

HORRSCOPE FOR THE SPRING MONTHS 2014:

To allow for the vagaries of the universe and interpretive inexactitude, it might pay to read everyone else's stars as well.

SCORPIO

Your local council must become 'Fit for the Future'. The state government is convinced that yet another slogan-driven campaign will do the trick. Providing more money might seem to be a simpler approach but not as much fun as fiddling yet again with the boundaries.

SAGITTARIUS

If you are a student at Braidwood Central School I am sure you got a lot out of this day. I am also sure that all of you performed to your personal best. How do I know all this? Read the school newsletter and you'll discover that all students always do and somehow the teacher always knows this.

CAPRICORN

The progression of houses from angular through succedent and cadent and back to angular again symbolizes the flow of life experience. Just like how my 3G internet clags out when the full flow of Canberra tourists on the blower gets preferential band-width allocation.

AQUARIUS

It's not a time to be afraid. A good meal, a comfy bed, a warm shower in the morning and sharing your life with friends and family. It might not be perfect but you won't be shot dead by unemployable morons with big guns and no idea.

PISCES

Obliquity is currently around 23 degrees 26 minutes and varies slowly over the centuries. Oblivion on the other hand, or in the other bar, is currently around 10 minutes before closing time and hovers around like a designated driver.

ARIES

If you are a student looking for a higher

education then stay alert in choosing the right institution. Of course if you were to vigorously protest about something, say rampant coal-seam gas fracking, you might find George's new meta-data laws will allow you to bypass Christopher's pricier options and head straight into a cheaper, but more correctional facility.

TAURUS

The love life of the people falling under Taurus is going to be delightful but perhaps not quite so for those of you that go under a Nissan Dualis.



GEMINI

If you're getting on a bit and want to plan for beyond retirement, you might like to consider ordering a place at the local cemetery. If you leave it too late you might lose the plot.

CANCER

Your life will take unpredictable turns and when you go back to the dealer they will say what do expect when you buy a European car where the steering box is only on that side in 5% of the cars they make? Thanks to the British-built railways the Japanese drive on the wrong side too or all our cars would be rubbish.

LEO

This month you'll have many profitable professional proposals in your court. If they involve financial advice, herbal tea or erectile disfunction you might end up in someone else's court. Fret not — if you're middle class, well dressed and articulate, just plead momentary insanity or melancholy over the recent loss of your dog and your barista will get you a coffee — sorry, I mean your barrister will get you off.

VIRGO

You will get into some healthy ego building by the end of the month and this is a good thing. Do not be put off by the small parts that are so difficult to find. What? Oh, bloody proofreaders; it's so darn hard to get a good one. Of course it should have read Lego building.

LIBRA

Professional challenges are ready to grab you. The GST may go up to 12.5%. Let's see now, add a tenth of the tax free price plus a quarter of that. God knows what you divide by to strip out the GST.

An intelligent grid can wean us off coal

The poles and wires belong to the people. How they are modernised for the future is a job better suited to technicians than privateers just wanting their money back.

I'M A RAILWAY BUFF and the other day as I was browsing my way through *Trains* by S.P. Gordon, published in 1976, I came to this timely quote:

"Any innovation that presents a challenge to existing practices and methods will usually be subject to a period of discredit. Electric traction in particular was seen as a threat to the alliance of coal and steam which held a monopolistic position as the source of all industrial power.

"Britain, as a major coal-producing country, could probably also see the demands for this product dropping considerably if steam motive power was abandoned, so the railways' 'anti-attitude' [to the introduction of electric locomotives in the 1900s] was no doubt given support from political as well as business circles."

So there you have it. We've been through all this, "Oh woe is me" stuff from the coal industry before. But of course it didn't work because electric (and diesel/electric) locomotives are obviously so much cleaner and easier to maintain than steam engines.

In the 1950s there were steam locomotives hard at work on every continent. By the 1970s they had nearly all been scrapped. In fact, almost the only steam engines left on the planet working for money are in power stations.

These inefficient and dirty engines will be scrapped eventually just as were steam locomotives. The coal industry will fail once again in its efforts to put self-interest ahead of technical innovation and the march of progress.

If the coal barons did not have such influence in government and sections of the media, we would not have to put up with so much drivel about how coal is here to stay. First it was for ever, now it's 'for decades yet' — and it will be used for quite some time but the important statement that our leaders must make is this:

"Coal has contributed hugely to the industrial development of the world but it is a dirty and finite fuel source and we're trying to replace it as fast as we can."

When Tony Abbott says, coal is 'good for humanity' and the 'foundation of prosperity', he runs the risk of making those comments his and the current government's legacy quotes. History will treat them as kindly as it has all Luddites who resist change at the behest of vested interests.



Into the future by Paul Cockram

Then there's this from the New South Wales Mineral Council. "Coal will remain a key energy source, especially for billions of the world's poor who still do not have access to cheap and reliable power."

