



Schedule of Services

Services are held every Sunday at 10:30 at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre

3 September, Dr Max Lawson, Walt Whitman as a spiritual teacher:

Emerson arguably met Whitman 12 times and sent Bronson Alcott and Henry Thoreau to New York to visit Whitman. They, like Emerson, were greatly impressed with Whitman, not only as a poet but as a prophet.

10 September, No meeting.

17 September, Rev. Rex Hunt "Celebrating Earth and Wonder in Early Spring"

There is no good reason to believe that taking nature to heart leaves a person with any fewer spiritual benefits than taking to heart the teachings of supernaturalist traditions

24 September, Helen Whatmough To be announced.

The bilby is one of the most critically endangered native animals in Australia; their numbers have dramatically reduced since European settlement. Now the final refuge of the small marsupial is in the Kimberley of Western Australia where the Indigenous Rangers are taking on the responsibility of protecting the bilby. See more p. 8



How farming giant seaweed can feed fish and help fix the climate

by **Tim Flannery**, Professorial fellow, Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute, University of Melbourne. *The Conversation*.

Bren Smith, an ex-industrial trawler man, operates a farm in Long Island Sound, near New Haven, Connecticut. Fish are not the focus of his new enterprise, but rather kelp and high-value shellfish. The seaweed and mussels grow on floating ropes, from which hang baskets filled with scallops and oysters. The technology allows for the production of about 40 tonnes of kelp and a million bivalves per hectare per year.

The kelp draw in so much carbon dioxide that they help de-acidify the water, providing an ideal environment for shell growth. The CO₂ is taken out of the water in much the same way that a land plant takes CO₂ out of the air. But because CO₂ has an acidifying effect on seawater, as the kelp absorb the CO₂ the water becomes less acid. And the kelp itself has some value as a feedstock in agriculture and various industrial purposes.

After starting his farm in 2011, Smith lost 90% of his crop twice – when the region was hit by hurricanes Irene and Sandy – but he persisted, and now runs a profitable business.

His team at 3D Ocean Farming believe so strongly in the environmental and economic benefits of their model that, in order to help others establish similar operations, they have established a not-for-profit called Green Wave. Green Wave's vision is to create clusters of kelp-and-shellfish farms utilising the entire water column, which are strategically located near seafood transporting or consumption hubs.

The general concepts embodied by 3D Ocean Farming have long been practised in China, where over 500 square kilometres of seaweed farms exist in the Yellow Sea. The seaweed farms buffer the ocean's growing acidity and provide ideal conditions for the cultivation of a variety of shellfish. Despite the huge expansion in aquaculture, and the experiences

gained in the United States and China of integrating kelp into sustainable marine farms, this farming methodology is still at an early stage of development.

Yet it seems inevitable that a new generation of ocean farming will build on the experiences gained in these enterprises to develop a method of aquaculture with the potential not only to feed humanity, but to play a large role in solving one of our most dire issues – climate change.

Globally, around 12 million tonnes of seaweed is grown and harvested annually, about three-quarters of which comes from China. The current market value of the global crop is between US\$5 billion and US\$5.6 billion, of which US\$5 billion comes from sale for human consumption. Production, however, is expanding very rapidly.

Seaweeds can grow very fast – at rates more than 30 times those of land-based plants. Because they de-acidify seawater, making it easier for anything with a shell to grow, they are also the key to shellfish production. And by drawing CO₂ out of the ocean waters (thereby allowing the oceans to absorb more CO₂ from the atmosphere) they help fight climate change.

The stupendous potential of seaweed farming as a tool to combat climate change was outlined in 2012 by the University of the South Pacific's Dr Antoine De Ramon N'Yeurt and his team. Their analysis reveals that if 9% of the ocean were to be covered in seaweed farms, the farmed seaweed could produce 12 gigatonnes per year of biodegraded methane which could be burned as a substitute for natural gas. The seaweed growth involved would capture 19 gigatonnes of CO₂. A further 34 gigatonnes per year of CO₂ could be taken from the atmosphere if the methane is burned to generate electricity and the CO₂ generated captured and stored. This, they say:

...could produce sufficient biomethane to replace all of today's needs in fossil-fuel energy, while removing 53 billion tonnes of CO₂ per year from the atmosphere... This amount of biomass could also increase sustainable

fish production to potentially provide 200 kilograms per year, per person, for 10 billion people. Additional benefits are reduction in ocean acidification and increased ocean primary productivity and biodiversity.

