business Council of Australia, a past Chair and board member of the Australian Institute of Petroleum and a former member of the Chair's Panel of the Australian Great Barrier Reef Foundation.

**Robert Purves AM** Robert is a businessman and an environmentalist. He is currently the President of WWF-Australia and is a former board member of WWF International. Robert is also a founding member of The Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists, a Director of Earth Hour Global, a Director of Climate Council of Australia, a Patron of the Lizard Island Research Station, and a Governor of Australian Youth Climate Coalition. Robert has a long career in public companies, including being Chair of a public listed company, DCA Group Limited. In 2004 Robert established the Purves Environmental Fund, which funds numerous environmental initiatives. In 2008 Robert was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for service to conservation and the environment, and awarded an Honorary Fellow from the University of Sydney.

**Martijn Wilder AM** is head of Baker & McKenzie's Global Environmental Markets legal practice. Martijn holds the following roles: Director, Clean Energy Finance Corporation; Director, Climate Council; Chair, NSW Climate Change Council; Governing Board Member, Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership; Member, Strategic Council of the Climate Institute; Member of the Wentworth Group; Adjunct Professor Australian National University; Affiliate, Cambridge Centre for Climate Change Mitigation Research Department of Land Economy, University of Cambridge. Martijn is currently Chair of the Victorian Government's Climate Change Act 2010 Independent Review Committee.

**Samantha Mostyn** is a Non-executive Director of Virgin Australia Holdings Limited, Citigroup Pty Ltd, Transurban Group, Cover-More Group Limited and Mirvac. She is President of the Australian Council for International Development. She is also a Director of Australian Volunteers International, Australian Council for the Arts, Carriageworks, St James Ethics Centre Foundation, the NSW Climate Change Council and ClimateWorks Australia. Samantha is currently Deputy Chair of the Diversity Council Australia, and is a member of the advisory board of the Crawford School of Government and Economics, ANU. She is also a Commissioner of the Australian Football League.

**Matthew Honey** is currently a Partner at Ernst & Young. He provides a range of assurance services to a variety of clients in the resources, utilities and manufacturing sectors. He is an Associate of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia, a Registered Company Auditor and Registered Greenhouse and Energy Auditor. Matt has over 17 years of experience providing financial reporting, governance, risk management, transactional and climate change related advice to his diverse client base both in Australian and internationally.

## COUNCILLORS

**Professor Tim Flannery** (Chief Councillor) is one of Australia's leading writers on climate change. An internationally acclaimed scientist, explorer and conservationist,

Professor Flannery was named Australian of the Year in 2007.

**Gerry Hueston** (Chair and Councillor) see previous page.

**Professor Lesley Hughes** (Councillor) is an ecologist in the Department of Biological Sciences at Macquarie University and an expert on the impacts of climate change on species and ecosystems.

**Professor Will Steffen** (Councillor) is a world-renowned climate science expert and researcher at the Australian National University, Canberra.

**Professor Veena Sahajwalla** (Councillor) is Associate Dean (Strategic Industry Relations), Faculty of Science, and Director, Centre for Sustainable Materials Research and Technology, at UNSW.



Climate Council Board members, Councillors and staff.

**Andrew Stock** (Councillor) is a senior energy advisor and an experienced executive in the oil and gas, renewables and petrochemical industries in Australia and overseas.

## STAFF

**Amanda McKenzie** (CEO) is an environmental leader and CEO of the Climate Council. She manages the Climate Council strategy and oversees the organisation's management. She is Chair of the Centre for Australian Progress and on the Board of Plan International Australia. In 2014, Amanda was recognised as one of Westpac's 100 Women of Influence. Previously, Amanda founded the Australian Youth Climate Coalition.

