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WEATHERING THE 'PERFECT STORM'

Addressing the Agriculture, Energy, Water, Climate Change Nexus

The Crawford Fund
2019 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Parliament House, Canberra, Australia

12-13 August 2019



Editor Ann Milligan

Closing comments

Dr Colin Chartres

The Crawford Fund

Last night Ross Garnaut indicated the importance of land management to sequestration of carbon, and today, as Tim Reeves has just so eloquently stated, we have had a lot of the detail filled in regarding key issues and solutions with respect to the impacts of climate change on agriculture, what needs to be done and how it can be delivered, with some practical examples. We've also heard of risks and unintended consequences of change.

Climate change is the driver of the issues we've been talking about. Clearly, these issues relate to water, which is directly related to climate, to population growth, and to energy, leading to a wide range of environmental and agricultural challenges that we have to overcome. It doesn't matter what is causing climate shifts, whether they are human-made or not. If we're going to solve the challenges created we need to do it together, and we need to take a non-partisan approach.

If climate change doesn't eventuate fully, if we don't go to two degrees warmer, or even higher, it doesn't matter. As Tim has just pointed out, we are going to do things which are going to make agriculture more efficient, more sustainable.

Those who will put into action the solutions we are talking about will largely be people under the age of 30. And a great thing about our conferences is that over recent years there have been increasing numbers of delegates of that age – even possibly 100 at this conference alone. It's a great challenge they face, and I hope they are really excited to be at the beginning of a career with so much to achieve, and so much potential to make a difference.

Older researchers, academics, policy-makers, can still take an active part: we can mentor, we can guide and we can also play advocates to the powers that be, to get our bureaucrats and politicians to listen and act.

A message that everyone here should be putting out to our politicians is that we need action, it needs to be non-partisan, and we can actually achieve something very considerable when we put our heads together in this area.

Thank you

When we meet as a Crawford Fund board, we start talking about next year's conference topic. Organising this annual conference takes us about a year. It's not just what happens here and now on the day. The board, and a number of individuals who act as a conference committee, help find speakers and ask these speakers to attend, before we move into the more detailed planning and preparation.

I'd like to thank Ross Garnaut who filled in at extremely short notice and delivered such a polished performance last evening. And thank you to today's

This paper has been prepared from a transcript.



Dr Colin Chartres during his closing comments in the Great Hall of Parliament House.

speakers who have all done a brilliant job – whether keynotes, overviews or case studies.

I also want to thank all of you in the audience not only for attending but also for your very articulate, perceptive and penetrating questions, which I noticed set several of the speakers to thinking deeply about how to answer.

Thank you to Conference Solutions, Greg Vickers and his team, for providing their usual excellent service.

Thank you to the Keynote listeners. The notes and minutes of the conference depend very much on your summaries.

We have had very very generous sponsorship, not only from some of the corporations around town and nationally, but also from individuals who have helped scholars get here. As our Chair John Anderson said at the start of today, we couldn't run this conference without your contributions. Thank you.

Finally, a large thank you to our team, led by Cathy Reade who is the driving force behind this conference. We owe a great deal to her brilliant organisational skills, and to her helpers: Larissa Marlow, Sue Faulkner and Lilian Mellink.

Dr Colin Chartres has had a long and successful career in the private sector, academia and government roles. Before joining the Crawford Fund in 2014 he was Director General of the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), a CGIAR Research Centre, headquartered in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 2007–2012. Previously, he was Chief Science Adviser to the National Water Commission, and held senior management roles in the Bureau of Rural Sciences and Geoscience Australia. He worked with CSIRO Division of Soils from 1984 to 1997 where he focused *inter alia* on soil acidity, soil structure and salinity issues and their impacts on agriculture, and from 2002 to 2004 in the Land and Water Division where he was involved in business development and international science linkages. Colin has a strong interest in the key nexus between science and policy and, through his work with IWMI, specialist interest in water scarcity and its impact on global food security and on science leadership and management best practice. Colin currently Chairs the Expert Review Panel for the Australian Water Partnership, is an Honorary Professor in the Crawford School of Public Policy at ANU, and is a member of the International Steering Committee of the Water for Food – Daugherty Global Institute at the University of Nebraska.