Nine per cent of the world's oceans is not a small area. It is equivalent to about four and a half times the area of Australia. But even at smaller scales, kelp farming has the potential to substantially lower atmospheric CO₂, and this realisation has had an energising impact on the research and commercial development of sustainable aquaculture. But kelp farming is not solely about reducing CO₂. In fact, it is being driven, from a commercial perspective, by sustainable production of high-quality protein.

What might a kelp farming facility of the future look like? Dr Brian von Hertzen of the Climate Foundation has outlined one vision: a frame structure, most likely composed of a carbon polymer, up to a square kilometre in extent and sunk far enough below the surface (about 25 metres) to avoid being a shipping hazard. Planted with kelp, the frame would be interspersed with containers for shellfish and other kinds of fish as well. There would be no netting, but a kind of free-range aquaculture based on providing habitat to keep fish on location. Robotic removal of encrusting organisms would probably also be part of the facility. The marine permaculture would be designed to clip the bottom of the waves during heavy seas. Below it, a pipe reaching down to 200–500 metres would bring cool, nutrient-rich water to the frame, where it would be reticulated over the growing kelp.

Von Herzen's objective is to create what he calls "permaculture arrays" – marine permaculture at a scale that will have an impact on the climate by growing kelp and bringing cooler ocean water to the surface. His vision also entails providing habitat for fish, generating food, feedstocks for animals, fertiliser and biofuels. He also hopes to help exploited fish populations rebound and to create jobs. "Given the transformative effect that marine permaculture can have on the ocean, there is much reason for hope that permaculture arrays can play a major part in globally balancing carbon," he says.

The addition of a floating platform supporting solar panels, facilities such as accommodation (if the farms are not fully automated), refrigeration and processing equipment tethered to the floating framework would enhance the efficiency and viability of the permaculture arrays, as well as a dock for ships carrying produce to market.

Given its phenomenal growth rate, the kelp could be cut on a 90-day rotation basis. It's possible that the only processing required would be the cutting of the kelp from the buoyancy devices and the disposal of the fronds overboard to sink. Once in the ocean depths, the carbon the kelp contains is essentially out of circulation and cannot return to the atmosphere.

The deep waters of the central Pacific are exceptionally still. A friend who explores mid-ocean ridges in a submersible once told me about filleting a fish for dinner, then discovering the filleted remains the next morning, four kilometres down and directly below his ship. So it's likely that the seaweed fronds would sink, at least initially, though gases from decomposition may later cause some to rise if they are not consumed quickly. **Alternatively, the seaweed could be converted to biochar** to produce energy and the char pelletised and discarded overboard. Char, having a mineralised carbon structure, is likely to last well on the seafloor. Likewise, shells and any encrusting organisms could be sunk as a carbon store.

Once at the bottom of the sea three or more kilometres below, it's likely that raw kelp, and possibly even to some extent biochar, would be utilised as a food source by bottom-dwelling bacteria and larger organisms such as sea cucumbers. Provided that the decomposing material did not float, this would not matter, because once sunk below about one kilometre from the surface, the carbon in these materials would effectively be removed from the atmosphere for at least 1,000 years. **If present in large volumes, however, decomposing matter may reduce oxygen levels in the surrounding seawater.**

Large volumes of kelp already reach the

ocean floor. Storms in the North Atlantic may deliver enormous volumes of kelp – by some estimates as much as 7 gigatonnes at a time – to the 1.8km-deep ocean floor off the Bahamian Shelf.

Submarine canyons may also convey large volumes at a more regular rate to the deep ocean floor. The Carmel Canyon, off California, for example, exports large volumes of giant kelp to the ocean depths, and 660 major submarine canyons have been documented worldwide, suggesting that canyons play a significant role in marine carbon transport.

These natural instances of large-scale sequestration of kelp in the deep ocean offer splendid opportunities to investigate the fate of kelp, and the carbon it contains, in the ocean. They should prepare us well in anticipating any negative or indeed positive impacts on the ocean deep of offshore kelp farming.