### Current staff:

**Katrina Porteus** – Chief Operating Officer

**Jessica Craven** – Head of Communications

**Nathalie Swainston** – Head of Digital and Community

**Dr Martin Rice** – Head of Research

**Alix Pearce** – Researcher

**Petra Stock** – Researcher

**Cassie Bremner** – Community Engagement Manager

**Kirsten Tidswell** – Digital Content Manager

**Rebekah Thielemans** – Operations and Executive Assistant

## VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRACTORS

We would also like to thank the following staff, contractors and volunteers who worked for the Climate Council during the year:

Claire Snyder

Emma Jukic

Emma McCormack

Claire Nakazawa

Samuel McNair

Adrian Daniel – Community Volunteer

Celine El Khoury – Community Volunteer

Daniel Raby – Research Volunteer

Eden Ottignon – Research Volunteer

Hannah Cifuentes – Operations Volunteer

Ilse O'Reilly – Research Volunteer

Lily Barnett – Research Volunteer

Lydia Smithers – Community Volunteer

Max Newman – Research Volunteer

Natalie Long – Research Volunteer

Natasha Homsey – Operations Volunteer

Robin Connell – Community Volunteer

Zak Baillie – Research Volunteer

# Appreciation

The Climate Council staff and Councillors are a passionate and committed bunch.

This year they have put in a huge effort, often in a really challenging political and media environment. Their work has been prolific and world class.

They've been bolstered by a fantastic group of volunteers, expert reviewers and contributors who have all generously given their time, expertise and energy pro-bono. Their contribution has been invaluable.

The Board, supported by the association members, have provided excellent guidance and oversight to the staff team. Again giving their sort-after expertise voluntarily.

It is a huge team effort - thank you!

The incredible work that the Climate Council has undertaken would not have been possible without the support that we have received from our incredible community of Founding Friends. We are deeply grateful for the ongoing support and dedication to the Climate Council.

The Council's work only gets such wide distribution because our Facebook friends, our supporters and other organisations share that information. Those daily shares are changing the conversation.

Without your support, the Climate Council simply wouldn't exist. Together we have made a significant and important impact in Australia. Thank you sincerely for chipping in what you can.

## FOUNDING FRIENDS & COMMUNITY GIVERS

Our special thanks goes to our incredible community of Founding Friends and Community Givers. Together we have built the Climate Council from scratch into a highly impactful organisation. Thank you for making all of this possible!

We would like to especially thank Jen Boocock, and her team of Jenny Sprent and Stephen Rae for running 150km through the Tasmanian wilderness to raise nearly \$20,000 for the Climate Council. Your incredible efforts are greatly appreciated.

## PHILANTHROPY

A small, but important, group of philanthropists have contributed to amplifying the contributions of the Climate Council community. Thank you.

- > Purves Environmental Fund.
- > Robert Hicks Foundation, managed by Equity Trustees.
- > Patagonia.



## SUPPORTERS

We would like to thank Baker & McKenzie for providing pro-bono legal advice to the Climate Council. Your support is invaluable.

Thank you to Essential Media Communications, Spade & Arrow, Organic Republic Bakery, AltusQ, Squareweave, Motion Picture Company, Agency, 2B, Lewin Advisory, CTAS Finance & Tax, and Forrest Training for their support of the Climate Council.

We would sincerely like to thank and acknowledge Simeon Glasson for his tremendous and continuing support of the Climate Council.

We'd also like to acknowledge our members and governors who use their expertise, influence and networks to promote and support the Climate Council's work.

Thank you to all of our friends on social media who continue to share our content far and wide. Your efforts are incredibly important to our work.

## CONTRIBUTORS & REVIEWERS

Thanks to the following people for reviewing and/or contributing to Climate Council reports: Professor Fiona Stanley, Dr John Hunter, Jon Barnett (University of Melbourne), Dr Melanie Bishop (Macquarie University), Professor Bruce Thom (University of Sydney), Professor Stefan Trueck (Macquarie University), Professor Frank Jotzo (Australian National University), Dr Jan McDonald (University of Tasmania), Howard Bamsey (Australian National University), Mark Mills (Generation Investment Management LLP), Arek Sinanian (Enproc Pty Limited), Tim Buckley (Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis), James Leaton (Carbon Tracker Initiative), Ian Dunlop (Independent commentator & Member, the Club of Rome), Dr Linda Beaumont (Macquarie University), Dr Elizabeth Hanna (Australian National University), Giles Parkinson (RenewEconomy), Prof. David Karoly (University of Melbourne), Prof. Barbara Norman (University of Canberra). We would also like to acknowledge the work of several anonymous reviewers.