But will it — and should it? At the beginning of this month 160 million people in Bangladesh suffered a sudden blackout lasting up to 10 hours when a 400-kilovolt transmission line from India suffered a 'technical glitch'.

Way back in 2009, before CSIRO stood for Coal Stays In Renewables Out, that once-proud and independent scientific research agency produced a 600-page report, 'Intelligent Grid'. It made a coherent case for redesigning



our electricity grid to make it more efficient and less prone to overloading.

The way the grid presently works is as old-fashioned as the steam engines that provide the grunt power. For starters, a huge amount of the coal's energy is wasted as unused heat exhausting up the chimney with the CO₂.

Then, the electrons forced at the power station to bump into their neighbours with such vigour, lose quite a lot of their enthusiasm by the time the energy wave arrives at the power point hundreds of kilometres down the wire. We know all this, but electricity has become such a 'non-discretionary' purchase that inefficiencies can be absorbed and ignored by the producers by simply raising the price to the end user.

The CSIRO report shows a better way, a more efficient way and a less-polluting way to maximise our energy resources. It shows how decentralised energy production leads to vastly better outcomes for consumers and the environment.

That's why the coal industry's sudden epiphany about the plight of the billions of Earth's citizens who have no access to electricity is as ridiculous as it is self-serving.

The last thing a developing country would think of doing is to copy the production and distribution network paradigm that our best brains are busy redesigning — unless of course the countries in question have their own influential mining magnates of similar proportions to ours.

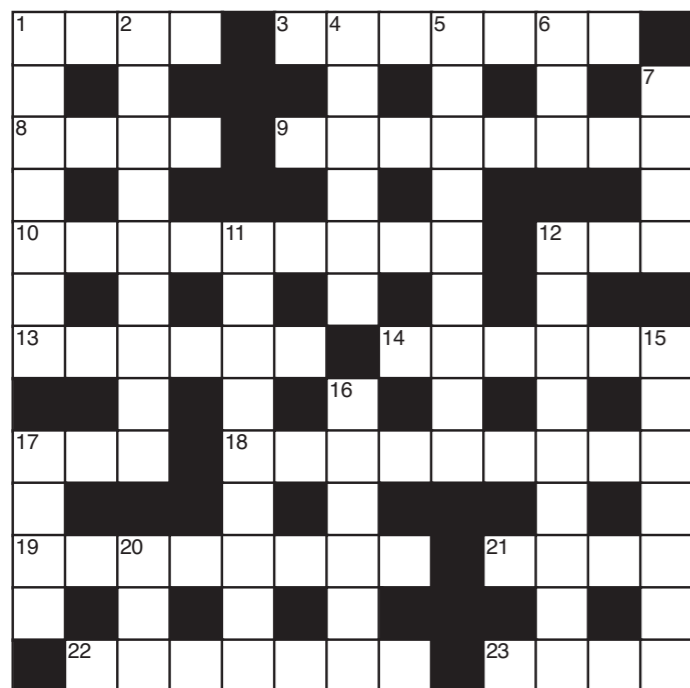
Whoops, funny that. We need to put all the coal enthusiasts — government, corporate, media and private into a cave and roll a rock across the entrance. Then the rest of us can work in the sunshine on a better model for the future.

We have everything in Australia. Abundant solar energy, creative minds and surplus manufacturing capacity, all ready to go. First, we design local power-producing units; solar, wind, gas co-generation (heat recovery and use) — whatever fits the need. Then we make them into modular packs for export to the developing world.

For every new power plant built here or overseas that doesn't need a continuous and expensive supply of coal (or uranium but that's another story), the environment wins, the consumer wins and future generations win.

The only people who will lose are ... well, you can tell who they are by what they say. And it's true — they're just a pack of losers.

BRAIDWOOD BAFFLER #7



ACROSS

1. Remedy (4)
3. The winners' attitude at the MCG this year? (7)
8. Harrowing (4)
9. You see it. You want it. You...? (3,2,3)
10. Was Russell crowing when they won? (9)
12. People carrier (3)
13. I'll see you in my? (6)
14. MacDonal'd's favourite shade? (6)
17. Resting place (3)
18. Dug puzzle, thirstily and quickly (anag.) (7,2)
19. Baby geese are goslings and baby sheep are (3,5)
21. French Dad (4)
22. Look out Rattus, Rattus! (4,4)
23. Da'ish (4)

DOWN

1. Emergency signal (4,4)
2. Unusual or scarce (4,4)
4. At all events (6)
5. Needles are used when she does this. (5,4)

6. It's roolly, roolly great! It's ... cool! (3)
7. Common newts (4)
11. New arrival (9)
12. Say goodbyes to 21 across (3,6)
15. Young 'uns (7)
16. We had one of these on Wallace Street but now we have two modern ones instead! (1,5)
17. Come here on one of these and you could end up on Manus Island! (4)
20. Meadow (3)

SOLUTION TO BAFFLER #6