Only entrepreneurs with vision and deep pockets could make such mid-ocean kelp farming a reality. But of course where there are great rewards, there are also considerable risks. One obstacle potential entrepreneurs need not fear, however, is bureaucratic red tape, for much of the mid-oceans remain a global commons. **If a global carbon price is ever introduced, the exercise of disposing of the carbon captured by the kelp would transform that part of the business from a small cost to a profit generator.** Even without a carbon price, the opportunity to supply huge volumes of high-quality seafood at the same time as making a substantial impact on the climate crisis are considerable incentives for investment in seaweed farming.

The above is an edited extract from [Sunlight and Seaweed: An Argument for How to Feed, Power and Clean Up the World](#) by Tim Flannery, published by Text Publishing.

Emphases by present editor JT

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### **Read more: Seaweed could hold the key to cutting methane emissions from cow burps:**

<https://theconversation.com/seaweed-could-hold-the-key-to-cutting-methane-emissions-from-cow-burps-66498>

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Aheda Zanetti and the burkini

You can trace the burkini's origins to the early 2000s in Bankstown, in Sydney's southwest, where Zanetti lived. She was born in Tripoli, Lebanon, and moved to Australia when she was two.

It was a game of netball that first inspired Zanetti to make sportswear, she says. She had been watching her young niece play her first game of netball but was dismayed to see her have to play with her team uniform worn on top of more traditional Islamic attire. "When I looked at her, she looked like a tomato," Zanetti says.

Zanetti created what she would go on to call the hijood — a portmanteau of hijab and hood. It was a breathable and easy-to-put-on garment that would cover the head and allow modest Muslim women to play sports easily. After a positive reaction at a local Islamic festival, she decided to start up a business, Ahiida, in June 2004.

Ahiida quickly moved onto swimwear. Zanetti says the move to create the burkini was inspired by an article she read that contained a description of Muslim women wading into the water wearing burqas. She decided to look up the definition of the burqa in the dictionary, which described it as a garment that covers the head and the body.

She then looked up the meaning of "bikini". It was described as a small two-piece bathing suit. Zanetti decided there was no reason not to combine the burqa and the bikini. "It's just a name that I invented. It doesn't mean anything," she says of the burkini. "It's really an Islamic two-piece bikini, but that sounds stupid."

At first Zanetti's garment attracted only a niche following. However in the aftermath of the 2005 Cronulla riots, local organisations began to look for a way to help Muslim Australians integrate and show others that their Muslim peers were part of Australian society. In 2007, Surf Life Saving Australia launched a campaign to find Muslim lifeguards to work on Sydney's beaches.



But there was a problem finding female Muslim lifeguards. The more revealing outfits often worn by women didn't sit well with many Muslim women. Although a variety of body-covering swimsuits had been produced for Muslim women over the years — a Turkish company named Hasema claims to have been producing them since the early 1990s — they were rare in Australia and not really suitable for lifeguards.

Here's where Zanetti came in. Surf Life Saving reached out to her to ask whether she could make a burkini suitable for lifeguards. She tweaked her design to help it stand up better to the work required of a lifeguard, making it a little tighter and a little shorter, and created a bold yellow-and-red design.

It was an immediate hit with young Muslims in Sydney. "The burkini allowed me to participate in activities at a level I had never previously expected," Mecca Laa Laa, a 20-year-old Muslim lifeguard in Sydney, told AP in 2009.

Before long, the burkini was being discussed by virtually every news outlet in Australia and many international designers, too. "The world exploded when they saw it," Zanetti says. "I've done over 1500 interviews since then."

She estimates that she has sold more than 700,000 garments since 2008. She says she sells burkinis all over the world to customers of all stripes. "The burkini that we produce is a fantastic product for any Muslim to wear," Zanetti says. "And non-Muslims, too. We've

sold to Jews, Hindus, Christians, Mormons, women with various body issues. We've had men asking for them, too."

If anything, the burkini might be a victim of its own success. Ahiida owns the trademarks to both the word "burkini" and the alternative spelling "burqini," but both have become generic terms for all similar Islamic swimwear. Zanetti says that she has tried to enforce her copyright but that it is hard in the international market.

Now the situation in France* has renewed interest in the burkini. "It's déjà vu," Zanetti says. This time, however, she feels that the nature of the attention has changed. "Before it was quite positive," she says. "Now everyone thinks we're hiding bombs in our burkinis."

Even so, she's glad she made the burkini. "It created a lot of confidence within our communities. Muslim women are much more active these days," she says. "I have no regrets."

The above is part of an article "The surprising Australian origin story of the burkini" which appeared first in The Washington Post, then in The Sydney Morning Herald ,AUGUST 19 2016. Author: Adam Taylor

* The burkini is controversial in France where in 2016 French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said that he supports bans on the burkini and that the garment is "not compatible with the values of France and the republic"

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## Red and Yellow

In 1855, an International Code of Signals was introduced for ships at sea. The letter 'O' signalled 'man overboard' and was represented by a red and yellow flag divided diagonally. This was probably the inspiration for the surf lifesaving flags introduced in 1935. Before then, patrol flags were blue and white. Red and yellow caps became standard in 1939.

## Women and surf lifesaving

Arguing that women were not strong enough to operate the equipment or swim in heavy surf, the Surf Life Saving Association banned them from qualifying for the surf bronze medalion and therefore from patrolling.

Despite this, many women worked behind the scenes or were valuable fundraisers. Others formed ladies' surf clubs and competed in carnivals, especially outside Sydney, where clubs were less concerned with the rules and more focused on their immediate community. The Surf Life Saving Association finally admitted women as full members in 1980. Since then, the number of active surf lifesavers has almost doubled.

## Nippers

Nippers are junior surf lifesavers aged between 7 and 14. They learn about surf awareness and safety, and compete in swimming and beach events.

Surf lifesaving clubs began Nipper programs for boys and girls in the 1920s and 30s. These programs operated differently at each club, with some only accepting boys while others ran Nipperette or Mermaid programs for girls.

With falling memberships and some clubs facing closure, the Surf Life Saving Association established a national Nipper program in the 1960s. The program expanded rapidly after 1980 when girls were eligible for full membership. The parents of many Nippers also joined up. There are now nearly 40,000 Nippers training to be future surf lifesavers.

## Safe from stingers

Lifesavers in northern Australia need protection from venomous box jellyfish and other marine stingers. In the 1970s, they wore pantyhose while on patrol. This led to the development of the tight-fitting lycra stinger suit. Bathing areas surrounded by stinger nets provide a safe place to swim. Lifesavers drag the enclosure with a net each morning to make sure no stingers have drifted in.

**From National Museum Australia.**

## A note from Carolyn Donnelly:

Hi there folks, I can't praise you both, Max and Ginna, enough about your magnificent presentation at SOL about the life and works of Christopher Isherwood. Wow, it was fabulous, we know, Max, that you can make the yellow pages appear interesting, but this was definitely worth hearing!! I now see the words and tune of the song "Cabaret". In a new light, in fact haven't been able to get them out of my head since! We are so fortunate to have you and Ginna to speak at SOL and really appreciate all the work you put into the preparation. Thanks, in anticipation of more in the future!

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Christopher Isherwood Quotes

"Fear, after all, is our real enemy. Fear is taking over our world. Fear is being used as a tool of manipulation in our society. It's how politicians peddle policy and how Madison Avenue sells us things that we don't need. Think about it. Fear that we're going to be attacked, fear that there are communists lurking around every corner, fear that some little Caribbean country that doesn't believe in our way of life poses a threat to us. Fear that black culture may take over the world. Fear of Elvis Presley's hips. Well, maybe that one is a real fear. Fear that our bad breath might ruin our friendships... Fear of growing old and being alone."

— A Single Man

"Do you think it makes people nasty to be loved? You know it doesn't! Then why should it make them nice to be loathed? While you're being persecuted, you hate what's happening to you, you hate the people who are making it happen; you're in a world of hate. Why, you wouldn't recognize love if you met it! You'd suspect love! You'd think there was something behind it—some motive—some trick."

— A Single Man

"You see, Kenny, there are some things you don't even know you know, until you're asked."

— A Single Man

About our most recent member and our speaker for 17 September

Rex A E Hunt is a Religious Naturalist, progressive Liturgist, and Social Ecologist.

A retired Uniting Church minister, his last placement was at the progressive Church of St James, in Canberra.

Rex is a leader within the international progressive religion movement, a member of the Religious Naturalist Association, and an Associate of the Westar Institute.

An author/editor of seven books on progressive christianity/religion, he and spouse Dylis live on the Central Coast. They have two adult children: Brendan and Rowena, three grandchildren: Elsie, Romeo, and Lenna, and a 'grand-dog' called 'Alfie'.



Do you know about the Church of the Larger Fellowship?

The Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF), a Unitarian Universalist congregation with no geographical boundary. Together, we create global spiritual community, rooted in profound love, which cultivates wonder, imagination, and the courage to act for justice. We strive to keep the flame of love burning bright for all who yearn for its warmth and light.

Our over 3,700 members, with their children, live all over the world. What brings us together is the desire to connect, seek, share and grow. You are welcome here whether you are a CLF member or not. Take your time, get to know us.

Read more: <https://www.questformeaning.org/clfuu/about/>

Would you care to join Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship?

Membership is open to all adults and includes this newsletter. *Full membership \$50 concession \$20*. Please note that all membership applications are subject to approval at a meeting of the Committee. Ask Rev. Geoff Usher for an application form at the Sunday service.

If you have a news item or written article you believe would be of interest to the congregation, we invite you to submit it for Esprit.

It would be helpful if items for publication, including articles and talk topics with themes could reach Esprit editor by the 15th of each month: jantendys@yahoo.com.au or hand to Jan Tendys at the Sunday service.

Do you have a topic of a spiritual / ethical nature that you would like to share with the congregation? As Unitarians, we support an "Open Pulpit" and invite members of the congregation to lead the service if they so wish. *Please see Caz Donnelly at the Sunday service*

Fellowship contact 0466 940 461

Website www.sydneyunitarians.org

Call to expand Indigenous rangers program

Mar 2017

Indigenous rangers are helping to prevent habitat loss and species decline across an area 10 times the size of Tasmania, a new report says.

The Country Needs People alliance — which represents dozens of ranger groups across the country — said it should be an incentive for the Federal Government to commit to extending funding for Indigenous Protected Areas.

The report found multiple examples of ranger groups, in each state and territory, controlling fires and destroying feral animals and weeds.

The Prime Minister's Indigenous Affairs adviser, Chris Sarra, said he supported a call to expand ranger numbers. In the report, Dr Sarra said rangers were succeeding because supporting their work encouraged self-determination and connection to country. "That success is built on the strength of our connection to culture and country," he said.

Country Needs People also called on the Government to set an ambitious target to employ an extra 4,200 Indigenous rangers by 2022.

The chief executive of the Olkola Aboriginal Corporation, Debbie Symonds, said her group had just four rangers covering 860,000 hectares on Cape York in Queensland.

"To be able to employ even another four rangers would be an amazing leap for us," Ms Symonds said.

Funding for 800 rangers has been given a lifeline by the Federal Government until 2020, but funding to operate the 75 Indigenous Protected Areas they work on runs out in the middle of next year.

Ms Symonds said on a recent "bush blitz", Olkola Land Managers had recorded new skinks, bats, moths, spiders and birds in their area. She said with "limited resources", the

rangers were also working to conserve the tiny population of the golden-shouldered parrot, a totem for the Olkola people.

Above is part of an article by Bridget Brennan for the ABC.

From Country Needs People

<http://www.countryneedspeople.org.au/>

31 august 2017

Just a quick update with some very cool news: Indigenous rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas won bronze at the World Future Policy Awards last week. Woo!

Congratulations have been flowing in from around the world, and Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion has said he's proud about the government's investment "not only leading to better environmental outcomes on country, but providing valuable employment opportunities for more than 2500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people."

Great to see the government proud of two shining light programs... but funding for both Indigenous rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas is due to end in less than a year.

The government has said they plan to extend the Indigenous ranger program to 2020 and the Indigenous Protected Area program to 2023, **but Indigenous land and sea management organisations are yet to receive final confirmation in the way of contract extensions.** That means rangers don't know if they'll have jobs this time next year or funding to continue their important work protecting nature across an area nearly ten times the size of Tasmania.

We're working to make sure the government delivers on its promises and we hope you'll be ready to spring into action if we need to tell them to get on with it. In the meantime, will you show your support for Indigenous rangers by helping build the number of people calling on the government to grow and secure Indigenous rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas?